

RLJ Lodging Trust
Form 424B5
March 19, 2013

Use these links to rapidly review the document

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

The information in this prospectus supplement is not complete and may be changed. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are not an offer to sell these securities and we are not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

Filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)
Registration Number 333-183485

Subject to Completion, dated March 19, 2013

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT
(To Prospectus dated August 22, 2012)

11,500,000 Shares

Common Shares

RLJ Lodging Trust is offering 11,500,000 common shares of beneficial interest pursuant to this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Our common shares are listed on the New York Stock Exchange, or NYSE, under the symbol "RLJ." On March 18, 2013, the last reported sale price for our common shares on the NYSE was \$22.20 per share.

Our declaration of trust contains restrictions on ownership and transfer of our common shares intended to assist us in maintaining our status as a real estate investment trust, or REIT, for federal and/or state income tax purposes. For example, our declaration of trust generally restricts any person from acquiring beneficial ownership, either directly or indirectly, of more than 9.8%, in value or number of shares, whichever is more restrictive, of our issued and outstanding common shares, as more fully described in the section entitled "Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer" in the accompanying prospectus.

Investing in our common shares involves risks. See "Risk Factors" on page S-4 of this prospectus supplement and the risks set forth beginning on page 10 of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012, which is incorporated by reference herein.

| | Per Share | Total |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Public offering price | \$ | \$ |
| Underwriting discount | \$ | \$ |
| Proceeds, before expenses, to us | \$ | \$ |

The underwriters may also exercise their option to purchase up to an additional 1,725,000 of our common shares from us at the public offering price, less the underwriting discount, for 30 days after the date of this prospectus supplement.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state or other securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The underwriters expect to deliver the common shares on or about March , 2013.

Barclays BofA Merrill Lynch Wells Fargo Securities

Prospectus Supplement dated March , 2013.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

| | Page |
|---|--------------|
| <u>About This Prospectus Supplement</u> | <u>S-ii</u> |
| <u>Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements</u> | <u>S-iii</u> |
| <u>Prospectus Supplement Summary</u> | <u>S-1</u> |
| <u>The Offering</u> | <u>S-3</u> |
| <u>Risk Factors</u> | <u>S-4</u> |
| <u>Use of Proceeds</u> | <u>S-5</u> |
| <u>Supplemental Federal Income Tax Considerations</u> | <u>S-6</u> |
| <u>Underwriting</u> | <u>S-8</u> |
| <u>Legal Matters</u> | <u>S-16</u> |
| <u>Experts</u> | <u>S-16</u> |
| <u>Where You Can Find More Information and Incorporation by Reference</u> | <u>S-16</u> |

PROSPECTUS

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| <u>About This Prospectus</u> | <u>1</u> |
| <u>Forward-Looking Statements</u> | <u>2</u> |
| <u>Our Company</u> | <u>3</u> |
| <u>Risk Factors</u> | <u>4</u> |
| <u>Use of Proceeds</u> | <u>5</u> |
| <u>Ratio of Earnings to Combined Fixed Charges and Preferred Dividends</u> | <u>6</u> |
| <u>Description of Capital Shares</u> | <u>7</u> |
| <u>Description of Common Shares</u> | <u>7</u> |
| <u>Description of Preferred Shares</u> | <u>15</u> |
| <u>Description of Depositary Shares</u> | <u>17</u> |
| <u>Description of Warrants</u> | <u>21</u> |
| <u>Description of Rights</u> | <u>22</u> |
| <u>Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer</u> | <u>23</u> |
| <u>Book-Entry Securities</u> | <u>26</u> |
| <u>Plan of Distribution</u> | <u>28</u> |
| <u>Legal Matters</u> | <u>30</u> |
| <u>Experts</u> | <u>30</u> |
| <u>Where You Can Find More Information and Incorporation by Reference</u> | <u>30</u> |

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This document consists of two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this offering and also adds to and updates information contained in the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference. The second part is the accompanying prospectus, which gives more general information, some of which does not apply to this offering. To the extent there is a conflict between the information contained in this prospectus supplement, on the one hand, and the information contained in the accompanying prospectus, on the other hand, the information in this prospectus supplement shall control. In addition, any statement in a filing we make with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act, prior to the termination of this offering, that adds to, updates or changes information contained in an earlier filing we made with the SEC shall be deemed to modify and supersede such information in the earlier filing, this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus, as the case may be.

You should read this document together with additional information described under the heading "Where You Can Find More Information and Incorporation by Reference" in this prospectus supplement. You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Neither we nor the underwriters have authorized anyone to provide you with different or additional information. If anyone provides you with different or additional information, you should not rely on it. You should assume that the information in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, as well as the information incorporated by reference, is accurate only as of its respective date or the date which is specified in any such document.

References in this prospectus supplement to "RLJ," "we," "our" and "us" refer to RLJ Lodging Trust, a Maryland REIT, together with its consolidated subsidiaries, including RLJ Lodging Trust, L.P., a Delaware limited partnership, which we refer to as our "Operating Partnership." The term "you" refers to a prospective investor in our common shares offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

