# LEADING MIDSCALE FRANCHISOR CHOICE HOTELS EMEA EMBARKS ON BRAND REFRESH REFLECTING EVOLVING GUEST REQUIREMENTS

**Wednesday 23 March, 2022**

- *Brand refresh underway following independent research to understand post pandemic guest requirements*
- *Brand Refresh comes as Choice Hotels celebrates the 50th anniversary of its first hotel in Europe opening*
- *Comfort, Clarion and Quality to be refreshed and Choice Hotels Sleep brand to enter EMEA for the first time*
- *Comfort refresh underway with arrival of updated brand toolkits, service behaviour training development and new dedicated support*

Following analysis of research into post pandemic travel requirements in key markets, Choice Hotels EMEA has commenced a refresh of its regional brand portfolio, starting with its Comfort brand. Alongside the refresh of its Comfort, Clarion and Quality brands, Sleep which is a popular Choice Hotels brand in other regions, will also be introduced to EMEA.

The brand refresh comes as Choice Hotels EMEA celebrates the 50th anniversary of its first hotel opening in Europe.

Reflective of the research, all refreshed Comfort hotels will deliver for today's value-driven midscale traveller who wants the basics done brilliantly with exceptional convenience. Exhibiting modern design, they will provide a warm, vibrant and friendly place to stay with energising casual spaces for socialising, relaxing, sleeping and working. Everything will revolve around the Comfort Hub - a multi-purpose space and the first area guests experience on arrival. It's where they check-in and out and go for anything from a morning coffee to an evening drink, with quiet space for working to a lounge area for socialising.

Design concepts are underway and franchisees will have flexibility within a framework with their design choices. They will be encouraged to showcase and embrace local, cultural influences since local inspiration will be part of the Comfort brand identity.

Underpinning everything is the Comfort Crew, with a Crew member always out and about, ready to greet guests, answer queries and be the first, visible point of contact. Roaming Comfort Crew members will also provide swift and easy check-in via iPad/tablet.

Comfort aims to stand out by providing value-driven guests with much more than a comfortable and safe place for the night and will offer memorable service and all-round efficiency at a price point guests want, in locations they want.

**Commenting on the Comfort brand refresh, Choice Hotels EMEA CEO, Jonathan Mills said:** "It's exciting to announce the refresh of our Comfort branded guest experience across EMEA today and we look forward to seeing the evolved Comfort guest experience as hotel owners begin transitioning to the refreshed brand and its hallmarks over the next two years

"2021 was a challenging year for our industry, but gave us the opportunity to realign with stakeholders and continue our focus on providing quality hotel choices that meet the wide variety of guest styles, travel needs and desired price points.

"While gravitation toward established brands like Choice Hotels continued, changing franchisee and guest requirements were apparent and in consideration of that, we engaged with customers and potential customers in our key European markets to best understand their evolving needs.

"Those exchanges indicated Comfort customers are looking for genuine hospitality that delivers personal service with the conveniences of a home set-up in addition to embracing and supporting local provenance. Our guests highlighted the importance of feeling relaxed, comfortable, and connected but with a focus on convenience and a caring service all in a clean environment. These findings created an opportunity for us to refresh the Choice Hotels EMEA branded guest experience, implement clearer differentiation between our brands and best meet the evolving needs of our franchisees and guests.

"Despite continued challenging times for hospitality, EMEA remains an important growth market for us

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and more than ever, franchisees are looking for us to anticipate future challenges and opportunities. Our brand refresh provides an opportunity for us to meet the evolving requirements of our franchisees and guests and excitingly Comfort is just the start! Clarion and Quality will also embark on a refresh during the course of this year, our Sleep brand, which is well established in other regions, will be introduced here in EMEA and we will also revisit our plans for the Ascend Hotel Collection."

The Comfort refresh is underway with the arrival of updated brand toolkits service behaviour training development and new dedicated support. Franchisees are being supported through the transition by Choice Hotels with service behaviour training currently in development for deployment by Choice Hotels across the Comfort portfolio in the coming months.

Choice hotels EMEA has worked with partners on various aspects of the relaunch including London based company 3Stories for the Comfort Hub Hallmark. This included the branding, F&B offering and interiors of the hub.

Choice Hotels EMEA is currently represented under the Clarion, Quality, Comfort and Ascend Hotel Collection brands. Comfort, Clarion and Quality will embark on a refresh throughout 2022, the Sleep brand, which is well established in other regions, will be introduced in EMEA and plans for the Ascend Hotel Collection will be revisited later this year.

Choice Hotels EMEA recently highlighted the importance of the franchise industry as it has seen a marked increase in a new generation of energised entrepreneurs looking to "upgrade" their passion for hospitality and manage their own business through franchising. The industry perspective notes that while franchising has been a successful business model for years, in recent months there has been an increased interest in franchising as a business format as many people look to franchising for the first time.

For further information on Choice Hotels, please visit: https://www.choicehotels.com/en-uk

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**Notes to Editors**

**About Choice Hotels EMEA**

Choice Hotels EMEA™ is represented under the Ascend Hotel Collection™, Clarion™, Quality™ and Comfort™ brands, in France, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Turkey. Choice Hotels International, Inc., the parent company of Choice Hotels EMEA, with more than 7,100 hotels representing over 600,000 rooms, in nearly 40 countries and territories is one of the largest hotel groups in the world (as of September 30, 2021).

**Forward-Looking Statement**

This communication includes "forward-looking statements" about future events, including anticipated hotel openings. Such statements are subject to numerous risks and uncertainties, including construction delays, availability and cost of financing and the other "Risk Factors" described in the Annual Report on Form 10-K and the Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q of Choice Hotels International, Inc., any of which could cause actual results to be materially different from our expectations.

**3Stories**

3Stories create successful brands and interiors by building engaging stories, brought to life through passion, people and ideas. From established hotel groups to restaurant start-ups, we seek to create concepts that connect with people emotionally, increase brand exposure and business profitability. 3Stories weaves together a holistic brand strategy to drive the vision, and that is executed in the identity, the environment, the experience and the aspiration. For further information about 3Stories visit www.3stories.co.uk or email contact@3stories.co.uk

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