

Brussels, February 4, 2009

RADISSON SAS HOTELS AND RESORTS TO CHANGE THEIR NAME TO RADISSON BLU

The Rezidor Hotel Group's rising, upper upscale star reveals its true colours ...

Radisson SAS, one of the world's most innovative, fast growing, contemporary hotel brands, is changing its name to Radisson Blu.

This small, but significant name change marks the latest step forward in the remarkable Radisson SAS success story and reflects the natural end of Radisson's links with the SAS Group following Rezidor's IPO back in November 2006.

Radisson SAS was created in 1994 when SAS International Hotels (SIH) joined forces with the Radisson brand for Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA). The resultant new, highly individual hotel brand grew rapidly and won a world class reputation for innovation, design and service concepts: many more recent Radisson SAS hotels are "new breeds" – contemporary flagship properties with iconic architecture and bold design solutions - that have become increasingly synonymous with the brand.

The name change was announced today, Wednesday 4 February 2009, at the Grand Opening party of the first Radisson Blu: the stunning Radisson Blu Hotel, Zurich Airport.

Rezidor President and CEO, Kurt Ritter, said: "We're extremely proud to hoist the Radisson Blu flag. After many, very successful years with SAS, we are eager to start cruising high on our own. And we'll fly the flag in an ever growing number of destinations."

Radisson Blu's Senior Vice President and COO, Thorsten Kirschke, explained that the change from SAS to Blu will be a gentle evolution through into 2010. "We currently have more than 200 hotels in operation or under development, so the name change has been designed in such a way that it'll avoid any unnecessary disruption but still create an impact."

Meanwhile Gordon McKinnon, Rezidor's Executive Vice President of Brands, revealed that the name Blu emerged as the most natural choice from Rezidor's intensively researched quest to find the right new visual differentiator to replace the familiar SAS 'blue box'.

“The name Blu started life as the project’s working title. But it soon became apparent that it was actually the most natural of choices. It’s simple, it’s short, it’s relevant and we’ve applied it in a way that adds a certain modernity to the identity without taking it too far,” he said.

“Most importantly it also promotes our specific brand heritage by preserving the graphic ‘blue box’ which has become the recognised symbol of the distinctive characteristics of the Radisson brand in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Radisson Blu preserves the continuity of our unique brand, while taking it that one essential step forward to more accurately represent its true position and future ambitions.”

These ambitions were today summarised by Kurt Ritter: “As Radisson Blu, we aim to become *the* fastest growing, most innovative and dynamic, upper upscale hotel brand in the world.”

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Radisson Blu Background: Hot dates

1960: The Royal Copenhagen, world’s first designer hotel, opens in Denmark. Designed by the legendary Arne Jacobsen for SAS International Hotels (SIH) - the hotel division of The Scandinavian airline group, SAS - it wins instant international acclaim for its groundbreaking architecture and interiors.

1994: SAS International Hotels, (SIH), joins forces with the Radisson brand in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), to create Radisson SAS in one of the worlds first joint branding initiatives.

2000: Radisson SAS passes the 100 hotels milestone – a real player in the market.

2002: The birth of Rezidor SAS Hospitality: a new name to reflect a new direction and the development of a multi-brand portfolio with Rezidor SAS as the parent company and Radisson SAS as a key brand.

Early 2006: The Radisson SAS success story is confirmed. The new brand has established its very own market position in the upper upscale, lifestyle segment with a focus on contemporary design and operational excellence. Radisson SAS has more than 150 properties in more than 40 countries throughout EMEA.

Late 2006: It's time for the SAS group to let its fledgling go and fly free. Rezidor SAS, renamed The Rezidor Hotel Group, is floated on the Stockholm Stock Exchange.

2008: The Rezidor Hotel Group has been trading as a listed company for over two years and it closes the year with a total portfolio of over 360 hotels across five, very different, carefully segmented brands, operating in 55 countries. Radisson SAS is acknowledged as the hotel industry's most improved and rising, upper upscale star.

Feb 2009: Radisson SAS rebrands as Radisson Blu: the news is announced at the opening of the latest, stunning 'new breed' property: The Radisson Blu Zurich Airport takes off...