



Astoria gets nod to open expanded Boracay resort

By Roy Stephen C. Canivel – January 7, 2019

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Local hotel chain Astoria Hotels & Resorts (AHR) opened last October its freshly minted P1.5-billion resort on Boracay Island, one of the first resorts allowed to operate after the six-month shutdown of the popular tourist destination.

Called Astoria Current, it is the company's second resort on the island. During Boracay's closure, the company was able to complete its new annex building, bringing the resort's total number of rooms to 205.

The executive fiat on the shutdown called for a moratorium on new projects including expansions.

When asked to clarify, a company representative said the building was already "structurally finished" before the moratorium began.

"Final touches on interior designs were done during the island closure," the representative said.

The company said in a separate statement the additional capacity from the annex building made Astoria Current the hotel in Station 3 of Boracay with the most number of rooms, all with direct access to the famed White Beach.

According to AHR, Astoria Current was one of the first resorts that the Department of Tourism allowed to open after it complied with all the necessary environment and local ordinances.

"We are one with the government in advocating for and implementing a more environment-friendly stay on the island so that Boracay will continue to be enjoyed by future generations," said company president Jeffrey Ng.

The cleanup of Boracay began in April and ended in October last year.

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) estimated the aggregate economic loss could have reached as much as P83.15 billion, while the loss in compensation could have reached up to P27.9 billion.

The PIDS study noted that it aimed to look at the "potential economic effects" of the shutdown. Different government officials have provided different numbers, but the actual losses have yet to be determined.

AHR said the closure posed a "challenge" but claimed its staff hardly felt its negative impact.

The firm said they were reassigned for retraining and other purposes in other AHR properties, including Astoria Palawan and Astoria Plaza in Ortigas Center.

"This way, not one employee lost his or her job over the six-month rehabilitation period," the company said.