

11 Hotel Waterparks Open in Asia Pacific & Middle East in 2009

By Jeff Coy & Amanda McDaniel

November 16, 2009 --- Eleven (11) hotel waterpark resort projects outside North America opened in 2009 --- despite the worldwide economic slowdown, construction curtailment and lack of bank loans. There are now 141 hotel waterparks with 11,316 rooms, 129 million square feet of outdoor waterpark space and 3.1 million square feet of indoor waterpark space that exist outside North America.

There are many waterparks, amusement parks and theme parks worldwide, but it is a recent phenomenon to build an on-site hotel that connects with the park. Indoor and outdoor park owners have discovered that having a hotel on site provides families with accommodations for a longer length of stay and a larger total spend.

Hotel Waterpark Resorts Opened in 2009						
REST OF THE WORLD Under Construction & Opening in 2009	Location		Number Rooms	OWP Sq Ft	IWP Sq Ft	Open
Chimelong Waterpark at Chimelong Hotel	Guangzhou	China	1,500	4,304,000		200904
Vivaldi Park Ocean World's OWP Expansion	Hongcheon	South Korea	1,278	50,000		200905
Caribbean Bay Resort & Bukit Gambang Waterpark	Bukit Gambang	Malaysia	578	2,613,600	0	200907
Haichang Waterpark Resort	Haichang	China				200907
Island Castle Resort	Jangam	South Korea				200907
Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort	Cebu	Philippines	656	322,000	0	200909
Wahoo Waterpark Bahrain City Center Mall	Manama	Bahrain	550		150,000	200910
Wave House at Siloso Beach Sentosa	Singapore	Singapore				200910
Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort & Lost World	Pattaya	Thailand	555			200911
Ice Land OWP & Planet Earth at WOW RAK	Ras Al Khaimah	UAE	70	1,306,800		200912
Splash Jungle Waterpark at West Sands Resort	Phuket	Thailand	447	75,000		200912
Total UC - Opening in 2009			11	5,634	8,671,400	150,000
Cumulative Total Open Year End 2009			141	11,316	129,814,600	3,110,058

Source: Jeff Coy, JLC Hospitality Consulting.

The worldwide database of hotel waterparks open, under construction and in development is maintained by Phoenix AZ-based JLC Hospitality Consulting.

The new projects opening are designed as mixed-use resort destinations that include hotels, conference centers, recreation, entertainment, shopping and residential components. All the components clustered together act as a stronger magnet that draws more families from a wider region. Higher entertainment value results in higher revenues captured by the overall resort, which explains why existing parks and resorts keep getting bigger and bigger.

Hotel Waterpark Resorts That Opened in 2009

1. **The Chimelong Resort in Guangzhou, China** opened a new 5-star, eco-themed hotel and convention center in April 2009. The hotel features 1500 rooms and 36 meeting rooms totaling 322,000 square feet of convention space. The hotel has 9 restaurants, pink flamingos and white tigers and boasts a peaceful and natural environment despite being surrounded by 5 theme parks. Many of the suites have great views looking into **Chimelong Waterpark**, which opened three years ago. The hotel waterpark is located adjacent to Chimelong Paradise Amusement Park, Safari Park, the International Circus and Guangzhou Crocodile Park. New improvements at the waterpark include live music, a disco in the wave pool and a weekly bikini contest.

Chimelong Waterpark is one of the largest and most advanced waterparks in the world with many high-tech rides. In 2007, it won IAAPA's Must See Award. Located on over 400,000 square meters (4.3 million sq ft) of land, Chimelong Waterpark has the world's most advanced ozone water treatment system, which kills germs and keeps the water clean while maintaining safe PH levels. The waterpark was designed by Whitewater West of Vancouver BC and includes some of the best water rides in the world such as Tornado, Boomerango and Behemoth Bowl. For families with smaller children, there is the world's biggest Kid's Pool with a Mini Tornado and other mini water rides.

The waterpark received 550,000 visitors in June 2009 compared to 255,000 in June 2008. The park expects to welcome its two millionth visitors by year end 2009, according to Chimelong Group director of investment, Tony Sze. For more info, call 4008-830083 or go to www.chimelonghotel.com.

