

WHITBREAD

Trading Statement

Released : 01 March 2005

Whitbread PLC
1st March 2005

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Budget hotels lead growth
Whitbread PLC 50 week trading update

Today Whitbread PLC announces total group sales growth of 7.7% for the first 50 weeks (to 17th February 2005) of its financial year. Like-for-like sales were ahead by 2.9% (2.7% in 2003/4):

	50 weeks	FY 03/04
Premier Travel Inn*	6.7%	3.6%
Marriott	3.9%	(0.2)%
Pub restaurants	1.6%	2.2%
High street restaurants	1.6%	3.1%
David Lloyd Leisure	3.8%	5.2%
Group	2.9%	2.7%

* excludes former Premier Lodge hotels

Alan Parker, chief executive, said: "At a time of transition for Whitbread, we continue to drive steady underlying sales growth.

"Premier Travel Inn has had an outstanding year, with second-half like-for-like sales ahead of a very strong first half. This performance has been driven by year-on-year gains in both occupancy and room rate. Today we complete a six-month programme to establish Premier Travel Inn as the UK's biggest hotel business, through the integration of Premier Lodge with Travel Inn. The bringing together of 457 hotels under one brand has been achieved on time and to budget.

"In a gradually improving trading environment for full-service hotels, Marriott has grown organic sales. Growth slowed in the last quarter of 2004 as the ongoing weakness of the US Dollar held back business from North American guests. However, we have been encouraged by our performance since the turn of the year.

"We have enjoyed stronger trading in our pub restaurants in the second-half of the year. The performance of Beefeater is particularly encouraging. Our largest pub restaurant brand, Brewers Fayre continues to deliver steady growth, but Brewsters remains disappointing and, as we have announced already, we are consolidating these outlets within Brewers Fayre.

"The performance of our high street restaurants business has been led by another good year for Costa, while total sales across the division have been driven by strong outlet growth in Pizza Hut and Costa.

"David Lloyd Leisure continues to deliver creditable like-for-like sales growth, although we have witnessed a dip in membership in mature clubs. We are seeing good performances from our clubs in the Netherlands and Belgium (neither yet included in like-for-like comparison) and new club openings in the UK.

"With sales growing faster than in recent years we remain confident for the outlook of the group and expect to report a satisfactory set of results on April 26th."

-ends-

Conference call for analysts:

Whitbread PLC finance director, David Richardson will be available for a conference call at 8.25am today, 1st March 2005.

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Notes - Glossary of terms contained in announcement

Like-for-like sales

Period over period change in total sales, less sales generated by businesses acquired or disposed of and retail outlets opened or closed during the current year and the previous year.

Hotels - Achieved Room Rate (ARR)

Hotel accommodation income divided by the number of rooms occupied by guests.

Occupancy

Number of hotel bedrooms occupied by guests expressed as a percentage of the number of bedrooms available in the period.

This information is provided by RNS
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