

Kurt Ritter receives Lifetime Achievement Award at the Worldwide Hospitality Awards ceremony in Paris

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Kurt Ritter, President & CEO of The Rezidor Hotel Group, has received the Lifetime Achievement Award 2008, on the occasion of the prestigious Worldwide Hospitality Awards – organized by HTR Magazine and MKG Group – celebrated on November 18 in Paris. Kurt Ritter was awarded for his long-time and successful career at the helm of Rezidor which he turned into one of the fastest growing hotel companies worldwide.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was introduced by the Worldwide Hospitality Awards last year only and is dedicated to senior leaders in the hospitality industry. The candidates, selected by the editorial team of HTR Magazine, are reviewed by the Advisory Board of the Hospitality Awards. They have to show an outstanding personal commitment to their role, a long record of achievements measurable in terms of dynamic business development and financial results, and social responsibility. "For all these reasons, Kurt Ritter was largely selected to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award 2008", said Georges Panayotis, Founder of the Hospitality Awards & CEO of MKG.

Kurt Ritter was born in Switzerland in 1947 and learned the meaning of providing guests with attentive service as a child in his parents' hotel. After completing his education at the "Ecole Supérieure de Commerce du Canton de Vaud," he went on to graduate from the prestigious Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. His first position took him to the Hotel Bellevue Palace in Bern as Assistant Manager.

He held a variety of positions at Ramada International Hotels in Belgium, France, Germany and Sweden. In 1976 he was appointed General Manager of the SAS Lulea Hotel in Sweden, before taking up a similar position at the SAS Kuwait Hotel in 1979. In 1984 he was promoted Vice President Middle East for SAS International Hotels (SIH) and moved to Singapore. In 1988, Kurt Ritter became Vice President & COO and returned to Europe, where he was appointed President & CEO of SIH in 1989.

In 1994, SIH signed a Master Franchise Agreement with Radisson Hotels Worldwide, which led to the company's name being changed to Radisson SAS Hotels & Resorts. In 2001, the company was renamed Rezidor SAS Hospitality. In September 2002, Kurt Ritter signed an agreement with Carlson Hotels Worldwide to develop the Country Inn, Park Inn and Regent brands in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. In November 2005, he signed a worldwide license agreement with the Italian fashion house Missoni, to develop and operate a lifestyle hotel brand of the same name: Hotel Missoni.

Since November 2006, Rezidor is listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchanges and features today more than 350 hotels with more than 74,500 rooms in operation and under development in 53 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Kurt Ritter will continue to head Rezidor until February 2012 and further focus on dynamic, high potential markets like Russia & CIS and the Middle East & Africa. At the same time Rezidor is continuing to further build on its asset-light strategy by concentrating on management and franchise contracts. Kurt Ritter's vision is to further grow the group's high quality and profitable portfolio with a highly skilled multi-national team who are committed to the group's service vision "Yes I Can!". Kurt Ritter is married to Lara Ritter, has three children and lives in Brussels.