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## Finest readies Playa Mujeres debut

By Gay Nagle Myers

Finest Resorts is the newest brand to join Excellence Group Luxury Hotels & Resorts, owner and operator of Excellence Resorts and Beloved Hotels on Mexico's Caribbean coast and one Excellence property in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

The 450-suite Finest Playa Mujeres will debut in April 2015 in Playa Mujeres, 25 minutes north of Cancun, not far from the 109-room Beloved Hotel and the 452-room Excellence property, both in Playa Mujeres.



*A rendering of the Finest Playa Mujeres, scheduled to open in April 2015.*

"The Finest resort will be a mix between our two other brands," said Domingo Aznar, vice president of sales and marketing.

"All our properties are all-inclusive and are geared to the luxury traveler. The Excellence resorts are adults-only, while the Beloved Hotel is a boutique property, which is rare for the Cancun area, and focuses on spa and relaxation for couples but also welcomes families with small children," he said.

The target audience for Finest Playa Mujeres is "vacation guests of all ages," according to Aznar, who noted that 20% of the resort's suites would be set aside for couples.

The newbuild Finest, now under construction, will offer a variety of room categories, suited to different market segments.

"Our suites are very large, ranging in size from 800 square feet to 3,400 square feet in our four Imperial suites," he said.



*A rendering of a junior suite at Finest Playa Mujeres. Rooms will range in size from 800 to 3,400 square feet.*

The family suites will include a connecting room for children; many of the rooftop suites will have a terrace with a plunge pool, while the pool units on the ground floor will each have a private pool and gardens and the 60 swim-up suites will connect with one of the resort's larger pools.

Kids' amenities will include a playground, special menus and activity programs.

"Finest Playa Mujeres will offer a respite for couples, families and small groups to celebrate and enjoy time together with amenities, activities and accommodations that are designed especially for them," Aznar said.

Resort facilities will include the Excellence Club for those 18 and older, the Finest Club for guests of all ages, nine dining options (eight of the nine restaurants will be a la carte), 10 pools, a fitness center, meetings facilities, concierge services and a spa.

"The Excellence Group competes with a number of high-end resorts in the Cancun and Riviera Maya area, but we believe our high service standards set us apart from our competition," Aznar said. "Demand is healthy for all of us, and we are well-positioned for the luxury market."

The 440-room Excellence Riviera Cancun recently increased seating capacity at its four restaurants, opened a take-away snack bar serving wood oven pizzas and added Nespresso coffee machines in its Club rooms and paddle boarding to its water sports options.

Beloved also offers Nespresso machines in the guestrooms as well as a kids' menu in its four restaurants, several lounges, a juice bar with crepes and waffles, three pools, a spa and land and water sports.

The next project for Excellence Resorts is Oyster Bay near Montego Bay. The resort plans to have a number of over-the-water bungalows, but no timeline has been set for opening.

The 452-room Excellence Punta Cana recently redid all guestrooms and added four honeymoon suites with rooftop decks and plunge pools.

Its ninth and newest restaurant features a tapas menu.

Although the past winter season was challenging, with cancellations due to winter storms in the U.S. and Canada, "we had a very good season, welcomed many repeat guests and are anticipating a strong summer," Aznar said.

Excellence Group relies heavily on agents, its main booking channel.

"We have no formal specialist program for agents at this time, but we work closely with our key agents and have solid relationships with our partners," Aznar said.

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