

# Alliance Global and Star Cruises bet chips on Tourism City Project



Marriott Hotel

**L**ike most new generation Asian entrepreneurs who are driving a fresh wave of economic vitality in the region, Kingson Sian, president of the Philippine conglomerate Alliance Global Corp., Inc. (Alliance Global) believes in the combination of responsible business and sound profit.

Sian said the recent extension and amendment of the Philippine Amusement Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) charter was the break that the industry, including the biggest gaming firms in the world, was waiting for to invest in the Philippines. The amendment allows PAGCOR to issue licenses to private corporations to own, manage and operate establishments in Manila.

Alliance Global will participate in PAGCOR's US\$15 billion Bagong Nayong Pilipino Entertainment City Manila project through its subsidiary, Travellers International Hotel Group, Inc. (Travellers International). Travellers received its PAGCOR license last June 2, the first of four pre-qualified groups.

Recently, Travellers International forged a deal with Hong Kong listed company Star Cruises Limited (Star Cruises), which is part of the Malaysian conglomerate Genting Group. Star Cruises is the third largest cruise line operator in the world.

The other major consortia in PAGCOR's Entertainment City Manila shortlist include Japan's Aruze Corp., led by its Chairman Mr. Kazuo Okada, an investor in Wynn Resorts Las Vegas and Macau; local mall developer SM Investments Corp.; and Bloombury. All four companies are betting their chips on this major tourist-oriented project, and are expected to put in at least US\$1 billion in cash on the table for their respective projects.

PAGCOR said business from the Entertainment City Manila is expected to double the government's revenue earnings from PAGCOR to about \$600 million to \$700 million a year.

Sian says Alliance Global and Star Cruises share PAGCOR's vision of using the Entertainment City Manila project not only to create thousands of employment opportunities but also to entice some of the country's overseas workers who are already part of the entertainment and tourism industries across the globe to come home.

"They all have the skills needed for the project. If given the choice, Filipinos will definitely prefer to work here in the country with the right amount of compensation," Sian said.

With its license from PAGCOR, Travellers International is ready to invest at least US\$1.55 billion in two large-scale tourism-oriented projects in Metro Manila over the next five years.

Maxims Hotel



The most ambitious and exciting part of Travellers International's project is its task to put up an iconic structure to symbolize the rich culture and heritage of the Philippines, according to Sian, adding that the Entertainment City Manila is expected to be the platform to showcase the best of what the Philippines can offer in arts and entertainment. Sian said that from Entertainment City Manila, it would be easy to entice tourists to see other attractions in the country.

The Alliance Global-Star Cruises consortium will likewise build several hotels with an aggregate room count of at least 5,000, thus transforming Travellers International into the largest hotel owner in the country. In addition, other facilities will include a world-class theme park and museum.

The opening of Entertainment City Manila will spark a hotel and tourism boom never before seen in the country. Sian said of the collateral benefits from the project. Similarly, the hotels that will be put up under the Alliance Global-Star Cruises development are expected to be better than the best already found in the country.

Aside from the Entertainment City Manila site, the group will undertake the development of Maxims Hotel, a luxury hotel brand of the Genting Group, on a one-hectare lot beside a lagoon, near the entrance to Newport City in Villamor Airbase. It will have a gross floor area of more than 20,000 square meters. The development is the country's first foray into an all-suites hotel to be built at a cost approximately P3.8 billion.

"With the opening of Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, we are expecting a surge in tourist arrivals. The Maxims Hotel, the country's first all-suites luxury hotel, will be rushed to give these tourists a memorable and positive business experience here in our country," Alliance Global Chairman Andrew Tin declared.

Alliance Global is tapping the expertise of world-renowned Gettys Chicago to design the interiors of the Maxims Hotel suites so that these will all bear the mark of luxury that frequent guests have come to associate with the brand. Gettys has completed interiors for over 500 luxury hotel and five-star resort projects in the Americas and the Caribbean region, including The Ritz-Carlton Chicago and the Hilton Grand Vacation Club in Hawaii. The firm is renowned in the hospitality industry for its "fresh thinking, creative solutions and uncompromising design."

Gettys Chicago is also the appointed interior designer for the grand lobby of One Central, a luxury residential condominium project in the Makati CBD of Megaworld Corporation, the property arm of Alliance Global.

Maxims Hotel Newport City will feature 172 Maxims suites, three villas and one presidential suite from the fourth to the eight floors. A personal butler will service all the suites, which start at a floor area of 54 square meters for the Maxims suites, a spacious 535 square meters for the villas and an expansive 652 square meters for the presidential suite.

Three private villa residences with individual pools are planned for the fourth floor. The same floor will host a luxurious pool for the exclusive use of hotel guests.

The lower floors of the hotel will be allocated for the Newport Entertainment and Commercial Center. The new mall will feature signature brands at the ground floor, a performance stage at the second level and four cinemas at the third floor.

Newport City is a 25-hectare residential, commercial and office development of Megaworld. At full development, the project will feature luxury residential condominiums, shopping malls, restaurant strips and business process outsourcing (BPO) office condominiums.

Key to the recent developments is the government's vision and PAGCOR's commitment to break new ground for the country's tourism trade.

Sian believes that with the promising partnership of Alliance Global and Star Cruises, both the Entertainment City Manila and Newport City will become a source of optimism and pride for the Philippines.



Retail Perspective