

Havana will be re-launched as a renewed tourist destination

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The 500th anniversary of Havana will be the opportunity to relaunch the capital as a renewed and updated tourist destination, said Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz.

Marrero said in recent statements to the weekly magazine Opciones that they take advantage of major events to update the tourism product and make new investments that contribute to development, and the half a millennium of the town of San Cristobal is no exception.

He said that in the country are averaged about five thousand new rooms for this year, and in the case of the capital, from this time until next year, must be put into operation 12 new accommodation facilities.

Marrero Cruz commented that most will be small and medium buildings, using houses with heritage values, such as Portales de Paseo and others with tourism prospects given to them by the Government.

Now we are going through a process of recovery and transformation to convert them into hotels of medium-high standard, and are promoted works in several locations in the Siboney neighborhood, Miramar, as well as the so-called Blue Vedado, in the Plaza de la Revolución.

The development program itself will also allow, before November 2019, the opening in Old Havana of the Prado y Malecón hotel, the Gran Hotel, and the Cueto.

He commented that in Havana there are more than 12 thousand rooms, but more than half of them have a three-star category, which is why the new investments are aimed precisely at incorporating a very competitive hotel plant such as the Kempinski Manzana and the Packard.

The change of image is one of the most important processes in cities that celebrate closed number anniversaries, in the case of the capital highlights, above all, the large investment that is made in the recovery of heritage, he said.

He said that in the extra-hotel network there are several facilities that in one way or another renew their product, an aspect in which the Palmares Group works.

It is planned to repair units such as La Cecilia, El Floridita, La Bodeguita del Medio, El Gato Tuerto and La Ferminia, a very nice restaurant but with a not very competitive product, he said.

The restaurant Don Cangrejo will be transformed into a club of high level, with gastronomic service of high category, it has a magnificent swimming pool next to the sea, however today it is limited to some nocturnal activities and to the gastronomy, he explained.

He added that the technically closed La Giraldilla recreational centre will become a family, recreation and leisure product.

For the 500th anniversary of the city, the Ministry also proposed to rehabilitate the old discotheque of the Comodoro Hotel, which has been closed for many years.

Hacienda Guanabito, located in Guanabo, will have a total restoration that will include peasant houses and a stable that will allow customers to enjoy a Creole atmosphere.

He announced that there is a plan to transform tourist shops such as Primera and B, in the Vedado, and the Palacio de Artesanía, in the Historic Center.

In the case of the Marina Hemingway will continue the work, while in the Marina Tarará there is an extensive program that will promote the change of image and products, he said.

He added that the Tourism Plan for Havana's anniversary has around 40 actions of broad magnitude and interaction, either in the construction of facilities or in total transformations.

More than 50 percent of the visitors that arrive to the Island do so through the capital; practically Havana defines the image of tourism in Cuba, commented the Minister of Tourism.

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