

Rajeev Menon, Marriott: “The world’s largest hotelier and the world’s largest international airline come together to...”

Emirates and Marriott International have entered into an agreement to develop Emirates Wolgan Valley, a Ritz-Carlton Lodge—a 40-key, all-inclusive luxury retreat set within a 7,000-acre private conservancy in Australia’s Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage region.

The World’s First Ritz-Carlton Lodge

Emirates Wolgan Valley, a Ritz-Carlton Lodge is poised to become the first Ritz-Carlton Lodge globally, marking a significant milestone for regional tourism in New South Wales. Conceived as purpose-built sanctuaries immersed in nature, Ritz-Carlton Lodges are designed to sensitively reflect their surroundings while minimising environmental impact, and to deliver the elevated luxury, comfort, craftsmanship, and service synonymous with The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company.

Scheduled to open in mid-2026, the lodge is set to establish a new benchmark for conservation-led luxury travel while reinvigorating the region’s high-end tourism landscape.

Emirates’ Long-Term Investment and Conservation Commitment

Since 2006, Emirates has invested over AUD 150 million in the Wolgan Valley property, restoring historic assets such as the original 1832 homestead and undertaking extensive environmental conservation initiatives, including the planting of more than one million native trees across the site.

An additional AUD 50 million investment will now support the transformation of the resort, in partnership with Marriott International, into a world-class Ritz-Carlton Lodge distinguished by refined design, legendary service, and a deep connection to place.

Community Engagement and Economic Impact

From its inception, the resort has maintained close ties with the Wolgan Valley community, a commitment that will continue with the lodge's reopening. The project is expected to generate up to 150 local jobs, alongside expanded opportunities for regional suppliers—from fresh Australian produce to essential services—providing a meaningful boost to the local economy.

Arrival and Access

Guests will arrive via a four-wheel-drive journey through the iconic Donkey Steps—an integral part of the lodge's immersive rural experience—or by helicopter, offering a dramatic introduction to the surrounding wilderness.

Leadership Perspectives

Tim Clark, President, Emirates Airline, said:

“Over our 30 years in Australia, Emirates has consistently sought to deliver enduring value—not only through air services but through long-term partnerships and community engagement. Our investment in Emirates Wolgan Valley helped pioneer one of Australia's earliest conservation-based luxury resorts. This agreement with Marriott International to create the world's first Ritz-Carlton Lodge represents the next chapter of that journey. Beyond being an extraordinary nature-based retreat for discerning travellers, the lodge will act as a catalyst for local economic growth, helping revitalise the Wolgan Valley region. We are deeply grateful for the support of federal and state governments, Lithgow City Council, and the local community in bringing this vision to life.”

Rajeev Menon, President, Asia Pacific (excluding China), Marriott International, added:

“We are honoured to collaborate with Emirates on this landmark development, uniting the world's largest international airline and the world's largest hotel company to elevate New South Wales' luxury tourism offering. As the first Ritz-Carlton Lodge worldwide, Emirates Wolgan Valley will be a compelling draw for our more than 260 million Marriott Bonvoy members, particularly those seeking immersive experiences that foster authentic connections with the destination.”

An Immersive Sanctuary in the Blue Mountains

Designed as a refined wilderness sanctuary, Emirates Wolgan Valley, a Ritz-Carlton Lodge harmonises untamed landscapes with effortless comfort. Drawing inspiration from the warmth and character of a traditional Australian homestead, the lodge will deliver signature, region-specific experiences curated by expert guides, alongside the legendary service standards of Emirates and The Ritz-Carlton.

Immersive Luxury Rooted in Nature

Occupying less than two percent of its vast 7,000-acre conservation reserve, the lodge offers exceptional seclusion amid pristine wilderness. Guests will encounter sweeping escarpments, native flora and wildlife, and expansive night skies—encouraging a slower, more meaningful engagement with the destination.

The lodge will feature 40 elegantly appointed suites with private pools, a sophisticated central homestead, world-class wellness offerings including The Ritz-Carlton Spa, and a dedicated naturalist-led experience hub—underscoring its commitment to conservation-driven luxury in one of Australia's most remarkable natural settings.