

Kasemkij expansion worth B6.5bn

Its first project will be in a prime area of Pattaya. The mixed-use project comprises a beach club, convention centre and three hotels with serviced apartments under its Cape Hotel Collection, Kantary Collection and Kameo Collection brands.

Total investment cost is estimated at 3.5 billion baht, with an opening planned for early 2019.

Poomiphat Navanukroh, the group's director for the travel industry, said it would be Kasemkij's biggest project and mark its official entry into the convention business.

The strong brand and connection with corporate clients, particularly in industrial estates, will support the new convention centre, he said.

The second luxury project is planned for Surat Thani province. It consists of 30 villas under the Cape Collection on a private island called Koh Farn and a 200-room Kantary Collection hotel on Koh Samui.

During low tides, visitors will be able to walk between the properties, which are about 800 metres apart. The project will cost 1 billion baht and should be completed by 2020.

The third project will be in Nakhon Ratchasima province under the Kantary Collection brand — a 225-room hotel scheduled to open in next year's third quarter.

To support the three projects, Kasemkij plans to double its staff from 5,000 now.

Mr Poomiphat said it was the biggest business move for the group since it was established in 1966 thanks to the creativity of the second generation of the Pangsrivongse family, the group's owners.

Tirawan Pangsrivongse, the group's business development manager, also has other businesses including a restaurant, cafe and fried banana stall.

With its three brands strong in the market, Kasemkij plans to launch a new boutique hotel brand in the second half of this year.

The group has 18 properties in its portfolio, with the main locations being prime areas in resorts and industrial estates.

The group enjoys average occupancy of 75% for its properties, outperforming the market.

"Reasonable prices and quality of service are our strong points. Many rivals can copy our designs but not our service, especially for food and beverages,"

Mr Poomiphat said.

The group's number of Russian customers has dropped in general but increased at its hotels in Phuket and Khao Lak thanks to big Russian travel agents promoting them.

