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The Emperor, Beijing opens its doors on April 18 as the first urban member of Design Hotels™ in China

Berlin/Beijing, February 15, 2008 (rg). With only a few months before the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and the anticipated influx of athletes and tourists to the city, the first member of Design Hotels™ in the People's Republic of China is set to open its doors on April 18. The 55-room hotel, The Emperor, is located adjacent to the former Imperial Palace of the Forbidden City, an acclaimed UNESCO world heritage



site. Nestled in an old tree-lined avenue among traditional Chinese temples and houses, the hotel offers a tranquil respite from the hectic city pace of Beijing though located in its geographic centre. The opening rates begin at 110 Euros.

The building of The Emperor was the former premises of the Qinghua University Alumni and features a classical Chinese brick façade and roof. Beijing Dacheng Yongan Zhiye Co. Ltd., developed the building into a hotel project with their international partners. The architecture of the cutting-edge design hotel was developed by renowned interior designers GRAFT, with international offices in Berlin, Los Angeles and Beijing. The project's brand and concept creation, and pre-opening operational development were created by restaurant and hotel development consultancy Walter Junger & Friends, Ltd. with offices in Berlin and Singapore.

The English name **The Emperor** was specially chosen: on one hand, it refers to the former imperial residence, the Forbidden City, home to Emperors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. On the other hand, the name alludes to the individualised service afforded to every guest - an experience worthy of an Emperor.

The choice of names and their meanings for all areas of the hotel was also based on underlining the philosophy of hospitality and design. The harmony in the relationship between traditional Chinese culture and modern design is the secret that allows the guest to learn all about its facets.

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SHI means *Food* and is the name of the Chinese restaurant. The all-day dining restaurant is an ideal setting for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and features an integrated bar which transforms into a Beijing hotspot in the evening. Chef John Hao is responsible for this culinary jewel. He has worked in the famous Green T. House and is a leading member in traditional Chinese associations, such as the China Cuisine Association and the China Association of Health-Protection Food. Chef Hao also leads the research institute "Longxing Hotel Management", known for the promotion of talented Chinese chefs.

His creative cuisine combines traditional Chinese basic elements with modern presentation. A highlight of the menu in SHI is the eight specialty dishes, each inspired by their imperial heritage.

A selection of exceptional Chinese vintage rice wines collected from all over the country are stored underground in various locations of the restaurant, covered by a transparent glass floor. Each wine is presented with a special ceremony that shows the traditional procedure as it was historically done. The wines are offered for limited sampling and sale and are complemented by an international selection of quality wines and spirits.

Individual guests of SHI can dine on a diagonal long table, where games, architectural books and design magazines are provided for entertainment, or use as well the table's area along the glass windows in a more traditional solution with friends and family. In addition, spacious bed-like seating in the lounge bar area, divided by opaque curtains, offer the perfect ambience for a late glass of wine or a drink while enjoying the music played by a guest DJ.

YIN, the bar of The Emperor, means *Drink* and is one of the most breathtaking locations in Beijing. It is located on the rooftop of the hotel and offers unrivalled views of the Jingshan Hill pavilions and the Forbidden City. The bar will be open from April to October and the menu will feature specially created cocktails, along with a Crêpe menu offering sweet and savoury delicacies, with a Chinese touch.

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Together with fashion events and art exhibitions a daily highlight of the hotel will also be the "Raising of the Lanterns" ritual at sunset on the roof terrace, which overlooks the Forbidden City. A signature anthem will further enhance the sparkling mood. This ceremony also marks the transformation of YIN into a club lounge under the stars.

YUE signifies *Joy* and aptly describes the hotel spa and wellness area. The all-glass enclosure, also located on the roof terrace, offers amazing views of the surrounding area. A reflecting pool, two massage rooms, a chill-out area and a fitness centre, fulfil the demands of international travellers. The highest point of the roof is reserved for the hotel's Jacuzzi and offers relaxation at the "highest" level - in summer as well as when snowfall blankets the city.

The business facilities at The Emperor are also tailored to the guests needs. The main meeting room located on the rooftop for 20 persons can be used as a private event space while enjoying the roof bar atmosphere. Both, on the first and second floors, there are private meeting spaces interconnected with the rooms.

Events as well can be held at the restaurant area within a private dining room for up to 15 persons.

The boutique **JING**, synonymous with *Exquisite*, offers a modern interpretation of a Chinese arts and craft store, in synergy with the hotel locale around which a cluster of Chinese handicrafts and artisan workshops flourished. Housed in the antique guardhouse of the building, YING also offers design articles, traditional Chinese crafts and the hotel's private collection.

Along the guestroom hallways, specially shaped sofa niches offer a variety of music selection from all over the world together with classical Chinese music. This private oasis offers a short relaxing break where guests can also watch on an LCD screen up to date information about Beijing hotspots, historic details, hotel's concept and some other little secrets.

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The **rooms** are unique for the almost "floating" interiors. All furnishings are connected to each other by an invisible line, appearing as if the wall flows into the bed, continuing into the sofa and finally to the desk. The prevailing colour in all rooms is white, highlighted with fiery orange, lime green, deep ocean blue as well as slate grey. Each installation features a roofline of the Forbidden City silhouette, once again connecting modern design with the traditional symbolism. A wall-mounted flat screen television can be adjusted for viewing from multiple areas of the room. The television also offers six in-house music channels in different genres and an USB connection for guests' portable music players. Room rates include breakfast and wireless internet access.

Project developer, Mr. LIU Shao Jun, is proud of this new hotel, "I am very excited that we have created such a unique hotel with our international partners and are setting a benchmark in the boutique hotel and restaurant industry in Beijing and all of China. Not only will global visitors feel welcome at our hotel, but domestic travellers will also have an opportunity to experience a new style of hospitality. Our sincere wish is for SHI, YIN and indeed The Emperor, to become the favoured gathering place for the residents and visitors of our beautiful city."

Reservations can be made via www.theemperor.com.cn as well as via www.designhotels.com.

Design Hotels™

Design Hotels™ represents and markets a hand-picked collection of 170 hotels in 41 countries across the globe. Established in 1993, as the first of its kind, the company offers unparalleled specialist knowledge from conceptual branding through to market trend consultancy and international representation.

The member hotels are independently owned but united by a commitment to individuality, progressive design and cultural authenticity. Design Hotels™ embody the most advanced ideas in the hospitality industry and offer cosmopolitan travellers new options for both travel and inspiration.

Design Hotels™ provides services ranging from public relations and marketing to global sales and revenue & distribution management. As of 2007 the company has an expanded service portfolio to include consultation in hotel development.

The company has its headquarters in Berlin and branches in London, Barcelona, New York, Singapore, Bali and Tokyo.

NEWS

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