Table of Contents

CAUTIONARY NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Certain statements in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein, other than purely historical information, including estimates, projections, statements relating to our business plans, objectives and expected operating results, and the assumptions upon which those statements are based, are "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Exchange Act. These forward-looking statements generally are identified by the use of the words "believe," "project," "expect," "anticipate," "estimate," "plan," "may," "will," "will continue," "intend," "should," "may" or similar expressions. Although we believe that the expectations reflected in such forward-looking statements are based upon reasonable assumptions, beliefs and expectations, such forward-looking statements are not predictions of future events or guarantees of future performance and our actual results could differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements. Some factors that might cause such a difference include the following: the current global economic uncertainty; increased direct competition; changes in government regulations or accounting rules; changes in local, national and global real estate conditions; declines in the lodging industry; seasonality of the lodging industry; risks related to natural disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes; hostilities, including future terrorist attacks or fear of hostilities that affect travel; our ability to obtain lines of credit or permanent financing on satisfactory terms; changes in interest rates; access to capital through offerings of our common and preferred shares of beneficial interest; our debt; our ability to identify suitable acquisitions; our ability to close on identified acquisitions and integrate those businesses; and inaccuracies of our accounting estimates. A discussion of these and other risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results and events to differ materially from such forward-looking statements is included in the sections entitled "Risk Factors" in this prospectus supplement and in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012 and our other periodic reports filed with the SEC and incorporated by reference herein and therein. Given these uncertainties, undue reliance should not be placed on such statements. Except as required by law, we undertake no obligation to update or revise publicly any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY

This summary highlights selected information contained elsewhere in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or the documents incorporated by reference herein or therein. This summary is not complete and does not contain all of the information that you should consider before making a decision to invest in our common shares in this offering. You should carefully read this entire prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including each of the documents incorporated herein and therein by reference, before making an investment decision. See "Where You Can Find More Information and Incorporation by Reference."

Our Company

We are a self-advised and self-administered Maryland REIT that invests primarily in premium-branded, focused-service and compact full-service hotels. We are one of the largest U.S. publicly-traded lodging REITs in terms of both number of hotels and number of rooms. Our hotels are concentrated in urban and dense suburban markets that we believe exhibit multiple demand generators and high barriers to entry. We believe focused-service and compact full-service hotels with these characteristics generate high levels of revenue per available room, or RevPAR, strong operating margins and attractive returns.

As of December 31, 2012, we, through wholly-owned subsidiaries, owned 100% of 144 hotels and a 95% interest in one hotel. Our 145 hotels are made up of over 21,600 suites/rooms and are located in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

Our strategy is to invest primarily in premium-branded, focused-service and compact full-service hotels. Focused-service hotels typically generate most of their revenue from room rentals, have limited food and beverage outlets and meeting space and require fewer employees than traditional full-service hotels. We believe premium-branded, focused-service hotels have the potential to generate attractive returns relative to other types of hotels due to their ability to achieve RevPAR levels at or close to those achieved by traditional full-service hotels while achieving higher profit margins due to their more efficient operating model and less volatile cash flows.

We have elected to be taxed as a REIT, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, commencing with the portion of our taxable year ended December 31, 2011. Substantially all of our assets are held by, and all of our operations are conducted through, our Operating Partnership. We are the sole general partner of our Operating Partnership. As of December 31, 2012, we owned, through a combination of direct and indirect interests, 99.2% of the outstanding limited partnership units in our Operating Partnership, or Operating Partnership units.

Our principal executive offices are located at 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 1000, Bethesda, Maryland 20814. Our telephone number is (301) 280-7777. Our website is located at www.rljlodgingtrust.com. The information found on or accessible through our website is not incorporated into, and does not form a part of, this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. We have included our website address as an inactive textual reference and do not intend it to be an active link to our website.

Recent Developments

Acquisitions and Dispositions

Our business objective is to generate strong returns for our shareholders by continuing to acquire primarily premium-branded, focused-service and compact full-service hotels at prices where we believe we can generate attractive returns on investment and long-term value appreciation through aggressive asset management. We intend to pursue acquisitions of these hotels in urban and dense suburban

Table of Contents

markets, and we also intend to selectively dispose of properties when we believe returns have been maximized in order to redeploy capital into attractive acquisitions and other opportunities.

We recently entered into an agreement to acquire three properties from a single seller two premium-branded, focused-service hotels and an apartment building that we intend to convert to a hotel located in Houston, Texas, for an aggregate purchase price of \$79.5 million. We currently expect to close this transaction by the end of the first quarter of 2013. The acquisition of these properties is subject to customary closing requirements and conditions, and there can be no assurance that we will complete this acquisition on the current terms or at all.

We also have entered into an assignment agreement with the contract purchaser of an unbranded 150-room hotel in San Francisco, California to assume its rights and obligations under its agreement to acquire this property. Our aggregate purchase price for this property will be \$29.5 million. We anticipate closing on this transaction at the end of the second quarter of 2013. If we acquire this property, we plan to undertake a complete renovation and convert this property to a premium-branded, focused-service hotel. The acquisition of this property is subject to customary closing requirements and conditions, and there can be no assurance that we will complete this acquisition on the current terms or at all.

Finally, we also have entered into an agreement to acquire the 231-room Hilton Cabana Miami Beach for an aggregate purchase price of \$71.6 million, or approximately \$310,000 per room. The hotel currently is under construction, and the current owners expect to complete the hotel in the fourth quarter of 2013, at which time we would simultaneously purchase and open the hotel. We made a \$7.2 million deposit that will be refunded if the hotel is not completed by an agreed upon outside closing date; we are not assuming any construction risk, including the risk of construction overruns. Along with customary closing requirements and conditions, the acquisition of this hotel is subject to other various conditions, including the substantial completion of the hotel by the third-party developer within the contractual scope of the agreement. There can be no assurance that we will complete this acquisition on the current terms or at all.

We are currently pursuing a number of additional acquisition opportunities which are in various stages of negotiation, but we have not agreed upon the terms related to, or entered into binding commitments with respect to, any of these potential acquisition opportunities and do not believe any of them are probable at this time.

Distributions

On March 15, 2013, we announced that our Board of Trustees declared a quarterly cash distribution of \$0.205 per common share of beneficial interest for the quarter ending March 31, 2013. The distribution is payable on April 15, 2013 to shareholders of record on March 28, 2013.

