
Marriott Brazil Wants Muslims to Feel at Home and Offers Mecca Compass

Contributed by Alexandre Rocha
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Eyeing Arab clients Marriott Brazil chain is offering in its luxury hotels exclusive services to Muslims. The differentiated services are provided in the JW Marriott, in Rio de Janeiro, and at Renaissance, in São Paulo, said the account manager at the hotel in Rio de Janeiro, Rodrigo Canto.

According to him, on making the reservation, the guest may identify himself as Muslim and ask for the services. They include items like an arrow and a compass showing the direction of Mecca so that the faithful may guide his movements at prayer time, the availability of a copy of the Koran, the offering of teas and of machinery to prepare the drink, largely consumed by the Arabs, and, in case the client requires, the removal of all alcoholic beverages from the fridge in the room.

JW Marriott also plans, according to Canto, to offer Arab subscription TV channels. "Our objective is to cause the guest who has already stayed at the hotel to return, as it is a specific service that is not offered by any other hotel in Rio de Janeiro," he said.

"The profile of Arab visitors is the same as that of all of our other clients, who want differentiated services from a hotel with fantastic infrastructure," he added.

According to him, JW Marriott is the chain's "six star" unit. Canto added that the hotel started making available services for Muslims in 2006.

The Sales and Marketing director at JW Marriott, Carolina Méscolin, explained that she recently participated in the Arabian Travel Market, a fair in the tourism sector that takes place in Dubai, and said that he sees a great opportunity in expanding the presence of Arab guests at chain hotels in Brazil.

"The (Emirates Airline) flight greatly helps open the market, but it is necessary to generate interest among clients," she said, after participating in the "Brazil-United Arab Emirates Bilateral Seminar," at the offices of the National Trade Confederation (CNC), in Rio. According to Méscolin, currently, among the favorite destinations for Arab tourists are countries like Malaysia, Egypt, France and Great Britain.

Méscolin added that the Marriott chain has four hotels in Brazil. Apart from the JW Marriott and Renaissance, the company also counts on another two units in São Paulo.

The Middle East, however, is one of the regions where the chain is growing most. According to her, the company has six

hotels in Dubai, a figure that should rise to 15 by 2011. Worldwide there are around 3,000 units in 69 countries.

Service

JW Marriott

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