

# Protea driving expansion into Africa

As part of its \$130-million African expansion drive, the Protea Hospitality Group is to build its fourth hotel in Hoima, Uganda, in the centre of the Albertine Rift Valley's oil exploration, extraction and processing region.

Construction is due to start in the third quarter of this year and the new hotel will take about two years to complete. Stuart Cook, managing director of Protea Hotels Uganda, says Protea's rapid expansion has been driven by the demand for hotel accommodation from business travellers flowing into the country.

According to Protea Hospitality CEO Arthur Gillis, the group hoped to expand "substantially" in Uganda in the next decade and also plans to increase its presence in Nigeria and Zambia.

In May, Marriott International announced plans for two new hotels in Addis Ababa; the first, Marriott Executive Apartments is due to open next year and the new Courtyard Hotel will open in 2015.

According to Alex Kyriakidis, president of Marriott International Middle East and Africa, the group was focusing its growth on Ethiopia, Benin, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria and Rwanda, with a number of new properties scheduled to open over the next five years.

Last month, The Rezidor Hotel Group, which operates brands such as Radisson Blu, opened its first hotel in Côte d'Ivoire. Rezidor president Kurt Ritter said the African continent was one of the group's focus areas for future business. Rezidor currently operates 47 hotels in 21 countries across the continent,

Source: *Business Day* via I-Net Bridge.