

Minor Hotels sees further growth potential for its brands in Africa

Minor Hotels (MH), a hotel owner, operator and investor, currently with a portfolio of 151 hotels and resorts in 22 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, South America, Africa and the Indian Ocean, sees further potential for the growth of its property and brand portfolio across Africa.



Image by 123RF

Currently MH has a portfolio of 27 properties in operation in seven countries in Southern and East Africa, with a further pipeline of two new resorts under development in North Africa. Three of the group's brands are currently present on the continent – Anantara, AVANI and Elewana Collection – with the luxury boutique PER AQUUM brand to be launched in the region in 2017.

The acquisition, earlier this year, of Tivoli Hotels & Resorts, a well-known Portugal-based brand with over 80 years' history with 14 properties across Portugal and Brazil, paves the way for the growth of this brand in Africa. The Tivoli acquisition was the latest in a series of international investments by MH as part of its long term diversification strategy, which over the last two years has seen the group invest over USD 550 million in hotel projects in Southern and East Africa, Asia, Australia, South America and Europe.

According to Dillip Rajakarier, CEO of Minor Hotels and COO of Minor International, "We see strong potential for the growth of our brands in Africa, including the opportunity to launch Tivoli in the region. There is potential both in Portuguese-speaking countries such as Mozambique and Angola, but also in the Maghreb, where economic and cultural ties to Portugal and Europe in general, are strong. Europe represents one of our main feeder markets and there is definitely potential for cross-selling within our existing African portfolio of brands – Elewana Collection, Anantara and AVANI."

MH' first entry into Africa was in 2008 when the group acquired 50% ownership of Elewana Collection, a group of luxurious lodges, hotels and tented camps in Kenya and Tanzania providing access to all the drama and spectacle of African wildlife in exceptional comfort. Most recently in May, Loisaba Tented Camp became the 15th property within the Elewana Collection. The new camp is located in the Loisaba Conservancy in Kenya, which spans three eco-systems, offering a variety of beautiful landscapes and incredible game viewing.

The year 2014 saw MH aggressively expand into Africa, with the group announcing an extension of their partnership with Rani Investment LLC to manage three properties in Mozambique, plus making a 25% investment in the properties. This followed the launch of the two companies' partnership in August 2013 for the operation of a resort in Mozambique, which was rebranded to Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort & Spa in late 2013.

In September 2014 MH announced a USD 101 million investment to acquire a 49% stake in a mixed use property project in Mozambique's capital in a further extension of this joint venture. In March this year, MH re-launched Anantara Medjumbe Island Resort. On a pristine private island off the northern coast of Mozambique, the 12-villa, adults-only African island hideaway reopened following an extensive refurbishment.

These investments in the continent were further consolidated by MH investing over USD 60 million to own a stake in a collection of Sun International properties in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Zambia. Five of the six properties have been rebranded to the upscale AVANI brand – AVANI Gaborone Resort & Casino in Botswana, AVANI Lesotho Hotel & Casino and AVANI Maseru Hotel in Lesotho, AVANI Victoria Falls Resort in Zambia and AVANI Windhoek Hotel & Casino in Namibia. The well known Royal Livingstone Hotel has joined the Anantara portfolio.

Looking ahead, the luxury hotel Essque Zalu Zanzibar on the north east coast of Zanzibar will be rebranded to PER AQUUM in 2017. In North Africa two new Anantara resorts are under development. In northern Morocco the 230-key Anantara Al Houara Tangier Resort is scheduled to open in the second half of 2017, in addition to the 93-key Anantara Tozeur Resort which will open in the southwest of Tunisia.

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