

MEET PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico Convention Bureau

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PUERTO RICO CONTINUES TO ENTICE MEETING GROUPS WITH NEW HOTELS, PROPERTY UPDATES AND INCREASED AIRSERVICE AT UPGRADED AIRPORTS

SAN JUAN, November 19, 2012 -- With more than 1.3 million square feet of meeting space and over 14,000 guest rooms throughout the Island, a world-class convention center and an increasing range of accommodation options, Puerto Rico continues its emergence as one of the most sought-after meeting destinations offering delegates a distinctive and memorable experience.

With recent additions to air service, renovated hotel and resort properties, the opening of new properties and others in the pipeline, Puerto Rico continues to expand its offerings to attract and better serve meeting and convention groups.

“Puerto Rico continues to upgrade its tourism product while adding new properties, services and amenities that are of great benefit to meeting and convention groups,” stated Milton Segarra, president & CEO, Meet Puerto Rico. “With new and more frequent airlift, the addition of properties in the luxury and budget category, and continued upgrades throughout, Puerto Rico is demonstrating its strength and vitality within the tourism and convention sector.”

Following is a brief overview of the latest hotel openings, renovations and upgrades and details on air service to Puerto Rico:

HOTEL & RESORT OPENINGS:

- **Dorado Beach, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve** opened in late 2012 in the former setting of the renowned Laurance Rockefeller property in Dorado Beach. The 114-room ultra-luxury property offers a 4,558 sq. ft. meeting room, Board Room and several private dining areas including Su Casa, a colonial-style hacienda featuring a four-bedroom villa for weddings and private events. The property is also home of a five-acre Spa Botánico and the Jean-Michel Cousteau Ocean Future Society Ambassadors of the Environment program, which incorporates eco-education group activities such as snorkeling, kayaking, hiking and touring an ancient Taino archaeological site on the hotel’s property.

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Puerto Rico Hotel Renovations & Infrastructure Updates.../2

- The much-anticipated **Condado Vanderbilt Hotel** opened for cocktails, dining and events within the hotel's Vanderbilt Court, Vino Veritas Wine Bar, Avos Cigar Lounge, Marabar Lounge and Terrace, 19 Nineteen restaurant. Approximately 15,000 sq. ft. of meeting and function space is also now available for groups meetings and events, including a ballroom with ocean views. Guestrooms at the property are expected to open in the fall of 2014.
- Houston-based Interra Capital Group has purchased the famed Puerto Rico property known as **The Normandie**. \$40 million in renovations are underway along with negotiations with major hotel management companies to operate the property. The refurbished property is expected to open in late 2014.

HOTEL RENOVATIONS & UPDATES:

Condado:

- At the **Caribe Hilton**, recent reinvestment projects include updates in the Main Building guestrooms, as well as meeting space renovations including the San Geronimo and San Cristobal ballroom, Las Olas and Terrace and the Gran Salon Los Rosales (Expo Center). Wi-Fi is now available in all guestrooms and public areas, and the property now boasts the only outdoor Starbucks kiosk in the world. Other recent property upgrades have been done to main building and garage elevators, building roofs and facades.
- **Condado Plaza Hilton**, celebrating 50 years in Puerto Rico will be opening a new Sports Lounge in late November. Recently completed renovations include updates in public spaces and a renovated and resurfaced salt water pool, the only pool of its kind in Puerto Rico. Upgrades for meeting groups include new computers in the 24-hour Business Center and also new equipment such as digital signage, wide-screen formatting, digital downloadable agendas and mobile apps for groups, as well as iPads for presentation control through on-site technology service provider PSAV.
- Following a \$35 million overhaul on public, meeting and dining spaces at the **San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino**, the property is nearing completion on another \$8 million investment in its 525 guestrooms and balconies. Seeking a contemporary, yet classic "highly residential feel," the upgrades include 47-inch TVs, new rugs and furnishings, new balcony furniture, ergonomic desks and chairs to offer guests an entire new look with warm wooden tones accented with splashes of tropical color and local artwork.

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- The **Radisson Ambassador Plaza Hotel & Casino** has begun a \$1.5 reinvestment project consisting of remodeling 33 suites and corridors on three of the hotel's floors. Additional upgrades will continue in several stages for completion in 2015. Already, the property has updated its restaurant, suites tower and rooftop pool deck as well as added a fitness center.

Convention Center District:

- Currently under construction is the 126-room **Hyatt House San Juan**. The first Hyatt House in the Caribbean, the \$28.7 million property is expected to open in late 2014 and will offer studio, one and two bedroom kitchen suites.
- Two additional properties are currently in the planning stages, including a 252-room **Courtyard by Marriott** and a yet-to-be-named property that will bring an additional 200+ rooms to the District.
- Construction of a **World Trade Center San Juan** have recently unveiled, which will provide international business activities and a place for delegates, local business executives and entrepreneurs to come together. Part of a \$36 million investment, the first phase will include 100,000 square feet of office space, 18,000 square feet of commercial space and 156 parking spaces.
- Plans to link the Puerto Rico Convention Center District to Old San Juan are already in development with the completion of the first phase of the **Bahía Urbana** project last May. The project includes a park-like promenade along the San Juan harbor with seating areas, sculptures and an open-air restaurant called Café 8 which features specials every day of the week. Other elements include an amphitheater, trapeze school and water taxis across San Juan harbor.

