

LUXURY SERVICES



10 Dakota

Ken McCulloch has announced plans for 12 additional Dakota properties as part of a £150m investment programme. Dakota is McCulloch's new low-cost, high-style concept which first launched outside Nottingham (see *LB* July 04). The next, a 132-room hotel, will open outside Edinburgh in spring 2006. Investors include the Bank of Scotland and a number of individuals. In an interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, McCulloch said, "The people we have spoken to are incredibly excited because they are investing in a lot more than a hotel. Dakota is very much the hotel of the future." The Dakota hotels are likely to be at airports and locations outside city centres. McCulloch has also speculated on extending his higher-priced Columbus hotel concept, which launched in Monaco in 2001.

Canouan Island

Canouan Island is an unusual project in St Vincent & the Grenadines, a few miles south of Mustique. The 1,200 acre island was almost entirely undeveloped before becoming the personal passion of banker Antonio Saladino, who acquired it in 1990. There is now a Raffles Resort, a further beach hotel and yacht club, spa and a number of properties which are being developed by Donald Trump for sale as private residences. The Raffles Resort has 156 suites and rooms, while the Tamarind Beach Hotel and Yacht Club has 42 properties. The island also has an 18-hole Jim Fazio-designed golf course, a Monte-Carlo-styled casino, and 17th-century chapel for couples marrying on the island. A

VICTORY BELL

The just-opened **HOTEL VICTOR** in Miami has a novel shopping service. While other hotels provide limos to take residents to the shops, the Ocean Drive property has installed a 'Neiman Marcus Button' in the rooms. At the touch of a telephone key, shoppers can speak directly to personal shoppers at the Bal Harbor branch of Neiman Marcus and request items from the catalogue or ask for a selection of outfits to be sent over. A similar concept is already in place in the Chambers Hotel in Manhattan, which has a link-up with Henri Bendel.

number of spa suites, only reachable by boat, can be booked for a day. In an interview with *Luxury Briefing*, Antonio Saladino explained, "We expect our average customer to be 45 to 60, in the top 2% income bracket and have two to three homes around the world." The 135 private villas being developed by The Trump Corporation will be designed to the owners' specifications, within the architectural guidelines of the island. Saladino said "The name Trump is an international brand. He has been a successful developer all his life and is associated with quality." Since 1990 \$200m has been spent on developing the island's infrastructure and adding roads, electricity, water treatment, a clinic, schools and a training college. All employees of Canouan Resorts Development, with the exception of management and engineers, are locally hired.

Four Seasons

Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts has announced plans for its third hotel in China. The Beijing property will open in 2006 and joins the existing Four Seasons Hotel in Shanghai which opened in 2002. A Four Seasons is also due to open in Hong Kong next year. The Beijing hotel will have 300 rooms and suites built around a central atrium, two ballrooms, three restaurants and a spa. Isadore Sharp, Chairman and CEO of Four Seasons, commented, "We look forward to opening the doors of Four Seasons Hotel Beijing as the city prepares to welcome the 2008 Olympic Games. China grows in importance as a business and cultural destination for travellers from around the world. Four Seasons will now be there to welcome them in China's key cities." The hotel, built in partnership with Evergreen, will be part of the Sunny Region Development on Xiao Liang Ma Qiao Road in the diplomatic and commercial district.

Hotel de Sers

The former Marquis de Sers Hotel on avenue Pierre 1er de Serbie, just off avenue George V, has now been resurrected as Hotel de Sers. French architect Thomas Vidalenc has retained the 19th-century features of the former mansion house of the Marquis de Sers within a new contemporary decor scheme. The bar, 52 rooms and six suites have been refurbished, adding state-of-the-art equipment including Bang & Olufsen plasma screens. Thomas Vidalenc explained, "Like touring, meetings and discovery, hotels are an integrated part of travel. Almost immediately after check-in the traveller wants the hotel to become a home; time takes on a new dimension and short-term expectations are expressed, fulfilled and, through good communication and excellent service, exceeded."

The Palms

The Palms is a new resort opening on Providenciales in the Turks & Caicos. The \$85m development at Grace Bay Beach has Oliver Messel-inspired architecture throughout, a serpentine infinity pool, complete with central hot tub and underwater music, set in a 12-acre estate. The 72 villas have coral stone façades hand-cut from Barbadian stone. A key feature will be the spa, created by Angel Stewart of Las Ventanas al Paraiso in Mexico. Each treatment room is set above the ocean and has its own water feature during the day and fire feature by night. Treatments are based on local botanicals and natural elements including powdered queen conch shells.

Ian Schrager

Having put his London hotels on the market (see October's *LB*), Ian Schrager

DOING THE CHARLTON

Developments are taking place at **CHARLTON HOUSE**, Roger Saul's country hotel in Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Monty's Spa is being added, which will have its own product range. If you like a product, you can fill a handblown glass bottle with it, to buy. A number of bedrooms have also been redesigned and a café added. Saul has also launched the Sharpham Park food brand, based on a historic 300-year-old estate near Glastonbury which the Sauls are now restoring. The product range includes sustainably farmed, organic provisions ranging from bread to venison.