

Get on your feet! Hotter than hot Latin pop stars Gloria and Emilio Estefan are adding their own Caribbean beat to a new development in Vero Beach, Florida | By Jim Butler



Hotel Lawyer in Florida. While Gloria Estefan's fans are anticipating the September 2007 release of her new Spanish-language album, 90 Millas, featuring original music inspired by her native Cuba -- the hotel industry is eagerly awaiting the opening of her new luxury resort, Costa d'Este in Vero Beach, Florida. Gloria and Emilio Estefan are not new to the hospitality industry -- they currently own 5 Cuban restaurants in Florida and Mexico, and the Cardozo Hotel in Miami. Their new mixed-use resort will include 94 hotel rooms, meeting space, a restaurant and spa. The resort is scheduled to open in January 2008, according to Benchmark Hospitality International, which will manage the property.

Gloria and Emilio Estefan are joining celebrities such as Andre Agassi, Magic Johnson, Shaquille O'Neal and Reggie Jackson - not to mention business gurus like Paul Allen, Steve Case, Bill Gates and Prince al Waleed - in lending their name or resources to lifestyle branding of resorts, condo hotels and other hotel mixed-use projects. Interestingly, the "personal brand master" himself, Donald Trump, hosted the news conference at the Trump Tower Building in 2004 when Gloria Estefan announced that her 2004 world tour would be her final one. Since then, the Estefans have continued to produce music, raise a family and involve themselves in many charitable causes while exploring ventures in the hospitality arena. (For a good recap of the celebrities in lodging, [click here.](#))

In previous posts here at www.HotelLawBlog.com, I have discussed some of the benefits of lifestyle hotels, including the unique lifestyle offering of the Hotel Valencia Santana Row that has achieved RevPAR penetration of more than 180% compared to its competitive set. While Hotel Valencia Santana Row is an urban lifestyle hotel, beach resort hotels are adding unique "lifestyle" elements and it will be an interesting trend to watch. (For the phenomenal story on Valencia Hotels, [click here.](#))

Like their music -- including the Latin beats of the Miami Sound Machine -- the Estefans' hotels and restaurants offer guests an experience in Cuban hospitality and culture. The Oriente, Costa d'Este's restaurant, will feature Cuban cuisine and a magnificent outdoor setting. Both Gloria and Emilio Estefan are Cuban exiles and outspoken opponents of Fidel Castro's regime. The Cuba connection is an interesting one for the hotel industry. At the May 2007 Meet the Money® conference, there was quite a bit of talk about "how and when" Cuba will open up to hotel development. While the Estefans -- and their music -- are forbidden in Castro's Cuba, the Caribbean currents indicate a sea change. It is not too difficult to imagine an Estefan-owned resort in a free Cuba - now that would be a great reason to "Do the Conga!"