

WHITBREAD

Trading Statement

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WHITBREAD TRADING UPDATE

TOTAL GROUP SALES INCREASE BY 2.4%

Whitbread PLC, the UK's largest hotel and restaurant group, today reports its trading performance for the 24 weeks to 13 August 2009.

Sales for the 24 weeks to 13 August 2009

	% change vs. prior year	
	Like for like sales	Total sales
Premier Inn	(7.7)	0.2
Pub Restaurants	2.1	(2.7)
Whitbread Hotels and Restaurants	(3.6)	(1.1)
Costa	2.7	18.4
Total	(2.6)	2.4

Alan Parker, Chief Executive Officer of Whitbread PLC comments:

We have achieved a consistent performance throughout the period with total sales up by 2.4%.

Whitbread has strong brands offering great value for money and we will continue to focus on what our customers want in today's price conscious environment. We are delivering on our priorities to outperform our competition, to achieve cash flow neutrality and to reduce operating costs.

Premier Inn's total sales have been maintained in a challenging trading environment. Against tough comparatives, like for like sales in the 24 weeks were down (7.7%) which is an improvement on the performance reported at week 13. Revenue per available room at (9.4%) lower, has improved from the first quarter run rate. We are enhancing weekend occupancy with our Premier Offers campaign targeting the leisure market.

Premier Inn has outperformed the hotel sector with evidence of business travellers trading down from 3 and 4 star hotels to find better value. A significant benefit for customers is Premier Inn's network of locations - the largest in the UK - and expansion continues to plan with the opening of 7 hotels and 1,167 rooms so far this year.

Our pub restaurant brands - Beefeater, Brewers Fayre, Table Table and Taybarns - located on joint sites alongside Premier Inn, continue to gain market share and delivered strong growth, with total sales* up 6.9% and like for like sales up 2.1%. Our value for money menus across all the restaurant brands and well maintained properties have attracted 7.2% more customers across the total estate.

Costa has recorded an outstanding performance with total sales growing 18.4% and like for like sales up 2.7%. In addition, sales in the UK and overseas franchise units were £84 million, an increase of 28%. The 7/10 coffee lovers' prefer Costa marketing campaign and other in-store initiatives continue to help drive transaction volumes. Costa has 969 stores in the UK as a result of opening net 88 outlets so far this year. Internationally there are now 416 Costa stores across 24 countries.

We remain focused on cost control and we are on target to deliver our previously announced £25 million cost saving programme. In addition, we have tightly managed labour costs in our operating units. Labour ratios in hotels and pub restaurants have been broadly held whilst in Costa labour ratios have improved materially. Our work on procurement has also enabled us to improve gross margins across all business units.

Backed by a strong freehold asset base our balance sheet remains robust. We anticipate debt at the half year to be at a similar level to the year end.

We have yet to see any substantive signs of improvement in the economic environment. There are a number of specific factors that are contributing to our performance. Costa's trading has been well ahead of expectations and we are seeing the benefits of our value offers in pub restaurants and our focus on cost control. Furthermore, we face softer Premier Inn comparatives in the second half. In the absence of any deterioration in trading, we expect the outturn for the full year to be at least at the higher end of current market expectations.

Board Change

Whitbread PLC has today announced the appointment of Richard Baker as a Non Executive Director as Charles Gurassa steps down (in line with normal practice) after nine years on the Board.

Whitbread will announce its half year results on 13 October 2009.

End

* Down (2.7)% including the 44 sites disposed of in September 2008

Conference call for analysts and investors

Alan Parker and Christopher Rogers will be available for a conference call at 8.00 today. To participate, dial 0808 238 0673 and enter passcode 25760047.

A recording of the conference call will be available until 13th September 2009. To listen, dial 0800 953 1533 and enter the passcode 25760047#. This service will be active approximately two hours after the conference call has finished.

Please dial into the call 10 minutes before to ensure you don't miss the start.

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For photographs and video please visit our media library on www.whitbreadimages.co.uk

Notes to Editors

Whitbread PLC is the UK's largest hotel and restaurant group operating market-leading businesses in the budget hotels and restaurant sectors. Its well-loved brands are Premier Inn, Beefeater, Brewers Fayre, Table Table, Taybarns and Costa Coffee.

Whitbread PLC employs over 33,000 people and serves 9 million customers every month in its 1,800 outlets across the UK.

In the financial year ended 26th February 2009, Whitbread PLC reported a 9.7% increase in Group Revenue to £1334.6 million and 12% increase in Underlying Pre-tax Profit to £228.2 million.

Whitbread PLC is listed on the London Stock Exchange. It is also a member of the FTSE4Good Index.

This information is provided by RNS
The company news service from the London Stock Exchange

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