Isla Verde:

- The **InterContinental San Juan Resort & Casino** is completing a remodeling of its public areas as part of a \$23 million investment in the property over the past two years. Part of the project is a lobby overhaul, including a new indoor-outdoor bar area and separate lounge. Since 2007, the property has updated its pools and gardens, built a new casino and renovated all guestrooms, lobby and meeting spaces. Final work on exterior paint and repairing of balcony railing will be completed in late November.

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- As part of its ten year anniversary, the 260-room **Courtyard by Marriott Isla Verde** is finalizing an \$11 million property renovation. Guest rooms and the lobby have been updated and a new main entrance has been put in place. Other updates include resurfacing of the pool area and construction of an oceanfront boardwalk.
- The **San Juan Water Beach Club Hotel** recently launched its new Business Boutique Guest Rooms, designed to offer comfort and functional workspace for today's business traveler. New amenities include an oversized work desk; comfortable executive chair; desktop multi-plug and USB connections; high speed Wi-Fi Internet; desk lamp; desk accessories; flat screen TV; a mini refrigerator, plus a reading chair and lamp. Each Business Boutique Guest Room features ocean views.
- *Salt Gastrobar* has opened at the **Howard Johnson Hotel, Isla Verde**. In addition to this specialty restaurant, the property is slated to begin a remodeling of its 115 guestrooms, banquet hall and conference space in coming months.

Beyond San Juan:

- Construction is underway for the 2014 opening of **The Hyatt Place Manati**. The 104-room property will offer flexible meeting space; complimentary Wi-Fi; a social area with a coffeehouse vibe and an e-room with complimentary computer access, printing and free Wi-Fi throughout. In addition, the property will feature a 24-hour fitness center; outdoor swimming pool; casino; complimentary daily breakfast; food and beverage market; and in-hotel dining including a café.
- On Puerto Rico's East end, the **Fajardo Inn** has reinvested in its property, remodeling the pool, beauty salon, conference area rest rooms, terraces and main building exteriors. In addition, conference rooms now offer complementary WiFi and recently introduced transportation services with the addition of two 15-passenger vehicles.

AIRPORTS & AIRLIFT:

Puerto Rico continues to serve as the Caribbean region's leader in airlift with 1,986 weekly non-stop and direct flights from the Mainland U.S., Canada, Latin America, Europe and the Caribbean. Recent airport announcements and increased air service updates include:

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- **Aerostar Airport Holdings** took over operations at the Luis Muñoz Marin International Airport earlier this year through a public-private partnership initiative. Renovations at the airport are already underway through a commitment of \$1.4 billion over a 40 year lease to transform the Caribbean's busiest airport into a world-class gateway.
- An additional \$38 million is being spent at Puerto Rico's regional airports to provide upgrades to these facilities. A master plan includes new spaces for concessionaires and a community project for artisans to sell their crafts at the Vieques Airport; the initiation of air service with Cape Air from Culebra; and a new management center, warehouses and cargo distribution area at Rafael Hernandez Airport in Aguadilla.
- **Southwest Airlines** began serving Puerto Rico in April with three daily flights from Orlando and one daily flight from Tampa, taking over routes formerly served by AirTran. AirTran will continue to serve Puerto Rico from Baltimore, Atlanta and Ft. Lauderdale.
- On Nov. 5, **Delta Airlines** initiated a daily non-stop flight between Chicago and San Juan. In addition, the airline will expand its daily service between New York/JFK and San Juan in December, new flights initiate on December 19th, 2013.
- **JetBlue** is initiating new flights from Chicago to San Juan. The daily non-stop flights will begin on November 20, 2013 between San Juan's LMM International Airport and Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. JetBlue offers 14 nonstop service destinations from San Juan, including, ten Boston, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood, Hartford, Jacksonville, New York (JFK), Newark, Orlando, Tampa, Washington D.C. (Reagan National) and West Palm Beach as well as Caribbean destinations Santo Domingo, St. Maarten, St. Thomas, and St. Croix.
- **Air Europa** will begin offering two non-stop weekly flights between San Juan and Madrid aboard a 299-seat Airbus A-330 aircraft beginning in May 2014.

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Editor's Note: Meet Puerto Rico is a non-profit organization established in 1962 to drive meetings, conventions, trade shows and incentive groups to Puerto Rico. With offices in San Juan, Chicago, and Washington DC, Meet Puerto Rico strengthens Puerto Rico's competitive position in the Americas and abroad by increasing awareness of the Island's outstanding meeting facilities and services, and produces approximately \$122 million to the local economy. Meet Puerto Rico can be reached at info@meetpuertorico.com or at its website www.meetpuertorico.com, and is the official marketing and sales agent for the Puerto Rico Convention Center (PRCC). For more information on the Convention Center visit www.prconvention.com. Meet Puerto Rico is accredited by the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) as an elite destination marketing organization. DMAI is the world's largest association of CVBs, representing more than 600 destination management organizations in more than 25 countries.



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