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BY GOING GREEN**

**CHOOSING RESORT MANAGEMENT: *THE HOW TOS***

**TRENDS: SPA + FOOD & BEVERAGE**

**HOW SHELL VACATIONS  
HOSPITALITY GETS THE BUSINESS**

**WATERPARK RESORTS: *SPECIAL REPORT***

# Southern Expansion



Tripp DuBois, vice president, Kor Group

**W**ith \$2.5 billion in assets, privately held Kor Group has integrated real estate, travel and hotel management under its corporate umbrella. A growth area for the California-based company is in luxury residences, especially condo-hotels. Another growth area is found south of the border, where Tripp DuBois, vice president, heads up operations. Recently, he took time to tell Resort + Recreation what he and Kor are up to, down there—and everywhere.

## **Please tell us about Kor Group.**

Kor has three brands. Tides and Viceroy are flagships for the Kor Hotel Group, and we also operate independently branded hotels. The leisure-focused Tides properties are luxury resorts located on coastal wonderlands such as South Beach and Playa del Carmen, Mexico. Viceroy is found in destinations like Santa Monica and Palm Springs. The Viceroy caters to a broader audience, while Tides is where couples go to reconnect and rejuvenate. It's more "Let's take yoga lessons together and talk about the rest of our lives."

While both brands will have great bars and food, The Viceroy is more about these exciting drinking and dining venues. Guests can still retreat to the peace and quiet of their rooms but it's more for people who want to be excited by the hotel. Kor Hotels also operates what we call Urban Retreats like the Maison 140 and Avalon in Beverly Hills.

## **What makes a Kor Hotel different from other hotels?**

What we're offering is creative design, intuitive service, wellness opportunities and exciting food and beverage options. We want our staff to understand and anticipate our guests' needs.

By wellness, I mean that we want to enhance a guest's lifestyle. We want guests and owners to learn new things or try new techniques when they stay at our properties – whether it's being pampered at the spa with a new treatment or taking yoga.

## **More hotel projects are including an ownership component, whether it's traditional real estate, fractional/PRCs, or condo hotels. How will this play out at KOR properties?**

It all depends on the destination and the opportunity. We have to look at the financial models to determine what types of product to offer at various properties. When you're looking at financing a project, the condo-hotel model makes sense because you're able to pre-sell a percentage of the project, starting the revenue stream much earlier than you would with a traditional hotel.

For our buyers, the condo-hotel concept makes a lot of sense. They're able to generate sufficient income to support effortless ownership. Along with that, they get five-star service. Generally speaking, most vacation homes are used just 25 days a year; with our plan they can use it up to 60 days a year.

## **Your newest project is the Viceroy Mayakoba, which you seem to very excited about. What's special there?**

First, it's the only five-star resort on the Riviera Maya and you're surrounded by a lush tropical reserve and sandy white beaches. Owners and guests will have access to a Greg Norman Championship Golf Course, great cuisine, and outstanding, personalized service. With convenient access to the airport in Cancun, it's easy to get here and feel that you're miles away from the ordinary.

## **Is Kor planning continued expansion in Mexico?**

Yes, we're developing the Villa del Sol and a Viceroy adjacent.

## **Are most of your buyers Americans?**

Although 35 percent of tourism is European, 65 percent of our buyers are from the United States, 20 percent are Mexicans, 10 percent are Canadians, and just 5 percent are European—so far.

## **Are the regulations regarding condo hotel sales in Mexico the same as in the states?**

Actually, it's not regulated the same way, but for U.S. and Canadian buyers, we follow the same laws they have at home. With Mexican buyers, you can discuss income potential, but we don't.

## **What trends is Kor plugged into?**

Eco-sensitivity and awareness are important to us. We will be watching our long-term energy costs, our water treatment and our impact on the local community. We don't want to be straining local resources. We'll also incorporate organic foods and beverages procured near the source into our beverage and dining selections.

--Judy Kenninger