Table of Contents

THE OFFERING

| | |
|---|---|
| Issuer | RLJ Lodging Trust, a Maryland REIT |
| Common shares offered by us | 11,500,000 common shares of beneficial interest |
| Common shares to be outstanding after this offering ⁽¹⁾ | 118,361,817 common shares of beneficial interest |
| Common shares and Operating Partnership units to be outstanding after this offering ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ | 119,255,817 common shares of beneficial interest and Operating Partnership units (excluding Operating Partnership units owned by us) |
| Use of proceeds | <p>We expect that the net proceeds of this offering will be approximately \$ million (or approximately \$ million if the underwriters' option to purchase additional shares is exercised in full), after deducting the underwriting discount and other estimated expenses of this offering payable by us. We intend to contribute to our Operating Partnership the net proceeds of this offering in exchange for Operating Partnership units. Our Operating Partnership intends to use the net proceeds of this offering to fund potential acquisitions and for general corporate purposes, and may use net proceeds to repay amounts outstanding from time to time under our unsecured revolving credit facility. See "Use of Proceeds."</p> <p>Affiliates of Barclays Capital Inc., Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC, which are underwriters of this offering, are lenders under our unsecured revolving credit facility. As described above, our Operating Partnership may use a portion of the net proceeds to repay borrowings outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility. As such, these affiliates will receive their proportionate shares of any amount outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility that is repaid with the net proceeds of this offering. See "Underwriting."</p> |
| Restrictions on ownership and transfer | Our declaration of trust contains restrictions on ownership and transfer of our common shares intended to assist us in maintaining our status as a REIT for federal and/or state income tax purposes. For example, our declaration of trust generally restricts any person from acquiring beneficial ownership, either directly or indirectly, of more than 9.8%, in value or number of shares, whichever is more restrictive, of our issued and outstanding common shares, as more fully described in the section entitled "Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer" in the accompanying prospectus. |
| Risk factors | See "Risk Factors" and other information included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus for a discussion of factors you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in our common shares. |
| NYSE symbol | RLJ |

(1) Excludes (a) 1,725,000 common shares issuable upon the exercise in full of the underwriters' option to purchase additional common shares and (b) 3,125,422 common shares and other equity-based awards we may issue in the future under our equity incentive plan.

(2) Includes 894,000 Operating Partnership units held by limited partners of our Operating Partnership, which units may, subject to certain limitations, be redeemed for cash or, at our option, exchanged for our common shares on a one-for-one basis.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in our common shares will provide you with an equity ownership in RLJ. As one of our shareholders, you will be subject to risks inherent in our business. The trading price of your common shares will be affected by the performance of our business relative to, among other things, competition, market conditions and general economic and industry conditions. The value of your investment may decrease, resulting in a loss. You should carefully consider the following factors as well as the risk factors discussed in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012 (which is incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement) before deciding to invest in our common shares.

Risks Related to Our Business and Properties

We may fail to consummate our pending acquisitions of several hotels, which could have a material adverse impact on our results of operations and earnings per share.

We intend to use a portion of the net proceeds of this offering to fund the cash consideration for the acquisition of several hotels, as described in the section entitled "Summary Recent Developments Acquisitions and Dispositions." These acquisitions are subject to customary closing requirements and conditions and there can be no assurances those requirements or conditions will be satisfied or that these acquisitions will close on the terms described herein or at all. If we fail to consummate these acquisitions, we will have issued a significant number of additional common shares without realizing all or a portion of the intended economic benefits from acquiring those properties. Even if we consummate these acquisitions, we may not realize their intended economic benefits. If we fail to consummate these acquisitions, we would expect to seek to acquire other hotel properties, but we may not be able to identify suitable acquisition candidates on attractive terms or at all, or such acquisitions may take a significant amount of time to accomplish. In addition, we will have broad authority to use the net proceeds of this offering for other purposes that may not be accretive to our operating results. As a result, our failure to consummate our pending acquisitions could have a material adverse impact on our results of operations and earnings per share.

Risks Related to this Offering

This offering may be dilutive, and there may be future dilution of our common shares.

Giving effect to the issuance of our common shares in this offering, the receipt of the expected net proceeds and the use of those proceeds, this offering may have a dilutive effect on our expected earnings per share and funds from operation per share for the year ending December 31, 2013. The actual amount of dilution cannot be determined at this time and will be based on numerous factors. Additionally, we are not restricted from issuing additional common shares or preferred shares, including securities that are convertible into or exchangeable for, or that represent the right to receive, our common shares or our preferred shares or any substantially similar securities in the future.

Affiliates of our underwriters may receive benefits in connection with this offering.

Affiliates of Barclays Capital Inc., Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC, which are underwriters of this offering, are lenders under our unsecured revolving credit facility. To the extent that our Operating Partnership uses a portion of the net proceeds of this offering to repay borrowings outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility, such affiliates of our underwriters will receive their proportionate shares of any amount outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility that is repaid with the net proceeds of this offering. These transactions create potential conflicts of interest because the underwriters have an interest in the successful completion of this offering beyond the underwriting discount they will receive. These interests may influence the decision regarding the terms and circumstances under which this offering is completed.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We expect that the net proceeds of this offering will be approximately \$ million (or approximately \$ million if the underwriters' option to purchase additional shares is exercised in full), after deducting the underwriting discount and other estimated expenses of this offering payable by us.

