



RAJ AND ASHOK KUMAR

## Royal Brothers buy Parkroyal hotel

BY FICNA ROTHERHAM

Singapore-based property investor Royal Brothers has completed the purchase of the Auckland Parkroyal Hotel - the first of a planned chain of four star Novotel hotels owned by the company across New Zealand and Australia.

The \$25 million Parkroyal deal made last year, was the first the Royal Brothers has done outside of Singapore for many years. Since then the company has committed to buying the Perth International for \$A26 million and to build the \$A46 million Times Square hotel development in Brisbane.

Other property buys are in the offing both in New Zealand and across the Tasman, with deals on two other New Zealand hotels likely to be announced in the next month. Queenstown, Wellington and Christchurch are the other sites in this country where Royal Brothers want to establish Novotel hotels in partnership with aggressive French international hotel operator, Accor.

Accor Asia Pacific will rebrand

the Auckland Parkroyal when it takes over management from the Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation in April. The hotel will undergo a \$2 million refurbishment and will be Accor's flagship in New Zealand.

"We don't just jump into a market and blindly go into deals. We had to team up with the right partner and we asked Accor because it has been so successful in Australia. It's the right synergy to provide it with the capital to enter the New Zealand market," says Raj Kumar, one of the two brothers running the private family company.

Royal Brothers is one of Singapore's top companies, with property assets valued at around \$700 million. The company controls many of the major properties in the Orchard Road area.

The brothers, Raj and Ashok have a reputation in Singapore as savvy long-term investors - they are known and take great pride in never having done a bad deal.

"If you're in business and not shrewd you won't make it in life. We have made it in Singapore and now we want to make it in New Zealand and Australia," says Raj Kumar.