

Sofitel Set to Open December 2010 in Phnom Penh – Travel Weekly, 29th Oct 2010

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Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra set for December Debut

The Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra announced that the 201-room, riverside property will open on Dec 11th, as the city's first new 5-star debut in a decade.



Located in an upscale residential quarter just downstream of Phnom Penh's Royal Palace, and close to both the Australian and Russian embassies, the hotel's debut will introduce eight new restaurants and bars to the city, Southeast Asia's first, Sofitel-branded So SPA and So FIT, as well as the top floor executive lounge, Club Millésime, and an 1,800-square-meter grand ballroom anchoring one of the most ambitious new meetings venues in the region.



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The December launch immediately redefines the city's upscale appeal, positioning the Sofitel as the most sophisticated new hospitality opportunity not only in Phnom Penh but in the region at large. The hotel's emergence here, in one of Asia's most compelling new destinations, is evidence of rising enthusiasm for Phnom Penh.



More than 6,000 candidates applied for work at the new hotel, buoyed by the brand's reputation and the bold strokes of a USD 50 million investment by a consortium of Cambodian, Thai and French investors. The Sofitel Luxury Hotels brand offers a unique blend of local culture and the French "Art de Vivre", and has been progressively moving to claim leading high-end market positioning in major destinations and capital cities. As a new generation Sofitel, the Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra aims to rapidly gain a leading position in the destination.

"For many people, Phnom Penh is one of Asia's great new destinations, generating an enthusiasm that we've seen in the past for places like Vietnam and the Maldives," said Didier Lamoot, General Manager of the hotel. "The Sofitel is opening as a grand manifestation of all that enthusiasm."

Despite the recent economic slump worldwide, visitors to Cambodia have continued to increase, albeit by a small margin. In 2008, the country's tourist authorities reported 2.12 million in-bound arrivals. In 2009, that number inched up

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to 2.16 million. Last month, the country's Ministry of Tourism reported that in-bound arrivals were up 14% over last year, a pace that's likely to accelerate with the development of the nation's infrastructure.



The 12-storey hotel occupies four hectares in a prime, riverside location, near the British International School and amidst a burgeoning neighborhood of upscale villas. The airport is 15 kilometers away. Within five years, the city's evolving centre is expected to be fixed right around the Sofitel.

Its fitness complex, the Phokeethra Sports Club, features tennis courts and squash courts, as well an outdoor swimming pool, a kid's club and fitness equipment. Sofitel So SPA enjoys expansive quarters on the hotel's third floor, overlooking the pool and the river.

Its five state-of-the-art meeting rooms, the magnificent grand ballroom and a 1,200-square-meter pre-function space are set to tap a growing interest in Phnom Penh as a land of entrepreneurial opportunity. The Sofitel will deploy its InspiredMeetings programme in the new facility, setting the stage for events that coordinate dedicated personnel and technology and that deliver one-of-a-kind affairs, from intimate parties to large scale conferences.

"As we look ahead to the next few years, Phnom Penh is likely to emerge as an attractive new venue among meetings and conference planners," said Lamoot. "The destination is fresh, and the ability to hop from here to Angkor is a major

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draw.”

Lamoot previously served as General Manager at the Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf and Spa Resort from September 2004.

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