We intend to contribute to our Operating Partnership the net proceeds of this offering in exchange for Operating Partnership units. Our Operating Partnership intends to use the net proceeds of this offering to fund potential acquisitions and for general corporate purposes, and may use net proceeds to repay amounts outstanding from time to time under our unsecured revolving credit facility

As of March 19, 2013, we had approximately \$99 million outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility. Our unsecured revolving credit facility matures on November 20, 2016 (which maturity may be extended for an additional year at our option subject to certain conditions) and currently bears interest at a rate of one-month LIBOR + 190 basis points.

Affiliates of Barclays Capital Inc., Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC, which are underwriters of this offering, are lenders under our unsecured revolving credit facility. As described above, our Operating Partnership may use a portion of the net proceeds to repay borrowings outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility. As such, these affiliates will receive their proportionate shares of any amount outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility that is repaid with the net proceeds of this offering. See "Underwriting."

Table of Contents

SUPPLEMENTAL FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

This discussion is a supplement to, and is intended to be read together with, the discussion contained under the heading "Material Federal Income Tax Considerations" in the Current Report on Form 8-K that we filed with the SEC on August 22, 2012, or the August 22 Form 8-K, and which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement. This discussion is for general information only and is not tax advice.

The following discussion should replace the discussion under the heading "Material Federal Income Tax Considerations Federal Income Taxation of Our Shareholders Taxation of Non-U.S. Shareholders Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act" in the August 22 Form 8-K.

The Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, or FATCA, which was enacted in 2010, imposes a 30% withholding tax on certain types of payments made to "foreign financial institutions" and certain other non-U.S. entities unless certain due diligence, reporting, withholding, and certification obligations are satisfied. As a general matter, FATCA imposes a 30% withholding tax on dividends on, and gross proceeds of the sale or other disposition of, our shares, if paid to a foreign entity, unless either (1) the foreign entity is a "foreign financial institution" that satisfies certain due diligence, reporting, withholding and certification obligations, (2) the foreign entity is not a "foreign financial institution," identifies certain of its U.S. investors and provides certain required information regarding such investors or (3) the foreign entity otherwise is excepted under FATCA. An intergovernmental agreement between the United States and an applicable non-U.S. government may modify these rules. The required withholding will not begin until January 1, 2014, with respect to dividends on our shares, and January 1, 2017, with respect to gross proceeds of a sale or other disposition of our shares.

If withholding is required under FATCA on a payment related to our shares, investors that otherwise would be exempt from withholding (or that otherwise would be entitled to a reduced rate of withholding) generally will be required to seek a refund or credit from the Internal Revenue Service, or the IRS, to obtain the benefit of such exemption or reduction (provided that such benefit is available). The provisions of FATCA are extremely broad and continue to be subject to future official IRS guidance and interpretation. Prospective investors should consult their tax advisors regarding the effect of FATCA in their particular circumstances.

Recent Legislative Changes

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, or ATRA, was enacted on January 2, 2013. As discussed in "Material Federal Income Tax Considerations Federal Income Taxation of Our Shareholders Other Tax Considerations Sunset of Reduced Tax Rate Provisions" in the August 22 Form 8-K, certain provisions of U.S. federal income tax law relating to individual ordinary income tax rates, capital gain taxation (including the taxation of capital gain dividends) and the applicability of capital gain rates to dividends designated as "qualified dividend income" were scheduled to "sunset" and revert to provisions of prior law for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2012. ATRA has modified those rules. For taxable years beginning after 2012, for noncorporate taxpayers, the highest ordinary income tax rate is 39.6%, and both the maximum capital gain tax rate (for gain other than "unrecaptured section 1250 gain") and the maximum rate applicable to qualified dividend income generally is 20%, without taking into account the 3.8% Medicare tax, discussed in "Material Federal Income Tax Considerations Federal Income Taxation of Our Shareholders Taxation of Taxable U.S. Shareholders Medicare Tax on Unearned Income" in the August 22 Form 8-K.

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

Table of Contents

In addition, as discussed in "Material Federal Income Tax Considerations Federal Income Taxation of the Company as a REIT General" in the August 22 Form 8-K, we may be subject to tax at the highest applicable corporate rate on the gain we recognize from the disposition of an asset acquired from a C corporation (or a partnership in which a C corporation is a partner) in a carry-over basis transaction to the extent of the "built-in gain" in the asset. Built-in gain is the amount by which an asset's fair market value exceeds its adjusted tax basis at the time we acquire the asset. In general, this tax applies for a period of 10 years beginning with the day the property of a C corporation (or a partnership in which a C corporation is a partner) is transferred to us in a carry-over basis transaction, or the recognition period. Pursuant to ATRA, the recognition period is reduced to five years for assets sold in 2012 or 2013. Absent further legislation, the recognition period will revert to 10 years in 2014.

S-7

Table of Contents

UNDERWRITING

Barclays Capital Inc., Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC are acting as representatives of each of the underwriters named below. Subject to the terms and conditions set forth in an underwriting agreement among us and the underwriters, we have agreed to sell to the underwriters, and each of the underwriters has agreed, severally and not jointly, to purchase from us, the number of our common shares set forth opposite its name below.

| Underwriter | Number of Shares |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Barclays Capital Inc. | |
| Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated | |
| Wells Fargo Securities, LLC | |
| Total | 11,500,000 |

Subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the underwriting agreement, the underwriters have agreed, severally and not jointly, to purchase all of our common shares sold under the underwriting agreement if any of these shares are purchased. If an underwriter defaults, the underwriting agreement provides that the purchase commitments of the nondefaulting underwriters may be increased or the underwriting agreement may be terminated.

We have agreed to indemnify the underwriters against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribute to payments the underwriters may be required to make in respect of those liabilities.

