



The Circa 39 Hotel in Miami Beach is part of Desires Hotels' new podcast initiative.

Desires Gives Traveling Guests More Info With Podcasts

BY DENNIS NESSLER

MIAMI— As part of its ongoing effort to stay ahead of the technology curve and provide its guests with the latest amenities, Tecton Hospitality has several hotels in its boutique division, Desires Hotels, participating in a

new podcast initiative.

Through a link on the company's website, guests can download previously recorded information from a Desires hotel in the city they are traveling to directly to their iPod or MP3 players. The three- to five-minute podcast will provide informa-

tion on local events taking place in the coming week, as well as some more general information about the city.

Tecton's vp, sales and marketing Doug Carrillo, touted the benefits of the new medium that the company began tapping into last month.

"Podcasts have taken off as a way for consumers to get information," Carrillo said, adding that the company's challenge was to figure out "how do we use them and turn them into something that would be beneficial to our customers."

The hotels participating in the podcasts thus far include Hotel Astor and Circa 39 Hotel, both in Miami Beach, FL; The Glenn Hotel in Atlanta and the Water Club in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Carrillo did say that eventually Tecton may "look to advance podcasts to other cities."

The other properties Desires manages include the Sagamore Hotel, Aqua Hotel, Wave Hotel, the Betsy Ross Hotel and the Strand Ocean Drive, all in Miami Beach. It is also developing a hotel in New York, the Hotel La Mela, which is scheduled to open this summer.

"We said with our vacation/leisure customers it would be great if they could know something about the city they are going to," said Carrillo.

With many of its guests derived from Generation X, according to Carrillo, wireless solutions are essential for its portfolio of hotels. The podcasts, which are offered free to guests, can also be accessed through the use of laptops and cellular phones with wireless capabilities, he added.

From a cost standpoint, Carrillo reported the investment for the property is minimal. "It's an investment of time. Management has to go down and tape information on the audio file. All you need is a computer," he said.

In addition to ultimately increasing guest satisfaction, the company is also hoping to generate additional sales as a result of increased activity on its website.

"We want to turn the lookers into bookers," Carrillo said. He pointed out that the company is entering uncharted waters with this initiative. "I don't know of any other brand that has podcasts," he said.

The podcast program complements the Your Desires program, launched in February 2004, which guests can access online for a more personal experience, according to the company.