



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **IHG BOUTIQUE HOTEL SLATED FOR DOWNTOWN ATHENS, GA**

ATHENS, GA - July 11, 2007 – Atlanta-based Rialto Property Partners, LLC has announced plans to develop IHG's (InterContinental Hotels Group) [LON: IHG, NYSE: IHG (ADRs)], Hotel Indigo® in downtown Athens, Georgia. The Athens location will feature 100 luxury guestrooms. The Hotel Indigo in Athens will be managed by IHG's operations division, The Hotel Management Group, the fourth largest management company in North America.

Located at 500 College Avenue in downtown Athens, the future site of Hotel Indigo will encompass an entire city block and anchor the north end of the downtown district. Hotel guests will be able to access downtown shopping, restaurants and nightlife, as well as be within walking distance to the Classic Center, University of Georgia (UGA) campus and Sanford Stadium.

Because Hotel Indigo strives to reflect the cultural aspects of each city in which its franchises are located, the Athens location will embrace the rich music and arts scene for which the town is known. Works from local artists will be on display, and a music venue within the hotel will host local musicians. A future competition is planned for UGA Graphic Design students in the Lamar Dodd School of Art to design an Athens' music-themed mural for an exterior wall of the hotel.

"Hotel Indigo is a hotel experience like no other, as far as design, comfort and services," said Barry Rutherford of Rialto Property Partners. "We are very excited to introduce such a unique concept that will address the needs of the sophisticated traveler to Athens. We are also looking forward to incorporating in our hotel the distinctive attributes of a city that is considered by many to be at the center of modern musical innovation."

Boutique hotels, known for their intimate, luxurious environments in addition to personalized accommodations and services, have gained increasing popularity throughout North America. Hotel Indigo is known as the industry's first branded boutique hotel, artfully combining the conveniences and consistencies of a brand hotel with the design cache and service personality of a boutique at an affordable price. The new Hotel Indigo Athens will feature signature design elements including oversized lobby chairs, which create a personal work or dining space within the public areas of the hotel; The Golden Bean, an on-site restaurant and bar; cozy, airy and inviting guestrooms with plush bedding, vivid wall murals, hardwood-style flooring and spa-style showers; and a fitness studio with cardio equipment and free weights. The Hotel Indigo brand is expanding throughout North America, with eight locations open and 50 more in the development pipeline. The first Hotel Indigo opened in Atlanta in October 2004 and other openings have quickly followed in major cities including Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Ottawa and Scottsdale.

"As past surveys have shown, a good number of our customers desire upscale properties, so Athens as a destination should become more attractive as our inventory of upscale rooms increases," said Chuck Jones, Director of the Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Many of these people should appreciate the amenities and unique flavor that this boutique property will offer. In addition, more high-end rooms in downtown Athens will make us more competitive in attracting larger conventions, as well as groups of all sizes that demand upscale accommodations."

Rialto Property Partners is committed to building Hotel Indigo Athens in an environmentally responsible way and will work to achieve LEED (Leadership In Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, the nationally accepted green building rating system. In an effort to meet this goal, Rialto Property Partners has entered into a joint development partnership with Melaver, Inc., a third-generation family business based in Savannah, Georgia.

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Melaver, Inc. developed Abercorn Common in Savannah, the first all-retail LEED shopping center in the nation. The prestigious LEED certification is the internationally recognized standard for high performance, low water and energy use buildings. Melaver, Inc. is committed to energy efficient, sustainable development with each project they develop.

Often coined "Green Building," LEED-certified buildings increase water and energy efficiency, minimize waste, use building materials from sustainable and recycled sources, use environmentally friendly paints and varnishes, and maximize the number of windows to bring in natural daylight. LEED-certified buildings have reduced building operating costs and provide a healthier indoor environment, while conserving natural resources. "The design and construction process we endeavor to put into place asserts the commitment that Rialto has to the future of our environment and to the Athens community," stated Frederick L. Fine, CEO of Rialto Property Partners.

For more information or to be placed on an advanced reservation list for Hotel Indigo Athens, please contact Anna George at [annaahig@gmail.com](mailto:annaahig@gmail.com) or call 770.316.1820.

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#### **About Hotel Indigo**

The newest member of the IHG family, Hotel Indigo is the industry's first branded boutique hotel experience. It is uniquely designed to appeal to guests who desire affordable luxury, personal service and an alternative to traditional hotels without sacrificing any of the businesses amenities they have come to expect. Renewal is the soul of Hotel Indigo's retail-inspired design concept – thoughtful changes that are made throughout the year to keep the hotel fresh. Guestrooms feature signature murals, area rugs, fluffy duvets and slipcovers that will change periodically, while public spaces will be transformed seasonally through changing aromas, music, artwork, murals and directional signage. From relaxed café dining to high-style rooms – Hotel Indigo creates an intriguing, warm and inviting environment for guests. For more information on Hotel Indigo, please visit [www.hotelindigo.com](http://www.hotelindigo.com).

#### **About The Hotel Management Group**

IHG's The Hotel Management Group is the fourth largest management company in North America. As of March 31, 2007, IHG's management portfolio consists of more than 200 hotels and nearly 44,000 rooms with another 17 hotels and over 4,000 rooms in the pipeline. Recently, The Hotel Management Group launched Performance Advantage, its proprietary hotel management program which allows for adaptation of its management services and contract terms based on the needs of each individual property investor.

#### **Rialto Property Partners, LLC**

Rialto Property Partners, LLC specializes in bringing to market unique projects that are designed to take advantage of unaddressed opportunities in a variety of selected real estate markets. Rialto provides pre-development services, which include land acquisition, project conceptualization, and joint venture partner development. For more information, visit [www.rialtopropertypartners.com](http://www.rialtopropertypartners.com).

#### **Melaver, Inc.**

Melaver, Inc. is a third-generation, family-owned business based in Savannah, Georgia. The sustainable real estate company developed one of the first LEED certified buildings in the U.S., which is also on the National Historic Register. It also developed the first all-retail LEED shopping center in the country, Abercorn Common, which includes the first LEED McDonald's worldwide. Melaver, Inc. owns and manages properties in Atlanta, Augusta, Savannah, Huntsville and Birmingham. For more information, visit [www.melaver.com](http://www.melaver.com).



*Notes to Editors:*

InterContinental Hotels Group PLC (IHG) of the United Kingdom [LON:IHG, NYSE:IHG (ADRs)] is the world's largest hotel group by number of rooms. IHG owns, manages, leases or franchises, through various subsidiaries, over 3,700 hotels and more than 558,000 guest rooms in nearly 100 countries and territories around the world. IHG owns a portfolio of well recognized and respected hotel brands including InterContinental® Hotels & Resorts, Crowne Plaza® Hotels & Resorts, Holiday Inn® Hotels and Resorts, Holiday Inn Express®, Staybridge Suites®, Candlewood Suites® and Hotel Indigo®, and also manages the world's largest hotel loyalty program, Priority Club® Rewards with over 33 million members worldwide.

The company pioneered the travel industry's first collaborative response to environmental issues as founder of the International Hotels and Environment Initiative (IHEI). The IHEI formed the foundations of the Tourism Partnership launched by the International Business Leaders Forum in 2004, of which IHG is still a member today. The environment and local communities remain at the heart of IHG's global corporate responsibility focus.

IHG offers information and online reservations for all its hotel brands at [www.ihg.com](http://www.ihg.com) and information for the Priority Club Rewards program at [www.priorityclub.com](http://www.priorityclub.com).

For the latest news from IHG, visit our online Press Office at [www.ihg.com/media](http://www.ihg.com/media).