



Marriott Expands Weddings Service - 1,200 Marriott Managers Complete Company's Wedding Planner Certification Program

Marriott Also to Launch Weddings Help Desk and Dedicated Web Site

WASHINGTON, Apr 20, 2004 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX/ -- Marriott International, Inc. (NYSE: MAR) today launched the most extensive weddings resource and service in the lodging industry. The company has trained 1,200 of its managers as "Marriott certified wedding event planners" to design and assist with a broad range of weddings, including cultural, religious, ethnic and military weddings, at its Marriott and Renaissance hotels. Marriott's wedding services will be enhanced later this month with a new toll-free weddings help desk, followed by the introduction of a dedicated weddings web site in May.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20030605/MARRIOTTLOGO>)

"Globally, the number of wedding events at Marriott and Renaissance properties grew approximately 10 percent over the past two years, and more than half of our hotels report a significant increase in ethnic, multicultural and military weddings," said Robin Uler, senior vice president, food, beverage and retail, Marriott International. "Annually, weddings and wedding-related business generate property revenues of approximately \$300 million for the company's full-service hotels."

According to Conde Nast Bridal Infobank, approximately 2.3 million couples are expected to marry in the U.S. alone and will spend on average a total of \$22,000 on their weddings and receptions. Approximately 71 percent of all wedding receptions take place in a hotel, country club or catering facility.

More couples are also traveling to get married, choosing destination and resort venues that provide unique and sometimes exotic backdrops for weddings, as well as transforming the event into a vacation for family and friends. Marriott offers the most resorts and spas in the lodging industry.

"We understand the important role our hotels play in planning and hosting weddings and have developed a full range of services to meet the needs of these special customers," said John Marriott, executive vice president, lodging, Marriott International. "The weddings business continues to grow and change, and our wedding event managers are incredibly well trained and equipped to create truly memorable experiences. Weddings are an opportunity to build trust and loyalty with our guests that last a lifetime."

"Marriott's certified wedding event planners" have been trained to assist with a variety of wedding ceremonies and receptions, including ethnic and multicultural weddings, which has greatly expanded the weddings market for the company. Marriott wedding event planners are also a helpful resource and point of contact for independent wedding planners who utilize the hotel's banquet space and catering services.

"Each 'Marriott certified' planner has completed specially designed course work and passed a 50-point test that covers a variety of wedding protocols and etiquette, as well as culinary and decorating trends," said Uler. "Our planners can suggest custom menus and flowers, help book music, develop room design and decor for indoor and outdoor ceremonies, and assist with related events, including the rehearsal party, wedding brunch, honeymoon and anniversaries. Their services are available at no additional charge for wedding events booked at Marriott and Renaissance hotels."

Just in time for the spring wedding season, the company will also introduce a toll-free weddings hotline and help desk to provide information and tips on wedding planning and to assist couples with researching Marriott and Renaissance locations and services. Representatives will be available seven days a week to serve as a resource on wedding trends, protocols, menu ideas, how to calculate costs, scheduling, etc. If the couple settles on a location, the representative will refer them to the appropriate Marriott or Renaissance certified wedding event planner.

In May, Marriott will introduce a newly designed weddings web site that walks the couple through the planning process start to finish. The site will offer a variety of suggestions and ideas from the company's top wedding event planners; feature couple testimonials; showcase striking visuals of venues, table settings and floral arrangements; and highlight trends and unique touches to personalize any wedding. Couples will be able to search locations and request space and room availability to book their event at any Marriott or Renaissance property.

Members of Marriott Rewards, the company's loyalty program, can also earn points for their wedding by taking advantage of Marriott's Rewarding Events. A substantial number of points can be earned based on qualified charges, including the wedding room block, banquet space, catering, flowers, audiovisual and staging. Points can be redeemed for the couple's honeymoon or

free vacations at more than 2,400 Marriott International hotels worldwide. Details on Marriott's Rewarding Events are available at MarriottRewards.com.

Outside of North America, wedding couples and their families will find similar wedding planning services offered at most JW Marriott, Marriott and Renaissance properties. Several hotels, such as the Costa Rica Marriott in San Jose, the Guam Marriott Resort & Spa, the Renaissance Kuala Lumpur and the Marriott St. Pierre Hotel and Country Club in Wales, also feature on-property wedding chapels.

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, INC. (NYSE: MAR) is a leading worldwide hospitality company with over 2,700 lodging properties in the United States and 67 other countries and territories. Marriott International operates and franchises hotels under the Marriott, JW Marriott, The Ritz-Carlton, Renaissance, Residence Inn, Courtyard, TownePlace Suites, Fairfield Inn, SpringHill Suites and Ramada International brand names; develops and operates vacation ownership resorts under the Marriott Vacation Club International, Horizons, The Ritz-Carlton Club and Marriott Grand Residence Club brands; operates Marriott Executive Apartments; provides furnished corporate housing through its Marriott ExecuStay division; and operates conference centers. The company is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and has approximately 128,000 employees. For more information or reservations, please visit the web site at www.marriott.com.

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