



Trisara Seafood Restaurant, one of Montara's properties in Phuket, as the group prepares to establish a labour academy to train boutique hotel management staff.

Montara handles labour pains

CHADAMAS CHINMANEEVONG

Montara Hospitality Group, a local resort owner, plans to add 1,500 workers to staff its boutique hotel management business, aiming to run at least 10 properties by 2018.

Chairman Narong Pattamasaevi said each property under the Trisara brand requires 300-400 people, while each hotel under the White label needs about 150 employees.

Montara recently launched its Trisara Academy to train staff and solve the labour shortage in the Thai hotel industry. The group envisions Trisara Academy as an institute to enhance the Thai workforce at the management level.

The goal of Trisara Academy is to create professionals for the growing hospitality business by offering short- and long-term courses ranging from a single day to three months.

The first course will start this September. The initial three programmes are the Trisara Internship Programme, Trisara Academy Lecture Series and Montara Career Development Programme (for Montara employees only).

The hospitality business in Asean is



Montara chairman Narong Pattamasaevi says Indonesia is an intriguing proposition.

forecast to boom, including in Thailand, where nearly all international hotel brands are represented.

Apart from beach destinations at home, Montara senses opportunity in Indonesia's 250-million-strong population.

"Domestic tourism can certainly boom in Indonesia," said Mr Narong. "Apart from Bali, Lombok and Flores, the islands in Nusa Tenggara have room to grow, especially for boutique hotels. Aside from beautiful beaches, Indonesia also has an interesting culture for tourists."

Myanmar is intriguing as well with its natural beauty and appealing culture, but it lacks tourism infrastructure and land prices are high, making hotels a risky venture.

"We're interested in Myanmar, but it will take time to invest in a hotel over there," he said.

In Thailand, the group sees many small islands in the Andaman Sea off Phuket, Krabi and Trang as suitable for developing boutique hotels.

In the next few months, Montara will open another luxury boutique hotel under the Trisara brand in a southern beach destination as part of its hotel management plan.

The group said the average occupancy rate for its two hotels, the Trisara and the Boathouse Resort in Phuket, will be at least 70% this year, up from 60% in 2013.

The room rate is estimated at US\$900 per room per night this year. It usually raises its room rate by 5-6% each year.