The underwriters are offering our common shares, subject to prior sale, when, as and if issued to and accepted by them, subject to approval of legal matters by their counsel and other conditions contained in the underwriting agreement, such as the receipt by the underwriters of officer's certificates and legal opinions. The underwriters reserve the right to withdraw, cancel or modify offers to the public and to reject orders in whole or in part.

Commissions and Discounts

The representatives have advised us that the underwriters propose initially to offer our common shares to the public at the public offering price set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement and to dealers at that price less a concession not in excess of \$ _____ per share. After the initial offering, the public offering price, concession or any other term of this offering may be changed.

The following table shows the public offering price, underwriting discount and proceeds, before expenses, to us. The information assumes either no exercise or full exercise by the underwriters of their option to purchase additional shares.

| | Per Share | Without Option | With Option |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Public offering price | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Underwriting discount | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Proceeds, before expenses, to us | \$ | \$ | \$ |

The expenses of this offering, not including the underwriting discount, are estimated at \$600,000 and are payable by us.

Table of Contents

Option to Purchase Additional Shares

We have granted an option to the underwriters, exercisable for 30 days after the date of this prospectus supplement, to purchase up to 1,725,000 additional shares at the public offering price, less the underwriting discount. If the underwriters exercise this option, each will be obligated, subject to conditions contained in the underwriting agreement, to purchase a number of additional shares proportionate to that underwriter's initial amount reflected in the above table.

No Sales of Similar Securities

We, our named executive officers and our trustees have agreed not to sell or transfer any of our common shares or securities convertible into, exchangeable for, exercisable for, or repayable with our common shares, for 90 days after the date of this prospectus supplement without first obtaining the written consent of the representatives. Specifically, we and these other persons have agreed, with certain limited exceptions, not to directly or indirectly

offer, pledge, sell or contract to sell any of our common shares,

sell any option or contract to purchase any of our common shares,

purchase any option or contract to sell any of our common shares,

grant any option, right or warrant for the sale of any of our common shares,

otherwise dispose of or transfer any of our common shares,

file, or request or demand that we file, as applicable, a registration statement related to our common shares, or

enter into any swap or any other agreement or any transaction that transfers, in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, the economic consequence of ownership of any of our common shares, whether any such swap, agreement or transaction is to be settled by delivery of our common shares or other securities, in cash or otherwise.

This lock-up provision applies to our common shares and to securities convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for or repayable with our common shares. It also applies to our common shares owned now or acquired later by the person executing the agreement or for which the person executing the agreement later acquires the power of disposition. In the event that either (1) during the last 17 days of the lock-up period referred to above, we issue an earnings release or material news or a material event relating to us occurs or (2) prior to the expiration of the lock-up period, we announce that we will release earnings results or become aware that material news or a material event will occur during the 16-day period beginning on the last day of the lock-up period, the restrictions described above shall continue to apply until the expiration of the 18-day period beginning on the issuance of the earnings release or the occurrence of the material news or material event.

NYSE Listing

Our common shares are listed on the NYSE under the symbol "RLJ."

Price Stabilization, Short Positions

Until the distribution of our common shares is completed, SEC rules may limit underwriters and selling group members from bidding for and purchasing our common shares. However, the representatives may engage in transactions that stabilize the price of our common shares, such as bids or purchases to peg, fix or maintain that price.

Table of Contents

In connection with this offering, the underwriters may purchase and sell our common shares in the open market. These transactions may include short sales, purchases on the open market to cover positions created by short sales and stabilizing transactions. Short sales involve the sale by the underwriters of a greater number of our common shares than they are required to purchase in this offering. "Covered" short sales are sales made in an amount not greater than the underwriters' option to purchase additional common shares described above. The underwriters may close out any covered short position by either exercising their option to purchase additional common shares or purchasing shares in the open market. In determining the source of our common shares to close out the covered short position, the underwriters will consider, among other things, the price of our common shares available for purchase in the open market as compared to the price at which they may purchase our common shares through the option granted to them. "Naked" short sales are sales in excess of such option. The underwriters must close out any naked short position by purchasing our common shares in the open market. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriters are concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of our common shares in the open market after pricing that could adversely affect investors who purchase in this offering. Stabilizing transactions consist of various bids for or purchases of our common shares made by the underwriters in the open market prior to the completion of this offering.

Similar to other purchase transactions, the underwriters' purchases to cover the syndicate short sales may have the effect of raising or maintaining the market price of our common shares or preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of our common shares. As a result, the price of our common shares may be higher than the price that might otherwise exist in the open market. The underwriters may conduct these transactions on the NYSE, in the over-the-counter market or otherwise.

Neither we nor any of the underwriters make any representation or prediction as to the direction or magnitude of any effect that the transactions described above may have on the price of our common shares. In addition, neither we nor any of the underwriters make any representation that we will engage in these transactions or that these transactions, once commenced, will not be discontinued without notice.

Electronic Distribution

In connection with this offering, certain of the underwriters or securities dealers may distribute prospectuses by electronic means, such as e-mail.

Other Relationships

Some of the underwriters and their affiliates have engaged in, and may in the future engage in, investment banking and other commercial dealings in the ordinary course of business with us or our affiliates. They have received, or may in the future receive, customary fees and commissions for these transactions. Affiliates of Barclays Capital Inc., Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC, which are underwriters of this offering, are lenders under our unsecured revolving credit facility. As described above, our Operating Partnership may use a portion of the net proceeds to repay borrowings outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility. As such, these affiliates will receive their proportionate shares of any amount outstanding under our unsecured revolving credit facility that is repaid with the net proceeds of this offering.

