

Novel hotel-ranking website targets Chinese tourists for Greek holidays

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www.feellikehome.cn

ATHENS, ATTIKI, GREECE, October 8, 2013 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The quirks of mainland tourists are being celebrated rather than ridiculed in a novel hotel-ranking system that aims to attract Chinese holidaymakers to debt-ridden Greece.

The ranking on travel website www.FeelLikeHome.cn uses dragons instead of stars to score hotels on a niche set of criteria.

Hotels get points for such things as offering congee at the breakfast buffet and Chinese-language TV. To attain the highest "five dragon" ranking, hotels must have Putonghua-speaking staff, city maps in Chinese and activities specifically tailored to Chinese tourists.

Feels Like Home was founded by three friends and about 100 hotels have joined the database since February.

Most of the hotels are in Greece, as two of its co-founders are currently based in Europe, while the other works in Beijing. The site also covers destinations such as Morocco, Austria, India, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Co-founder Nicholas Triantafyllidis, 36, has worked in hotel management for 15 years and said the idea was about cashing in on a lucrative market.

"Hotels like the idea, as everyone, in the back of their heads, wants to attract the Chinese because they are big in numbers and they are new," he said.

"Tourism is the number one product in Greece and we've always has Chinese visitors because just like China, Greece has a lot of history and culture, which they are interested in."

Previously, the clientele was only wealthy mainlanders, but "now we want to attract more of the rising middle class", Triantafyllidis said. It was as simple as having soy sauce at the buffet, he added.

"The Chinese tourist will try Greek food but he would like to have some soy sauce on the side because he's familiar with that taste," he said.

The trio have spent more than €60,000 (HK\$615,000) on building and marketing the site, including running online campaigns on Weibo, but uptake has been slow.

"We're struggling in marketing towards the Chinese," Triantafyllidis admitted.

Hotels pay US\$299 to register and the homepages of their websites are translated into Chinese. Annual fees start from US\$200 for a 25-room establishment.

"Hotels are sceptical about it, because it's a matter of trusting us," Triantafyllidis said. "We're just three guys trying to persuade a whole market in Greece, but what we are trying to do is prolong their tourist season."

Yiannis Daktilidis, manager of the five-star Petasos Beach Resort in Mykonos, said the resort had made a number of adjustments to cater to Chinese clientele.

"Along with our Greek tea and chamomile that we offer in our rooms, we have introduced a selection of jasmine, oolong and pu'er teas," he said. "Our tourism season is fairly short - five to six months - so any chance of expanding that by a few months would be a success. We believe that could happen if we successfully attract Chinese tourists."

www.FeelLikeHome.cn

Dragon Ratings

One dragon: Translate hotel's homepage; register on Feel Like Home.

Two dragons: Chinese electrical adaptors in every room; translate menu, brochures, front desk documents and signs; welcome letter in Chinese.

Three dragons: One pair of slippers per guest; instant noodles, chopsticks and tea sets with three types of Chinese tea in every room; one Chinese TV channel.

Four dragons: Breakfast earlier than 7am for city hotels and before 8am for resorts; must have congee, hard boiled eggs, soy milk, white bread, chopsticks and chopstick holders, dim sum items, and Chinese tea, oyster, black bean, garlic, soy, and hoisin sauces, soybean paste and sesame oil.

Five dragons: At least one Chinese-speaking member of staff; hotel's online booking system in Chinese; city maps and guides in Chinese; offer group activities specifically for Chinese tourists.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1300980/novel-hotel-ranking-website-targets-chinese-tourists-greek-holidays>

AKILA LIN
WWW.FEELLIKEHOME.CN
00302106109777
email us here

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