2. The Dynamic Zone outdoor waterpark addition at Vivaldi Park opened in May 2009. **Vivaldi Ski Park & Ocean World Resort is located in Hongcheon, Gangwon-do province, near Seoul, South Korea.** Vivaldi Park has three apartment-style hotel buildings featuring 1278 guest rooms. Vivaldi Park is best known as a ski resort with day and



nighttime skiing on the slopes of Mount Palbongsan. Vivaldi Park also has a huge indoor-outdoor waterpark called Ocean World, which opened in 2007 as the largest indoor & outdoor waterpark in Korea. It has the capacity for 18,000 people at one time. It is designed to look like an oasis in the middle of the Egyptian desert --- with a large Sphinx and pyramid to give it a sense of mystery.

Ocean World is divided into three areas: (1) Indoor Aqua Zone, (2) Outdoor Zone, and (3) Outdoor Extreme Zone. The Indoor

Aqua Zone has a wave pool, swim pool, water flex, indoor slide, indoor lazy river pool,

toddler pool and sauna. The Outdoor Zone has a lazy river, kid's pool, toddler pool, high-speed slide, family raft ride and Royal sunbed. The Outdoor Extreme Zone has a rapid river, surfing mount, kid's pool, body slide, ocean lake and wave beach.

But what really gets people going to the park is the wave pool which can produce a wave almost 7.9 feet high. Prior to Ocean World, the only indoor wave pool could be found at Everland's Caribbean Bay.

The new 50,000 square foot expansion, Dynamic Zone, features the very popular Monster Blaster, Super Boomerango and Giant Waterplex water slides from Whitewater West of Vancouver BC. The Monster Blaster is an uphill water coaster that defies gravity with drops and curves to thrill riders of all ages. The Super Boomerango is a family raft ride that provides a sense of weightlessness for up to six riders. The Giant Waterplex is a multi-level play structure that includes numerous interactive water features and two tipping buckets. This was the third expansion since Ocean World contracted with Whitewater West in 2005 and 2007. For more, call 82-2-2222-7474 or go to www.vivaldioceanworld.com.

3. Sentoria Development Group opened its **Caribbean Bay Resort in Bukit Gambang Resort City, Malaysia** in July 2009. The Caribbean Bay lodging units consist of 578 studio, deluxe and family suites complete with clubhouse, gym, Jacuzzi, infinity pool, steam room and meeting facilities. The waterpark is divided into four main components --- Coco Beach, Penguin Island, Tree Top Hill Slides and Garden Terrace. The waterpark covers 60 acres



including a 20-acre lake, 1 kilometer beach, water lagoon, 25,000 square foot wave pool, 6-lane mat racer and family river rafts. Other facilities include a team-building area, 18-station obstacle course, a high ropes course, mini zoo, paintball and jungle trekking.

The waterpark and the accommodations were the first to open at a cost of RM105million,

according to finance manager Heap Wee Guan, who said the total build out would take 10 years and one billion to complete. The next phase calls for an adventure park, a forest park, a bazaar, heritage square and more resort villas. For more, call 03-8943-8388 or go to www.sentoria.com.my.

4. The Haichang Group opened the **Caribbean Park Waterpark Resort in Haichang, China** in July 2009. Billed as the largest waterpark in central China, SCS of Denver CO



designed and installed the world's largest waterpark play structure covering 15,000 square feet. It is 66 feet high with 38 decks, two tipping buckets, a volcano geyser, 6 waterslides and hundreds of interactive water features. ProSlide Technology of Vancouver BC installed two of the hottest water rides on the planet --- the Tornado and the CannonBOWL --- plus 4 body slides. Caribbean Waterpark also includes a wave pool with retractable roof, various restaurants, a wedding chapel and a huge resort development.

5. **Island Castle Resort in Jangam, South Korea** opened in July 2009. With a brand new waterpark and a 148-room resort hotel just one-half hour from Seoul, Island Castle is the perfect quick getaway for families. The waterpark has the tallest ProBowl in the world and the first-ever TantrumTwist in Korea. Riders seated in 2-man WhirlyWheel tubes will plummet 4 stories in complete darkness before defying gravity multiple time in the Tantrum funnel and then exiting into the splash pool below.

