

## Luxury Mountain Resort Hotel Opens in Azerbaijan



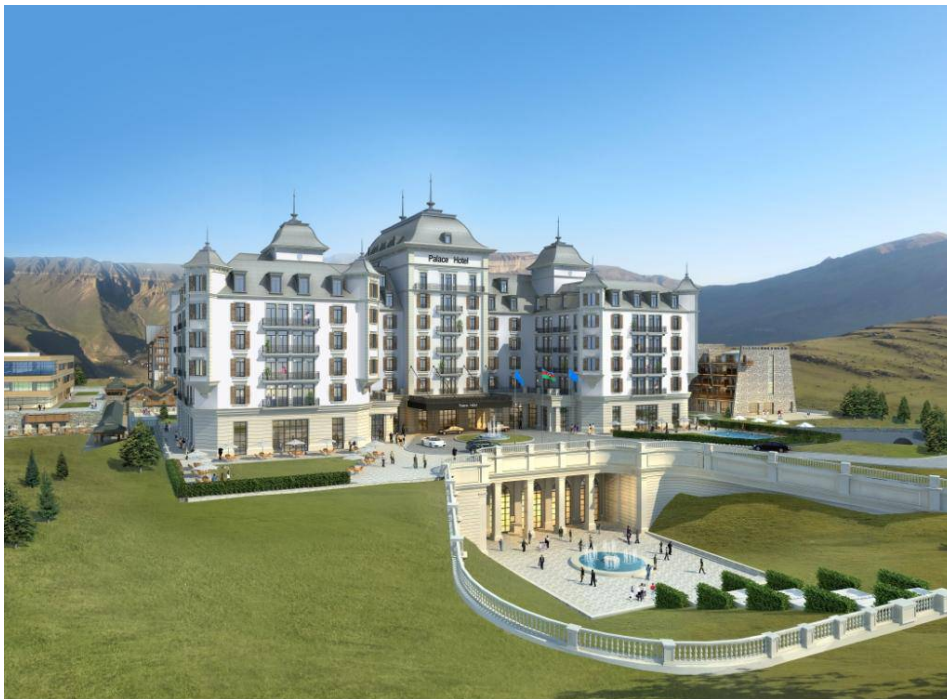
(20<sup>th</sup> February, 2014) Pik Palas, an imposing new hotel designed by ReardonSmith Architects for a major new year-round resort in the Greater Caucasus mountain range of Azerbaijan, has just opened its doors. Shahdag Mountain Resort is destined to become the region's premier resort with skiing and other snow sports in the winter as well as golf and various summertime pursuits during the rest of the year. Pik Palas will be the most luxurious hotel and prominent building in the resort.

The design of the hotel is inspired by the grand mountain hotels of the Swiss Alps, as requested by the client. Local limestone and render clad the façade of the building's reinforced concrete structural frame, which employs a raft foundation with a lightweight framework for parts of the pitched roof. The zinc-clad roof with its diamond-format tiles will develop a rich patina as it ages.

Windows with bronze coloured frames add an understated sophistication to the exterior; these are flanked on each side by traditionally styled shutters. Guestrooms, centrally placed on the facades, benefit from French doors onto balconies dressed with finely worked metal balustrades.

Pik Palas Shahdag is one of two hotels designed by ReardonSmith for resort's main plaza which will also be bordered by a lively mix of chalets, ski facilities, retail boutiques, restaurants and bars. The hotel's siting and

proximity to the other amenities helped to determine its structural layout and spatial flow. As visitors approach the resort from the north, a grand sense of arrival is unveiled. A gatehouse pavilion welcomes guests before they progress up the inclined driveway, passing the rooftops of the shops to one side and then sweeping round above the ballroom level to reach the porte cochère and main entrance. An alternative entrance has also been provided at ground-level linking the hotel directly with the shopping boutiques.



CGI image

A primary consideration was the connection with the resort's principal ski routes to the south. Changing rooms and ski in/out facilities which in the summer could also serve golfers, were therefore located in the south wing from where guests ski just a short way to the mountain lifts. At grade, the central area between the two flanks of the building is occupied by the impressive 700 sq metre ballroom. Carved into the mountainside on the south, it is consequently column-free; it opens out on the north elevation to a large "external ballroom" terrace protected by the landscaped undulations of the valley on three sides and with an elegant colonnade leading to the ballroom interior on the fourth.

Pik Palas boasts a spacious, 32,300 sqm footprint which accommodates 168 guestrooms including a Presidential Suite and an exclusive 1,030 sq metre penthouse apartment within the rooftop level of the central wing. There is an expansive spa and health club and indoor and outdoor pools, as well as the 570 sq metre golf and ski facilities.



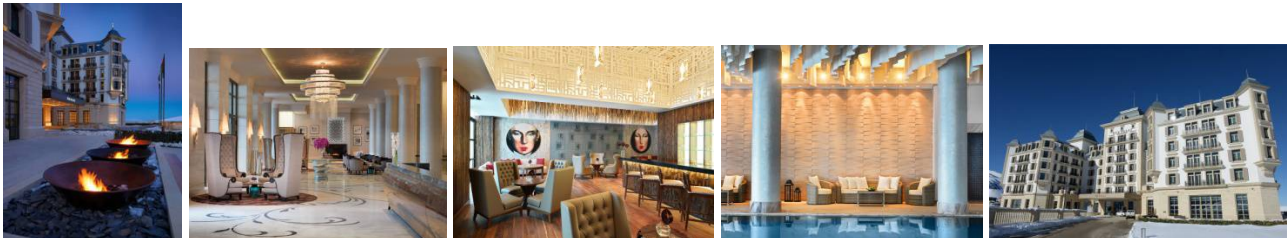
Pik Palas has also been designed with a wide range of epicurean hotspots to entertain Shahdag's visitors, from the fine dining of the Alpina Brasserie and Wine Bar, to the cosmopolitan Asian delights of the Fujisan Restaurant and Bar and the casual comfort of the Chocolat patisserie and café. While for guests wishing to mix business with pleasure, the hotel also has a generously sized Executive Lounge.



“The vision for Shahdag is bold and exciting, and we are looking forward to the imminent opening of our second hotel there,” says Conrad Smith, Managing Director of ReardonSmith. “Pik Palas is a huge hotel designed for numerous activities all the time, from large events of national significance to luxury weekend breaks for independent travellers. So, behind the opulence of the interiors is a building rigorously planned to be operationally very efficient”.

Located in the Shahdag National Park and surrounded by mountains, the new resort will play an important role in the First European Games next year which will be headquartered in Azerbaijan's capital city of Baku.

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Thumbnail images suitable for online publication only

## Editors Notes

### About ReardonSmith Architects

ReardonSmith is an award-winning global leader in hotel and resort design based in London. The practice has an unrivalled track record in the restoration and rebuilding of luxury hotels in London, an enviable reputation for the design of new destinations in Europe, and the widest experience of hotel architecture across the entire spectrum of new-build and existing estates. In 2013, the practice formed ReardonSmith Landscape, a dedicated landscape design team, to offer clients a fully integrated building and landscape design process. Current projects include: The Beaumont, London; InterContinental London Park Lane; Regent Porto Montenegro; The Lanesborough, London; Intourist and White City hotels in Baku, Azerbaijan; Four Seasons Astana, Kazakhstan; Bowness Hotel, Windermere, UK; Wentworth Golf Resort, Surrey, UK; and several projects for Cadogan Estates in London. For more information visit [www.reardonsmith.com](http://www.reardonsmith.com)

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