In addition, in the ordinary course of their business activities, the underwriters and their affiliates may make or hold a broad array of investments and actively trade debt and equity securities (or related derivative securities) and financial instruments (including bank loans) for their own account and for the accounts of their customers. Such investments and securities activities may involve securities and/or instruments of ours or our affiliates. The underwriters and their affiliates may also make investment

Table of Contents

recommendations and/or publish or express independent research views in respect of such securities (including our common shares) or financial instruments and may hold, or recommend to clients that they acquire, long and/or short positions in such securities and instruments.

Notice to Prospective Investors in the European Economic Area

In relation to each Member State of the European Economic Area which has implemented the Prospectus Directive, or, each, a Relevant Member State, with effect from and including the date on which the Prospectus Directive is implemented in that Relevant Member State, or the Relevant Implementation Date, no offer to the public of our common shares may be made in that Relevant Member State other than:

- A. to any legal entity which is a qualified investor as defined in the Prospectus Directive;
- B. to fewer than 100 or, if the Relevant Member State has implemented the relevant provision of the 2010 PD Amending Directive, 150, natural or legal persons (other than qualified investors as defined in the Prospectus Directive), as permitted under the Prospectus Directive, subject to obtaining the prior consent of the representatives; or
- C. in any other circumstances falling within Article 3(2) of the Prospectus Directive,

provided that no such offer of shares shall require us or the representatives to publish a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive or supplement a prospectus pursuant to Article 16 of the Prospectus Directive.

Each person in a Relevant Member State who initially acquires any shares or to whom any offer is made will be deemed to have represented, acknowledged and agreed that (1) it is a "qualified investor" within the meaning of the law in that Relevant Member State implementing Article 2(1)(e) of the Prospectus Directive, and (2) in the case of any shares acquired by it as a financial intermediary, as that term is used in Article 3(2) of the Prospectus Directive, our common shares acquired by it in this offering have not been acquired on behalf of, nor have they been acquired with a view to their offer or resale to, persons in any Relevant Member State other than "qualified investors" as defined in the Prospectus Directive, or in circumstances in which the prior consent of the representatives has been given to the offer or resale. In the case of any shares being offered to a financial intermediary as that term is used in Article 3(2) of the Prospectus Directive, each such financial intermediary will be deemed to have represented, acknowledged and agreed that our common shares acquired by it in this offering have not been acquired on a non-discretionary basis on behalf of, nor have they been acquired with a view to their offer or resale to, persons in circumstances which may give rise to an offer of any shares to the public other than their offer or resale in a Relevant Member State to qualified investors as so defined or in circumstances in which the prior consent of the representatives has been obtained to each such proposed offer or resale.

We, the representatives and its affiliates will rely upon the truth and accuracy of the foregoing representation, acknowledgement and agreement.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus have been prepared on the basis that any offer of shares in any Relevant Member State will be made pursuant to an exemption under the Prospectus Directive from the requirement to publish a prospectus for offers of our common shares. Accordingly any person making or intending to make an offer in that Relevant Member State of shares which are the subject of this offering may only do so in circumstances in which no obligation arises for us or any of the underwriters to publish a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive in relation to such offer. Neither we nor the underwriters have authorized, nor do they authorize, the making of any offer of shares in circumstances in which an obligation arises for us or the underwriters to publish a prospectus for such offer.

Table of Contents

For the purpose of the above provisions, the expression "offer to the public of our common shares" in relation to any of our common shares in any Relevant Member State means the communication in any form and by any means of sufficient information on the terms of this offering and our common shares to be offered so as to enable an investor to decide to purchase or subscribe our common shares, as the same may be varied in the Relevant Member State by any measure implementing the Prospectus Directive in the Relevant Member State; the expression "Prospectus Directive" means Directive 2003/71/EC (including the 2010 PD Amending Directive, to the extent implemented in the Relevant Member States) and includes any relevant implementing measure in the Relevant Member State; and the expression "2010 PD Amending Directive" means Directive 2010/73/EU.

Notice to Prospective Investors in the United Kingdom

In addition, in the United Kingdom, this document is being distributed only to, and is directed only at, and any offer subsequently made may only be directed at persons who are "qualified investors" (as defined in the Prospectus Directive) (1) who have professional experience in matters relating to investments falling within Article 19 (5) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005, as amended, or the Order, and/or (2) who are high net worth companies (or persons to whom it may otherwise be lawfully communicated) falling within Article 49(2)(a) to (d) of the Order (all such persons together being referred to as "relevant persons"). This document must not be acted on or relied on in the United Kingdom by persons who are not relevant persons. In the United Kingdom, any investment or investment activity to which this document relates is only available to, and will be engaged in with, relevant persons.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Australia

No prospectus or other disclosure document (as defined in the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) of Australia, or the Corporations Act) in relation to our common shares has been or will be lodged with the Australian Securities & Investments Commission, or ASIC. This document has not been lodged with ASIC and is only directed to certain categories of exempt persons. Accordingly, if you receive this document in Australia:

- (1) you confirm and warrant that you are either:
 - (a) a "sophisticated investor" under section 708(8)(a) or (b) of the Corporations Act;
 - (b) a "sophisticated investor" under section 708(8)(c) or (d) of the Corporations Act and that you have provided an accountant's certificate to us which complies with the requirements of section 708(8)(c)(i) or (ii) of the Corporations Act and related regulations before the offer has been made;
 - (c) a person associated with us under section 708(12) of the Corporations Act; or
 - (d) a "professional investor" within the meaning of section 708(11)(a) or (b) of the Corporations Act, and to the extent that you are unable to confirm or warrant that you are an exempt sophisticated investor, associated person or professional investor under the Corporations Act any offer made to you under this document is void and incapable of acceptance; and
- (2) you warrant and agree that you will not offer any of our common shares for resale in Australia within 12 months of the common shares being issued unless any such resale offer is exempt from the requirement to issue a disclosure document under section 708 of the Corporations Act.

