

Hi-tech tourism taken to new heights



REACH FOR THE STARS: An artist's impression of Peppers Broadbeach, the Gold Coast's latest five-star hotel.

Phil Bartsch

GUESTS at the Gold Coast's first new five-star hotel since the opening of Palazzo Versace a decade ago will check in using iPads supplied to them during their stay.

Peppers Broadbeach is being touted as one of the most technologically advanced hotels in Australia.

It will open its doors in October after hotel owner and operator Mantra Group yesterday unveiled a deal struck with Gold Coast

developer Niecon. Under the deal Mantra will manage the \$850 million, 505-apartment twin tower development The Oracle.

Mantra chief executive officer Bob East said the towers would be branded as Peppers Broadbeach.

"The new Peppers Broadbeach will be the largest property within the Peppers portfolio and represents the brand's first foray into the metropolitan hotel market," Mr East said.

He said apart from harnessing the latest in port-

able technology, the hotel also would offer guests other unique services such as the use of retro scooters and customised surfboards.

Mantra Group has committed to almost \$390 million worth of new hotel developments this year.

Mr East said Peppers Broadbeach would be launched in three phases, with a soft opening from October with room rates starting from \$260 a night. It will officially open with the full suite of Peppers services next March.

Gold Coast-based property and tourism analyst Bill Morris said the local tourism industry was set to rebound over the next 12 months to two years.

"With the emerging markets from China and India it's a good time to be opening a new five-star hotel on the Gold Coast," he said. "The market has been tough in the last two years. Occupancy rates on the Gold Coast are about 70 per cent, barely satisfactory to make good money but it's going to get better."