

Hoteliers' quarterly earnings soar

By Charisse Jones, USA Today

Boosted by the strengthening U.S. economy, Marriott International Inc. posted a \$197 million profit in the last three months of 2014, 30 percent more than during that quarter in 2013.

The hotel company's earnings of 68 cents per share was a 39 percent improvement over earnings during that period the previous year.

"Business is looking very good," said Laura Paugh, Marriott's senior vice president, investor relations, who noted that the company expects revenue per available room to grow between 5 and 7 percent in North America and also worldwide this year.

Confidence that strong travel trends will continue was also reflected in the 39,000 rooms that Marriott added to its inventory in 2014, and the 240,000 that were in the pipeline at the end of the year.

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