Table of Contents

Notice to Prospective Investors in the Dubai International Financial Centre

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus relate to an Exempt Offer in accordance with the Offered Securities Rules of the Dubai Financial Services Authority, or DFSA. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are intended for distribution only to persons of a type specified in the Offered Securities Rules of the DFSA. They must not be delivered to, or relied on by, any other person. The DFSA has no responsibility for reviewing or verifying any documents in connection with Exempt Offers. The DFSA has not approved this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus nor taken steps to verify the information set forth herein and has no responsibility for this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. Our common shares to which this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus relate may be illiquid and/or subject to restrictions on their resale. Prospective purchasers of our common shares offered should conduct their own due diligence on our common shares. If you do not understand the contents of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, you should consult an authorized financial advisor.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Hong Kong

Our common shares may not be offered or sold in Hong Kong, by means of any document, other than (1) to "professional investors" as defined in the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap. 571, Laws of Hong Kong) and any rules made under that Ordinance or (2) in other circumstances which do not result in the document being a "prospectus" as defined in the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 32, Laws of Hong Kong) or which do not constitute an offer to the public within the meaning of that Ordinance. No advertisement, invitation or document relating to our common shares may be issued or may be in the possession of any person for the purpose of the issue, whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere, which is directed at, or the contents of which are likely to be read by, the public in Hong Kong (except if permitted to do so under the laws of Hong Kong) other than with respect to our common shares which are intended to be disposed of only to persons outside Hong Kong or only to "professional investors" as defined in the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap. 571, Laws of Hong Kong) or any rules made under that Ordinance.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Korea

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus should not be construed in any way as our (or any of our affiliates or agents) soliciting investment or offering to sell our common shares in the Republic of Korea, or Korea. We are not making any representation with respect to the eligibility of any recipients of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus to acquire our common shares under the laws of Korea, including, without limitation, the Financial Investment Services and Capital Markets Act, or the FSCMA, the Foreign Exchange Transaction Act, or the FETA, and any regulations thereunder. Our common shares have not been registered with the Financial Services Commission of Korea in any way pursuant to the FSCMA, and our common shares may not be offered, sold or delivered, or offered or sold to any person for reoffering or resale, directly or indirectly, in Korea or to any resident of Korea except pursuant to applicable laws and regulations of Korea. Furthermore, our common shares may not be resold to any Korean resident unless such Korean resident as the purchaser of the resold common shares complies with all applicable regulatory requirements (including, without limitation, reporting or approval requirements under the FETA and regulations thereunder) relating to the purchase of the resold common shares.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Japan

No securities registration statement, or SRS, has been filed under Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the Financial Instruments and Exchange Law of Japan (Law No. 25 of 1948, as amended), or FIEL, in relation to our common shares. Our common shares are being offered in a private placement to

Table of Contents

"qualified institutional investors" (tekikaku-kan-toshika) under Article 10 of the Cabinet Office Ordinance concerning Definitions provided in Article 2 of the FIEL (the Ministry of Finance Ordinance No. 14, as amended), or QIIs, under Article 2, Paragraph 3, Item 2 i of the FIEL. Any QII acquiring our common shares in this offer may not transfer or resell those shares except to other QIIs.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Singapore

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus have not been registered as a prospectus with the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Accordingly, this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any other document or material in connection with the offer or sale, or invitation for subscription or purchase, of our common shares may not be circulated or distributed, nor may our common shares be offered or sold, or be made the subject of an invitation for subscription or purchase, whether directly or indirectly, to persons in Singapore other than (1) to an institutional investor under Section 274 of the Securities and Future Act, Chapter 289 of Singapore, or the SFA, (2) to a "relevant person" as defined in Section 275(2) of the SFA, or any person pursuant to Section 275(1A), and in accordance with the conditions, specified in Section 275 of the SFA or (3) otherwise pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions of, any other applicable provision of the SFA.

Where our common shares are subscribed and purchased under Section 275 of the SFA by a relevant person which is:

- (1) a corporation (which is not an accredited investor (as defined in Section 4A of the SFA)) the sole business of which is to hold investments and the entire share capital of which is owned by one or more individuals, each of whom is an accredited investor; or
- (2) a trust (where the trustee is not an accredited investor (as defined in Section 4A of the SFA)) whose sole whole purpose is to hold investments and each beneficiary is an accredited investor, shares, debentures and units of shares and debentures of that corporation or the beneficiaries' rights and interest (howsoever described) in that trust shall not be transferable within six months after that corporation or that trust has acquired our common shares under Section 275 of the SFA except:
 - (a) to an institutional investor under Section 274 of the SFA or to a relevant person (as defined in Section 275(2) of the SFA) and in accordance with the conditions, specified in Section 275 of the SFA;
 - (b) (in the case of a corporation) where the transfer arises from an offer referred to in Section 275(1A) of the SFA, or (in the case of a trust) where the transfer arises from an offer that is made on terms that such rights or interests are acquired at a consideration of not less than S\$200,000 (or its equivalent in a foreign currency) for each transaction, whether such amount is to be paid for in cash or by exchange of securities or other assets;
 - (c) where no consideration is or will be given for the transfer; or
 - (d) where the transfer is by operation of law.

By accepting this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, the recipient hereof represents and warrants that he is entitled to receive it in accordance with the restrictions set forth above and agrees to be bound by limitations contained herein. Any failure to comply with these limitations may constitute a violation of law.

