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## Bazarian Intl. to build hotel at Club Med



By Matthew Taylor

Bazarian International is to develop the former Club Med site for the luxury Park Hyatt hotel chain, Premier Ewart Brown announced yesterday.



The \$294 million project, due to be ready by Spring 2011, will feature 100 rooms and suites,

swimming pools, tennis courts, five restaurants and bars and an 18-hole golf course designed by Nick Faldo.

The development will also include 140 condos, some of which will be available for hotel guests as well as 40 fractional ownership units. Dr. Brown said a Bill will be brought to Parliament in the coming term setting down the terms of the deal.

He said: "It is a new day in tourism and it is exciting to know that we are delivering on the promise of turning tourism around for the people of Bermuda."

Carl Bazarian, President of Bazarian International, said: "This is one of Bermuda's most precious locations and, by being redeveloped to the highest standard and branded with a world-renowned international hotel brand, will become the catalyst for Bermuda's resurgence as the premier island resort destination in North America and the Caribbean."

Bazarian International also announced it has reached an agreement with the Park Hyatt hotel chain — voted by Global Traveler as the 'Best International Hotel Chain' for the past four consecutive years — as the operator and brand for the development. Dr. Brown said: "Today represents a concrete step toward the transformation of a dormant property into to a five star dream site of which Bermuda can be very proud.

"The Park Hyatt brand has the ability to generate excitement worldwide and that is exactly what we are looking for."

He said Mr. Bazarian and his company Bazarian International are major developers in the Caribbean region of eye-catching, first class tourism products and the company had partnered with such brands as Ritz-Carlton and Four Seasons.

Mr. Bazarian said the design for the Park Hyatt St. George's Resort would be elegant and traditional with "a little bit of modern".

It will have low rise units in clusters with a maximum of three-storeys. Every unit will have an ocean view.

"He said there was a heavy investment in meeting space, spa and golf to help ensure its year-round use.

The hotel will run boats into St. George's for shopping trips with Mr. Bazarian saying there would be few commercial outlets on the site.

The hotel will be marketed in the others operated by the Park Hyatt chain, which is in 44 countries, said Mr. Bazarian who added that Park Hyatt had three working groups involved with the project with another one due in Bermuda next week.

The Club Med hotel has been empty for 20 years and Bazarian is the third developer to be touted by Government as its saviour in recent years and the Premier admitted it had become a symbol of the "former state of tourism in Bermuda".

Dr. Brown added: "In the past, we have had expressions of interest; periods of exclusivity; grand conceptual plans and even promises of branded partnerships.

"Today, in keeping with the positive achievements this Government has made in reversing the decline in Bermuda's tourism I am pleased to announce that we have arrived at a Master Development Agreement with Bazarian International for the development of the site of the former Club Med in St. George's.

"Today represents the most concrete step toward the transformation of a national eyesore to a five star, dream site of which Bermuda and the people of the East End in particular can be very proud."

Asked about whether anything had been signed on financing, Mr. Bazarian said once the master development agreement and lease was in place he was very confident of concluding a deal with two major banks.

"I have never failed in raising financing in the Caribbean, Central America or Latin America." And he said Bazarian had already spent significant development funds to make the project reality.

At yesterday's press conference the Premier admitted no lease had been signed but, he added: "We expect to do that today."

He could not say how much rent would be charged by Government but he said: "I will make sure that (information) is made available."

The Premier said he believed it would be 131-year lease and it will have to be approved by Parliament. Late yesterday the Premier's press spokesman Glenn Jones released a statement saying the Master Development Agreement had now been signed.

Mr. Jones added: "The leases have been agreed and technical officers will carry out their final review of them tomorrow morning with a view to them being executed immediately thereafter.

"It's important to note that the Legislature's support is essential in this effort because a special Act is required. It will be historic legislation, that's why the Premier called for bipartisan support.

"We've seen other travel destination countries lose landmark tourism deals as a result of partisanship in Parliament."

A Government press release quoted Mark Hoplamazian, president and chief executive officer of Global Hyatt Corporation, as saying: "We are delighted to be considered part of this landmark opportunity at this beautiful and historic site. The cultural and historical relevance of St. George's, coupled with the vision of the partners involved, will make this one of the world's most interesting and breathtaking resort destinations."

Mr. Bazarian added: "Not only is Nick Faldo a legendary player and wonderful ambassador for the game, he is also an exceptional golf course designer. We have no doubt that he and his architects will create something very special in St George's."

What's promised:

- a luxury Park Hyatt hotel with 100 rooms and suites
  - a 12,000 square-foot spa and fitness centre
  - a beach club
  - swimming pools
  - tennis courts
  - five restaurants and bars
  - extensive meeting and function space
  - a staff housing facility.
  - an 18-hole Nick Faldo Signature golf course (to be developed on the site of the existing St. George's Golf Club)
  - 140 Park Hyatt-branded condominiums (a portion of which will be available for use as transient hotel accommodation)
- and 40 luxury Hyatt Residence Club fractional ownership units.
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