



For Immediate Release

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Shaner Hotels Announces Alliance with Dubai-Based The First Group

Partnership Focused on Expanding Presence Throughout Cyprus and the Gulf Region

STATE COLLEGE, Pa., November 26, 2024—Officials of Shaner Hotels, an award winning, international hotel owner, operator and developer, today announced the formation of an alliance between its Shaner Italia division and Dubai-based The First Group. As part of the strategic alliance, The First Collection at Jumeirah Village Circle, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel, will be the first of many similar projects the partnership will seek to expand its portfolio. This is the first hotel to debut under The First Group’s lifestyle hospitality brand, The First Collection.

“While there is an obvious and growing demand for well-branded, well-operated hotels throughout the Gulf region, there are surprisingly few existing opportunities there to pursue as local owners tend to gravitate toward independent properties with lesser oversight,” said Plato Ghinos, president, Shaner Hotels . “This partnership aims to fix that, providing services for all stages of the hotel life cycle, from site selection through final sale.”

“Our alliance with Shaner Hotels will enable both organizations to benefit from the cross-pollination of proprietary operational systems and vast hospitality experience which will accelerate the expansion of our portfolio of managed hotels and F&B assets.” said Apo Demirtas, chief strategy officer, The First Group Hospitality.

The new alliance will promote hotel management agreements (HMAs) throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Greece and Cyprus. Hotels will operate under the First Collection, Tribute Portfolio and the Marriott international family of brands.

“Shaner has a well-deserved reputation as a strong international operator with hotels throughout Greece, Italy, the Bahamas and the United States,” said Rob Burns, CEO, The First Group. “With a firm grasp of regional dynamics, a strong internal culture and an existing footprint along the Mediterranean, they are an ideal partner to expand further into the Gulf region.”

The First Collection at Jumeirah Village Circle, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel

Developed by The First Group and operated by The First Group Hospitality, the upper upscale, 40-story hotel marks Marriott Bonvoy’s Tribute Portfolio debut in the Middle East. The 491-suite tower provides premium amenities, including a stylish business lounge, expansive swimming pool and sundeck, fully equipped fitness center and spa center with separate male and female treatment facilities. Nestled in the vibrant Jumeirah Village Circle, the hotel is a short ride from Dubai’s beaches, Downtown Dubai, Dubai South and Al Maktoum International Airport.

“The First Group has developed a true gem in the Middle East with The First Collection at Jumeirah Village Circle, a Tribute Portfolio hotel, already having won multiple awards prior to even opening its doors for business,” said Lance Shaner, chairman and CEO, Shaner Hotels.

“We are confident that we will help the hotel succeed both financially for our stakeholders and personally with our guests as we provide a truly one-of-its-kind experience for discerning travelers to Dubai.”

About Shaner Hotels

Headquartered in State College, Pa., Shaner Hotels is one of the foremost owner-operator companies in the hospitality industry with more than \$1 billion invested in 60 hotel properties owned and managed across the U.S., Italy, Greece and the Bahamas. Over the past 40 years, the company has also been engaged in both new development and redevelopment of more than 80 hotel projects with leading brand affiliations such as Marriott International, InterContinental Hotels, Choice Hotels and Hilton. New properties are constantly evaluated as Shaner Hotels continues a conservative yet opportunistic approach to growth. For more information about the company and its divisions visit www.shanercorp.com.

The First Group

Founded in 2005, The First Group is a hospitality real estate developer and hospitality management company with a portfolio of award-winning hotels and residences, and a robust array of F&B outlets and lifestyle venues. Over the past two decades the organization has bolstered its reputation as the region’s premier end-to-end hospitality solutions provider, having developed 19 hospitality projects with over 55 F&B outlets, currently managed by The First Group Hospitality. Discover more at www.thefirstgroup.com.