6. **Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort in Lapulapu City, Cebu, Philippines** opened in September 2009 after three years of construction with 322,000 square feet of outdoor waterpark to complement its 616 rooms and 40 villas. Much of the hotel was completed in 2006 but weather and other factors delayed portions of the P4.5 billion project led by Korean development firm, Philippine BXT Corporation, according to resort general manager Richie Kang.



The resort features six 11-story buildings, an adventure waterpark, Jacuzzi, pool villas, a business center and an Arnold Palmer golf course under construction. The resort offers a Korean hospitality

experience but is targeting visitors also from Japan, China, Europe and North America. The immense waterpark features an island pool, adventure pool, wave rider and 3 waterslides --- making it an ideal leisure destination among families. There are 5 pools, a jungle lazy river, a cave rider, beach zone and a 5-lane mat racer. On the beach, you'll find scuba,

snorkeling and parasailing. The waterpark and resort were designed by TPJavier Architects & Associates.

The resort is owned 60 percent by BXT Corporation and 40 percent by Taihan Electric Wire and solely operated by the Imperial Palace hotel brand. The venture marks the first time that Philippine government has given tax cuts to a resort operator, welcoming the flow of foreign capital and the creation of local jobs that accompany the opening. The Imperial Palace is currently the largest resort in the area by number of rooms, followed by the Shangri-la brand. Nearby attractions include the Mactan International Airport, Cebu International Convention Center, a business park and shopping mall. For more, call marketing at 63-32-494-5273 or go to www.imperialpalace-cebu.com.

7. Wahoo! Indoor Waterpark at Bahrain City Center in Manama, Bahrain opened in July 2009. The BD22.6 million project is described as the Middle East's first indoor waterpark. An outdoor waterpark is scheduled to open in June 2010. Two hotels with a



total of 550 rooms are planned by mall developers, MAF Investments (Majid Al Futtaim Group). The Wahoo! Indoor Waterpark covers 150,000 square feet and features a FlowRider, Master Blaster, Sidewinder, 4-lane mat racer, toddler pool, lazy river, surfing school and a SurfRider surfing machine that generates 9 foot waves. The high-rise, indoor-outdoor waterpark is separated by a wall of glass. Indoor and outdoor areas feature a mix of real and artificial plants to enhance the paradise island theme centered around a moored schooner. The waterpark features prayer rooms,

10 thrill rides, two food & beverage outlets and a Wave Pro retail outlet. Wave Pro is open to mall visitors for all kinds of sports equipment and apparel including the “burkhis” for Muslim women.

“Wahoo! is open all year long. Even when it’s cold, we will be offering a warm pool destination,” according to general manager Damien Latham.

Four leading companies were involved with the Wahoo! The rides were installed by Aqua Leisure of Dubai. Architectural designers were Shankland Cox of the UK. Floors and finishes were supplied by Sim Leisure of Malaysia, and landscaping was handled by Almoayyed Contracting Group of Bahrain. The waterpark also features the new Defender Filter provided by US-based Neptune Benson which uses less water and runs 90% more energy-efficient. For more, call 973-1758-4444 or go to www.bahraincitycenter.com.

8. Wave House at Resorts World Sentosa in Singapore SG opened in October 2009. It’s a \$15 million beachside attraction at Siloso Beach on Sentosa Island. The sprawling 81,855 square foot surfer’s paradise offers 3 enormous pools with artificial waves. The 9 foot high FlowBarrel produces barreling waves that seasoned surfers love in a single pool. For novices, the FlowRider has two pools that produce gentler waves. The attraction is part

of the Wave House franchise founded by American Tom Lochtefeld. He opened the first Wave House in San Diego CA in 2005, which was followed by others in Santiago, Chile and Durban, South Africa. Wave House Sentosa is a 3-story complex that is open 7 days a



week and encompasses a roof-top bar, a lounge that overlooks the FlowBarrel pool and a chic Mexican-Californian restaurant, plus two cocktail bars and a Billabong surf shop.

Despite the recession, Lochtefeld believes Wave House Sentosa will be an instant hit and hopes to draw a million visitors annually. While the economy in the US is in the doldrums, the Wave House in San Diego saw a 15% hike in revenue during the summer of 2009 compared to the

summer of 2008. Generally, people view the beach as low cost entertainment. "The Wave House is not just about surfing. It is about experiencing the beach and surf culture. Ten percent of visitors are there just to check it out," he said. For more, call 65-6377-3113 or go to www.wavehousesentosa.com.

