

China's tropical golfing paradise beckons as Asia Golf Tourism Convention heads to Mission Hills Haikou in 2014

13 May 2013

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Asia's golf tourism industry will be gathering on China's tropical island of Hainan next spring as the region's most important golf tourism convention moves to award-winning golf resort Mission Hills Haikou.

The baton for the 3rd Asia Golf Tourism Convention was passed to China at a signing and hand-over ceremony on the final day of AGTC 2013, held at the Royal Cliff Hotel and PEACH Convention Centre in Thailand's leading golf destination, Pattaya.

An agreement to host the event, which is organised by global golf tourism industry association IAGTO (International Association of Golf Tour Operators), was signed by IAGTO President Peter Walton and Mission Hills Group Vice Chairman Tenniel Chu, who also signed on behalf of the Haikou government, the third partner in AGTC 2014, before exchanging gifts with Itthiphol Kunplome, Mayor of Pattaya City, to mark the official hand-over as host.

Addressing delegates, Tenniel Chu said: "It has always been Mission Hills' vision to promote the goodwill through golf and we intend to advance with time and inspire happy, healthy and harmonious lifestyles and experiences for all. It was also a great opportunity to meet with business acquaintances, old friends and also the chance to make the new ones."

Xie Jing, Vice Mayor of Haikou City, Hainan's capital, commented: "It is a great honor that IAGTO has decided to move the 2014 Asian Golf Tourism Convention to Mission Hills Haikou, in China. This will have an enormous impact on Hainan's strategy to develop as an international tourism Island. Hainan Island is situated in China's tropical belt. As such it enjoys a wonderful tropical climate, with year round sunshine and fresh sea air. It really is a world class golfing destination."

Sharing some statistics from the Mayor, Chu revealed that in 2011, Hainan Province saw more than 30 million tourist arrivals while tourism revenue grew 24% from the previous year to US\$4.3 billion. In 2012, visitor numbers to the island exceeded 33 million, with travel revenue hitting US\$6 billion.

“Hainan is on track to become one of the world’s leading tourist resort destinations by 2021” said Chu. He added: “With the conference taking place in Haikou, I am sure the international tour operators and service providers will enjoy and experience the exceptional services, unique lava rock golf courses and other fully-integrated facilities of Mission Hills Haikou.

“We believe that the conference will also serve to enhance Haikou's international reputation and will help further the city's goal of becoming the leading international destination of golf tourism.

AGTC delegates were also shown a presentation underlining the continuing growth of Mission Hills Haikou since its opening in 2010. Offering 10 courses set in a lava landscape as well as world largest Spa and Mineral Hot Spring resort accredited by Guinness World Records, the resort will see the opening of the Lan Kwai Fong entertainment district at the end of the year, while future plans include the addition of Ritz-Carlton, Renaissance and Hard Rock hotels and the new Mission Hills • Huayi Brothers • Feng Xiaogang Movie-Themed Town.

IAGTO’s Peter Walton is also excited about Mission Hills Haikou hosting AGTC 2014. He said: “Last year, we took the inaugural AGTC to Malaysia with the intention of waking the sleeping giant that the country as a golf destination represents; the number of IAGTO golf tour operators selling Malaysia has increased by 40% in the subsequent 12 months.

“This year, AGTC was staged in Thailand, the strongest and most important golf destination of the Asia Pacific region, which attracted the attention of the golf tourism world with attendance increasing by 18%.

“Taking the 3rd AGTC to China in 2014 is an incredibly exciting step for IAGTO because in one fell swoop we will be able to showcase the fastest developing golf and tourism destination in the Asia-Pacific region while simultaneously introducing sellers from across the region to the largest-ever gathering of golf travel buyers from the world’s fastest-growing outbound tourism market – China.

“Mission Hills Haikou is the perfect venue for this event, representing as it does a complete golf destination in itself and the gateway to the international tourism island of Hainan with its enormous array of golf courses, topography and culture, all within a beautiful tropical setting.

“The buzz around the convention following the announcement of next year’s venue and destination for the 3rd AGTC was palpable and we are certain that it will surpass all expectations.”

AGTC 2014 takes place at Mission Hills Haikou from 31 March to 3 April, 2014.

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INFORMATION FOR THE EDITOR

IAGTO

Established in 1997, IAGTO is the global trade organisation of the golf tourism industry, and has over 500 golf tour operator members in more than 61 countries, which control more than 85% of golf holiday packages sold worldwide and which collectively have annual sales of over US\$2 billion. IAGTO runs a successful annual North America Convention, along with its annual Mid Year Convention and regular Destination Conventions. IAGTO established the International Golf Travel Market, now owned and operated by Reed Travel Exhibitions, in 1997 and the International Golf Travel Writers Association in 2000. It also runs the prestigious annual IAGTO Awards.

Mission Hills ▪ Hainan

Mission Hills Haikou lies in the volcanic region of exotic Hainan Island, China. Nestled amid lush, green gardens, it features 10 acclaimed tournament courses by Schmidt-Curley Design, each one incorporating the native lava rock formations.

In US GOLF Magazine, Lava Fields was named Best New International Course in 2011 and Blackstone named number two Best New International Course in 2010. Lava Fields ranked a World Top 100 course by Golf World in the UK and Asian Golf Monthly ranked Blackstone top course in China, and top championship course in Asia-Pacific.

Other resort offerings include 518 elegantly-designed guest rooms and suites, 29 elegant spa villas, a three-story clubhouse, state-of-the-art meeting facilities, 12 world-class restaurants, a fully-equipped sports and recreation centre, Hainan's only aquatic theme park, therapeutic volcanic mineral springs showcasing centuries-old bathing philosophies from five continents, a grandiose bamboo and volcanic rock constructed spa oasis, shopping arcade and many other facilities.

In 2012, Guinness World Records recognised Mission Hills • Haikou as the World's Largest Spa & Mineral Springs.

Construction has begun on a low-carbon-footprint town centre. It will be a hub for business, leisure, wellness, entertainment and cultural exchanges. Highlights include Mission Hills • Lan Kwai Fong • Haikou, a joint project with Hong Kong's Lan Kwai Fong (LKF) Group. It boasts 240,000sq m of shopping, entertainment, cultural and dining attractions. Several hotels will also be featured, among them Marriott International's Ritz-Carlton and Renaissance brands, and Hard Rock Hotel.

The new Mission Hills • Huayi Brothers • Feng Xiaogang Movie-Themed Town, with a grand opening scheduled in 2014, is destined to become a major entertainment and commercial district in Haikou. The 930,000sq m site will showcase six professional movie studios, as well as numerous dining, entertainment, shopping, cinema, cafe, bar and hotel facilities. The combination of iconic film elements and 24-hour dining and shopping districts will further establish Mission Hills Haikou as a leading business, entertainment, cultural and leisure destination in China.

Mission Hills Haikou has hosted several international profile tournaments including two editions of World Celebrity Pro-Am tournament, a ground-breaking celebrity pro-am golf tournament for Asia, the 56th World Cup of Golf in November 2011 and two editions of the World Ladies Championship. A magnificent addition to Hainan's tropical island paradise, Mission Hills Haikou is poised to become the island's premier sanctuary, attracting visitors from around the globe.

Getting There: Mission Hills Haikou is 15 minutes from Haikou Meilan International Airport (HAK). Flights from major cities throughout Asia -- including Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore -- to Haikou are available.

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