

Hilton Plans to Double Its Hotels in China Over Next Few Years

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(Yicai Global) March 17 -- Hilton Inc. [NYSE:HLT] is looking to expand its investments in China, and within a few years expects to significantly increase the number of its hotels and bring in three new brands to the country, catering to a range of consumer groups.

The hospitality firm is preparing more than 200 hotels, many of which will be full-service hotels and mid-range Hilton Garden Hotels. As occupancy and daily rates at high-end and budget hotels have declined lately, mid-range hotels appear a better option for return on investment.

Hilton has more than 90 hotels in China, said Rupert Hallam, vice president for sales in the Asia Pacific region, adding that this figure will double in the next few years. "In terms of return on investment, Hilton Hotel's communication and cooperation with property owners as well as the returns we bring them are still relatively good, which is why we have the opportunity to sign more brands," Hallam said.

"Of course, we also see the potential of the mid-range hotel, so we will pay attention to the development of Hilton Garden Hotels. We will introduce three new brands, Curio - A Collection by Hilton, Canopy by Hilton and Embassy Suites by Hilton. We hope to meet different market demands through different brands."

Hallam described Curio as a personalized high-end hotel targeting families seeking a quality travel experience. The embassy is an all-suite hotel with rooms between 45 and 48 square meters in size. The Canopy is aimed at younger travelers, with a digital concierge service. The firm plans to launch the Curio brand in China this year, with the remaining brands following later. The exact schedule is subject to construction progress.

Hilton was one of the first international hotel brands to hit the Chinese market, however, it hasn't been quick to open new hotels or launch new brands due to its conservative and prudent development strategies. Of the 14 Hilton brands, six have been introduced to China.

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