9. **Centara's Grand Mirage Beach Resort & Lost World Waterpark in Pattaya, Thailand**

opened 555 rooms and its own indoor-outdoor waterpark in November 2009. Located on the Wong Amat Beach in North Pattaya, the 5-star resort hotel is designed to a Lost World concept with its own jungle, waterpark and diverse attractions. The hotel is two 18-story towers connected by sky bridges. All rooms face the ocean and guests have direct access to the beach and water sport activities including windsurfing, kayaking, boating and fishing.

The Lost World has its own jungle where there is an intriguing waterpark with swimming pools, waterslides and a lazy river with waterfalls. The hotel is well organized for children with a kid's club and a daily activities program that includes an indoor camp safari and game rooms for ages 3 to 9 years while teens have a separate e-zone games and meeting area. For more, call 0-2769-1234 extension 6675-6676 or go to www.centarahotelsresorts.com.

10. **Splash Jungle Waterpark at West Sands Resort in Phuket, Thailand** opens December 2009 with 110 villas and condos. That number will grow to 447 units by the end of 2010, according to Grace Yang-Mercer, vp of Splash Jungle Waterpark. The park features 3 waterslides capable of handling 360 riders an hour, a lazy river meandering for 11,316 feet, a wave pool and other stuff. That's a pretty big splash for a holiday island that hasn't had much of a thrill since Dino Park. There's even a snow-making machine on the way, for cool tropical evenings. Total project cost is 500 million baht.

11. Initially scheduled to open in May 2009, the delayed **Ice Land Waterpark in Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), UAE** will have its soft opening in December 2009 and its official launch in January 2010, according to developers. The snow-themed Ice Land Waterpark is the first phase of the 120-acre, Dh150 million WOW RAK mixed-use resort destination that includes a theme park being built in Ras Al Khaimah through a joint venture of Polo Amusements Group of India, RAK Investment Group and RAK Properties. RAK is one of the smaller but

rapidly-growing emirates among the seven in the UAE. RAK shares a rugged border with neighboring Oman and has 25 miles of golden sand with emerging UAE resorts.



When finished, the **Ice Land Waterpark** will be one of the biggest waterparks (30 acres) in the Middle East and one of the top parks in the world, according to Balwant Chawla, managing director of Polo RAK Amusements, who expects a million visitors in year one. Designed to hold about 15,000 people at one time, the waterpark will also feature the region's biggest man-made waterfall at 525 feet wide and 115 feet high, the first-ever area for aqua football, an artificial coral reef, scuba diving, a wave pool, 27 waterslides and a 645,000 square foot rain dance pool deck which will blast pulsating music while showing people. Other features include 70 kabana-style rooms, ice-skating, games, arcades, bowling alley, indoor golf and food courts.

The project calls for 14 hotels, a second theme park called Planet Earth and a 129,000 square foot Shopping & Entertainment Plaza within two years.

The Planet Earth Theme Park, spread over 24 acres, will feature 5 theme zones representing Oceanic, Cosmos, Mountain, Jungle and Desert --- each with thrill rides, kiddie rides, eateries and merchandising outlets. Each zone will alleviate the heat with the use of water bodies, greenery, mist, snow, ice and air conditioning. The Mountain Zone, for example, will have a roller coaster that runs through the snow play area, and the Oceanic

Zone will have a clear water chute that takes people through a live underwater experience. For more, call 00971-50-4321301 or go email ceo@wowrak.org.

Where's the money to build new hotels and waterparks?

Real estate will go back to being a long term investment instead of being a trading vehicle as it became in the last 15 years. The securitization model of selling packaged commercial mortgages has not yet been repaired. The new focus is on regional commercial bank lending, but the banks are preoccupied with their own problems rather than making new loans. The smaller projects will be easier to finance over the next few years, creating an opportunity for resort expansions and waterpark additions to existing hotels.

Meanwhile, new private equity firms and consortiums are forming to acquire bargain properties and complete unfinished projects. There is still a lot of money still sitting on the sidelines waiting for consumer and investor confidence to return. "Asia will lead the world back," according to Joel Ross of US-based Citadel Realty Advisors. "The young people there are hungry to learn and earn."

Stay positive, work smart and do the right thing.



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