

MEDIA

Havana lifestyle magazine debuts Dec. 8

After more than a year of planning, *The H* — a glossy bilingual English-language magazine printed in Spain — will finally make its debut on Dec. 8 at an inaugural party in the Cuban capital.

Billing itself as “Havana’s essential lifestyle magazine,” *The H* will be on newsstands by December, just in time for major cultural events such as the 26th Latin American Film Festival and the Havana Jazz Festival.

“Bravely going where no magazine in Havana has gone before, *The H* gives voice to the sights, sounds and styles that so many visitors overlook,” editor-in-chief Rómulo B. Sans told *CubaNews*. “Havana is so much more than long cigars and short rum.”

The first 25,000 commercial copies of *The H* are being made available by Ceiba Publications, a division of Ceiba Finance Ltd., a British investment fund based in the Channel Islands that has invested \$500,000 in the project.

The 164-page magazine, published in an unusual square format, boasts outstanding digital photography and paper quality of a type almost never seen in Cuba.

Sans said the magazine will be distributed throughout the U.S. and Cuba for \$9.95 per copy, and in Europe for 10 euros. Subscriptions will cost 25% off the cover price for four issues including postage, though these are only estimates since all prices are still being finalized.

The premier issue of *The H* contains everything from profiles of six of Havana’s brightest young acting stars, to exclusive fashion shooting by Johann Sauti of Hugo Boss, to the

definitive guide to Havana’s “in” places for eating, dancing and drinking.

And for extremist experience freaks who want to taste, wear, breathe and dream Havana, *The H* is supported by a growing family of websites —

www.themagazine.com (video and music downloads), theonline.com (weekly Havana listings), themusic.com (MP3 Havana) and a host of related products including *The H* wear, models, services, events, awards and film.

Says Sans: “Havana is the human zoo that everyone’s talking about, but it takes a magazine like *The H* to track down and capture the wildest urban living in the world.”

The H is being printed by Comgraphic S.A. of Barcelona, which Sans considers one of the best printers in Spain. Since it is not coming from Cuba, the magazine isn’t subject to restrictions under the U.S. embargo.

Details: Romulo Sans, Editor-in-Chief, *The H*, Calle Manuel Moreno 116, Vilassar de Dalt, 08339 Barcelona, Spain. Tel: +53 7 264-8181. E-mail: romulo.sans@themagazine.com.



Actress Juliet Cruz on H's cover.

TOURISM BRIEFS

MELIÁ TO INVEST \$12 MILLION IN CUBAN HOTELS

Spain’s Grupo Sol Meliá will invest \$12 million to renovate and enlarge its hotels throughout the island, according to Gabriel García, director of sales and marketing for Meliá’s Cuba division.

“This will permit us to maintain in top condition the 21 hotels and resorts we currently operate in Cuba,” said García, noting that Meliá now has 8,479 rooms containing 16,878 beds under its management.

García made his announcement during a presentation to a network of travel agencies that work with Mexico’s Taino Tours, which has generated over \$1.7 million in revenues for Meliá’s Cuban operations during the first eight months of 2004.

“Together with this magnificent partner, our goal is to reinforce our promotional efforts in the market, so that for Mexicans who travel to Havana, the Meliá chain will become, necessarily, their home away from home,” he said.

In Havana, Meliá runs three hotels with a combined 1,400 rooms: the Meliá Cohiba, the Meliá Habana and the Tryp Habana Libre.

CUBANACÁN, GRAN CARIBE MAKE TOP 100 INDEX

Cuba’s state-owned Grupo Cubanacán S.A. ranks 65th in this year’s survey of the world’s top 100 hotel chains by *Hotels* magazine — moving up from 69th place in 2002.

Another Cuban government entity, Gran Caribe S.A., moved up one notch, from 83rd to 82nd place. Both companies are among the largest hotel chains in Latin America, out-ranked only by Mexico’s Grupo Posadas.

In addition, Gaviota S.A. — which is run by Cuba’s armed forces — ranked 115th among the top 300 hotel groups in number of rooms; Gaviota didn’t make the 2002 list.

Among foreign hotel chains with properties in Cuba are France’s Accor (4th place), followed by Spanish conglomerates Sol Meliá (12th place) and NH Hotels (24th place).

Details: *Hotels Magazine*, 2000 Clearwater Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60544-8809. Tel: (630) 288-8260. URL: www.hotelsmag.com.

WRI: MOST CARIBBEAN CORAL REEFS IN DANGER

About two-thirds of coral reefs in the Caribbean “are directly threatened by human activities,” says a new report issued by the Washington-based World Resources Institute.

The WRI — saying the reefs need urgent protection — based its \$500,000 study on information from scientists, park managers and officials, mapping out perceived threats to reefs in places from Puerto Rico to Panama.

The study concluded reefs face multiple obstacles to survival, including coastal development, sediment-laden runoff and overfishing.

Cuba, on the other hand, has some of the healthiest coral reefs, along with Belize, Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico and the Bahamas.

Details: WRI, 10 G Street, NE, Suite #800, Washington, DC 20002. Tel: (202) 729-7600. Fax: (202) 729-7610. URL: www.wri.org.

HISTORICAL IMAGES OF CUBA NOW AVAILABLE ON CD-ROM



Beaufort Publishing Group has released a CD-ROM archive containing over 500 images of Cuba. The archive contains many historically important photos of key figures from the Cuban revolution, as well as countless images of ordinary Cubans in the early 1960s. Pricing information for the CD-ROM isn’t yet available. The archive was gathered by Deena Stryker in the process of writing a book about Fidel Castro, “When the Revolution Was Young,” which is also available from Beaufort. Details: Craig Johnson, Beaufort Publishing Group, 3026 Churchill Rd., Raleigh, NC 27607. Tel: (919) 420-0322. E-mail: info@beaufortpublishing.com. URL: www.beaufortpublishing.com.