

PRESS RELEASE

**SOFITEL UNVEILS THE NEW LOOK OF THE ICONIC GRAND PLAZA BALLROOM**

**Manila, 6<sup>th</sup> of June, 2014** – After an extensive USD5 million investment, Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila’s Grand Plaza Ballroom will be unveiled this September 2014. The new design builds on the legendary elegance of the iconic venue, which has been the scene of countless memorable events since it first opened in 1976.

“The Grand Plaza Ballroom’s luxurious transformation will launch a new chapter and re-confirm Sofitel’s reputation as the preferred destination for meetings, milestones and grand events. The renovation will include the Ballroom, nine meeting rooms as well as a spectacular new winding staircase expected to set the new standard for magnificque events,” shares General Manager Adam Laker.

“We are constantly transforming the hotel to elevate the facilities throughout the property to the Sofitel level of luxury,” says Laker. “In the last few years we have launched our famous dining destination, Spiral, the lavish Imperial Residence as well as our recreational facilities including Le Spa and fitness center, So Fit.

“We are preparing for important events such as the APEC Summit taking place in 2015 and for this year our very own 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary,” Laker continues. “With its exquisite view of the Sofitel’s iconic poolside and lush gardens, framed by the waters of the Manila Bay, the Grand Plaza Ballroom remains truly one of a kind. All the meeting venues of Sofitel, from the new refurbished Grand Plaza Ballroom, to the nine meeting rooms, the two marquees – the Harbor Garden Tent and Sunset Pavilion, reflect the finest in Filipino design and craftsmanship combined with the best of timeless French elegance.”

**A Testament to History**

Since its opening in 1976, the Grand Plaza Ballroom has been home to numerous hosted events for heads of state, celebrity and high profile weddings and birthdays, local and international conventions, events of top multinational corporations, diplomatic functions, fashion shows, concerts and product launches. Among the memorable events that have taken place in the Grand Plaza Ballroom are the ADB President’s Reception, Club Bulakeno’s Annual Dinner Ball for the past 25 years, Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (POGS) Convention for 25 years and the Feast of Colours: A Gala Dinner with Chef Geoffrey Zakarian.

Among the enduring masterpieces by National Artist Leandro Locsin, the Grand Plaza Ballroom is a collaborative work between Locsin and Dale Keller with Spatial Lighting. Today, the Grand Plaza Ballroom is unrivaled as the only major hotel meeting venue that commands the magnificent view of the Manila Bay. The ballroom’s renovation is a collaboration with acclaimed architecture and interior design firm A. Ilustre and Associates.



“The original theme of the hotel was contemporary Filipino as reflected with the Tinalak-inspired patterns in the guest room interiors,” recounts Arch. Raul R. Locsin of Leandro V. Locsin & Partners, then Chief Architect during the design and construction of the hotel back in 1976. Southern patterns of Mindanao influenced the triangular geometric shape in most art forms displayed. The original Murano crystal chandeliers especially flown in from Italy will be preserved in luminous splendor with its 876 crystal teardrops to be set against a modern backdrop to enhance its luster.

### **The Best of Filipino Craftsmanship with the Touch of French Elegance**

Stunningly bold and creative pieces will be at play as the renovation features the innovative blend of artistry, indigenous materials and modern sensibilities. Grand entrances will be accentuated by a majestic architrave of 30 pillars and towering murals of local artistic interpretations of the three (3) major islands – Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. A modern journey through a cornucopia of natural elements from the country’s lush forest, the adorned Grand Plaza Ballroom will feature bamboo rings, bamboo, banana barks, onion skin, duldul seeds, coco palwa, guod, mahogany seeds, alpaco to tahong shells, coco shells and elephant seeds.

Reminiscent of 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture and design, palatial-style floor-to-ceiling veneer doors, handles akin to steel sculptures of the classic French scrolls and earth tones of reds, browns, oranges, golds and creams artistically scattered on carpet resonate the timeless French heritage throughout the opulent foyer.

Bound to be a major highlight and favorite setting for captured special moments is the grand 180-degree winding steel staircase leading up to a second level lit by a 7-tiered crystal lighting fixture. Designed to dramatically welcome guests, this ideal backdrop features intertwined patterns in matte gold finish with black Marquina granite inspired by French vineyards.

Ballroom elegance is redefined in the quintessential events destination this September as Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila ushers a new chapter in magnificent events.

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### **Sofitel, World Class Hotels & French Elegance**

Sofitel is the only French luxury hotel brand with a presence on five continents with 120 addresses, in almost 40 countries (more than 30,000 rooms). Sofitel offers contemporary hotels and resorts adapted to today’s more demanding and more versatile consumers who expect and appreciate beauty, quality and excellence. Whether situated in the heart of a major city like Paris, London, New York, Shanghai or Beijing, or nestled away in a country landscape in Morocco, Egypt, French Polynesia or Thailand, each Sofitel property offers a genuine experience of the French “art de vivre”.



***Sofitel Legend and Sofitel So are two labels that come to enrich Sofitel Luxury hotels.***

*Sofitel Legend hotels are iconic and mythical; they are often centuries-old listed heritage buildings: Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi, Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam and Sofitel Legend Old Cataract Aswan.*

*Sofitel So hotels are new « boutique hotels » characterized by a stylish focus on contemporary design by famous architects and/or embellished by international celebrities from the world of fashion, design or art: Sofitel So Mauritius Bel Ombre, Sofitel So Bangkok and Sofitel So Singapore (2013).*

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