

Americas' Ritz-Carlton Reserve 6-star hotel on its way and on time

Dorado Beach Resort reconstruction to be completed by December

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Talk about catering to the luxury market!

The iconic Dorado Beach Resort, founded by Laurance Rockefeller in 1958 and closed in 2006, is being redeveloped as the first new Ritz-Carlton Reserve six-star hotel in the Americas and only the second in the world, while aiming to retain the spirit of the original landmark hotel.

"We are doing whatever it takes to finalize the project by the end of the year as initially planned," said Federico Stubbe Jr., president of Prisa Group, one of the project's two development corporations. "We have more than 700 direct employees at the construction site and everything is running on time and within budget."

The project is the first phase of a 10-year, \$2.2 billion tourism and residential development master plan that is expected to be completed by 2020 and will include a second luxury hotel, additional luxury residential units and the redevelopment of two additional 18-hole golf courses that are adjacent to the Dorado Ritz Reserve.

The hotel's local economic impact will be enormous. Once the facilities are open, they are projected to generate 983 jobs at the Ritz-Carlton Reserve, Dorado Beach Club, golf courses and the other club amenities, with an additional 1,067 indirect and induced jobs at the resort and club, \$61 million in annual generated income and \$12 million in tax income to the government.

Total investment in the Dorado Beach resort going forward amounts to \$1.2 billion. Its master plan calls for adding up to 124 beachfront residences, 18 golf villas and 34 estate homes, all branded and managed by Ritz-Carlton.

That is in addition to the investment in the overall Dorado Beach resort to date of \$1 billion, which includes a clubhouse, the Dorado Beach East Estate Homes and Dorado Plantation residential



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developments, and the \$10 million Watermill aquatic park.

The Dorado Ritz Reserve will embrace local history, culture and art. The resort will feature Taíno design influences throughout its structures, while historical indigenous Taíno artifacts found at the construction site will be displayed throughout the hotel.

Continuing Dorado Beach's tradition of displaying art, developers are working with local art consultants, museums, galleries and collectors and will commission art from noted contemporary artists, with a focus on Puerto Rican and Latin American artists.

Art will be on display throughout the hotel, with some pieces available for sale.

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Work on the Dorado project's first phase started 18 months ago with the demolition and cleanup of the original hotel structures and, although the original structure was demolished, developers are using the traditional, contemporary architecture concepts from Rockefeller for the new six-star hotel.

"Basically, we're going to provide the same feeling that the original hotel had, because the original feeling of the place was simply unique. What made Dorado Beach what it was, was its great campus and landscape. And we aren't reneging on that feeling," Federico Stubbe Sr., chairman & chief executive of Prisa, told CARIBBEAN BUSINESS in

asphalt, glass, steel, copper and aluminum.

Seventy-five percent of the Dorado Beach property will remain as permanent green space, including a 32-acre old-growth forest reserve. Most of the Ritz-Carlton Reserve campus will be a car-free zone. Residents and guests will travel using electric golf carts.

There are 14 miles of paved Rockefeller Trail for walking, bicycling or cart travel. The project is also pursuing the use of renewable energy, including the possibility of an adjacent solar powerplant.

Jean Michael Cousteau's Ambassadors of the Environment Program will be housed in a new LEED platinum-certified facility to teach and promote sustainability.

"Representatives from Cousteau's Futures Society have met with local firm Aventuras Tierra Adentro, and we're working with them to adjust their ecotourism offerings to a six-star clientele, because high-end people also like adventure," Stubbe Jr. said.

In addition, guests and residents will be able to enjoy the three miles of beaches and the four 18-hole championship golf courses once they are renovated.

The two subsequent phases of the Dorado Ritz Reserve could be completed between 2016 and 2017. ■

Developers are pursuing a LEED silver certification for the Ritz-Carlton Reserve.

a previous interview (CB July 22, 2010). "Of course, we'll do outstanding landscape architecture and take it to a six-star level versus what a six-star level was in 1958."

Continuing with Rockefeller's pioneering conservationist stance, developers are pursuing a LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council for the Ritz-Carlton Reserve. There are only a handful of resort hotels in the world with a silver, gold or platinum certification.

Materials from the old hotel are being recycled, including concrete,