Table of Contents

Notice to Prospective Investors in Switzerland

We have not and will not register with the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority, or FINMA, as a foreign collective investment scheme pursuant to Article 119 of the Federal Act on Collective Investment Scheme of 23 June 2006, as amended, or CISA, and accordingly the securities being offered pursuant to this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus have not and will not be approved, and may not be licenseable, with FINMA. Therefore, the securities have not been authorized for distribution by FINMA as a foreign collective investment scheme pursuant to Article 119 CISA and the securities offered hereby may not be offered to the public (as this term is defined in Article 3 CISA) in or from Switzerland. The securities may solely be offered to "qualified investors," as this term is defined in Article 10 CISA, and in the circumstances set out in Article 3 of the Ordinance on Collective Investment Scheme of 22 November 2006, as amended, or CISO, such that there is no public offer. Investors, however, do not benefit from protection under CISA or CISO or supervision by FINMA. This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any other materials relating to the securities are strictly personal and confidential to each offeree and do not constitute an offer to any other person. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus may only be used by those qualified investors to whom they have been handed out in connection with the offer described herein and may neither directly or indirectly be distributed or made available to any person or entity other than their recipients. It may not be used in connection with any other offer and shall in particular not be copied and/or distributed to the public in Switzerland or from Switzerland. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus do not constitute an issue prospectus as that term is understood pursuant to Article 652a and/or 1156 of the Swiss Federal Code of Obligations. We have not applied for a listing of the securities on the SIX Swiss Exchange or any other regulated securities market in Switzerland, and consequently, the information presented in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus do not necessarily comply with the information standards set out in the listing rules of the SIX Swiss Exchange and corresponding prospectus schemes annexed to the listing rules of the SIX Swiss Exchange.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of our common shares offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and certain federal income tax matters will be passed upon for us by Hogan Lovells US LLP. Sidley Austin LLP will act as counsel to the underwriters.

EXPERTS

The combined consolidated financial statements and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting (which is included in Management's Annual Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting) incorporated into this prospectus supplement by reference to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The statement of assets acquired and liabilities assumed as of May 30, 2012 and statements of revenues and direct expenses for the years ended December 31, 2009, 2010 and 2011 of Courtyard New York Manhattan/Upper East Side incorporated into this prospectus supplement by reference to our Current Report on Form 8-K/A filed with the SEC on August 9, 2012 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The consolidated financial statements of APF Emeryville, LLC and its subsidiaries as of and for the year ended December 31, 2011 incorporated into this prospectus supplement by reference to our Current Report on Form 8-K/A filed with the SEC on August 6, 2012 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of Cornerstone Accounting Group, LLP, independent accountants, given on the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION AND INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

We have filed a registration statement on Form S-3 with the SEC in connection with this offering. In addition, we file annual, quarterly, and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy the registration statement and any other documents filed by us at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the Public Reference Room. Our SEC filings are also available to the public at the SEC's Internet site at <http://www.sec.gov>. Our reference to the SEC's Internet site is intended to be an inactive textual reference only.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus do not contain all of the information included in the registration statement. If a reference is made in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus to any of our contracts or other documents filed or incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the filed copy of the contract or document.

The SEC allows us to "incorporate by reference" into this prospectus supplement the information we file with the SEC under the Exchange Act prior to the completion of this offering, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. Information incorporated by reference is part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Later information filed with the SEC under the Exchange Act prior to the completion of this offering will update and supersede information in previously filed reports with the SEC or in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

Table of Contents

This prospectus supplement incorporates by reference the documents listed below, all of which have been previously filed with the SEC:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012;

the portions of our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A filed with the SEC on March 30, 2012 incorporated by reference in the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on June 5, 2012 (as amended by our Form 8-K/A filed on August 9, 2012), June 15, 2012 (as amended by our Form 8-K/A filed on August 6, 2012) and January 7, 2013; and

the description of our common shares included in our Registration Statement on Form 8-A (SEC File No. 001-35169) filed with the SEC on May 9, 2011 under Section 12(b) of the Exchange Act and including any additional amendment or report filed for the purpose of updating such description.

We also incorporate by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus additional documents that we may file with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act from the date of this prospectus supplement prior to the termination of this offering; provided, however that we are not incorporating any information furnished under either Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of any Current Report on Form 8-K.

You may request a copy of these filings, at no cost, by contacting Anita Cooke Wells, Vice President, Administration and Corporate Secretary, 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 1000, Maryland 20814, by telephone at 301-280-7777, by e-mail at awells@rljlodgingtrust.com, or by visiting our website, www.rljlodgingtrust.com. The information contained on our website is not part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. Our reference to our website is intended to be an inactive textual reference only.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

**Common Shares, Preferred Shares, Depositary Shares,
Warrants and Rights**

We may offer, from time to time, one or more series or classes of:

Common shares;

Preferred shares;

Depositary shares representing our preferred shares;

Warrants exercisable for our common shares, preferred shares or depositary shares representing preferred shares; and

Rights to purchase common shares.

We refer to our common shares, preferred shares, depositary shares, warrants and rights collectively as the "securities." This prospectus describes some of the general terms that may apply to these securities and the general manner in which they may be offered. The prices and terms of any securities to be offered, the net proceeds that we expect to receive from the sale of such securities and the specific manner in which such securities may be offered will be set forth in one or more supplements to this prospectus.

We will deliver this prospectus together with a prospectus supplement setting forth the specific terms of the securities we are offering. The applicable prospectus supplement also will contain information, where applicable, about U.S. federal income tax considerations relating to, and any listing on a securities exchange of, the securities covered by the prospectus supplement.

We may offer the securities directly to investors, through agents designated from time to time by them or us, or to or through underwriters or dealers. If any agents, underwriters, or dealers are involved in the sale of any of the securities, their names, and any applicable purchase price, fee, commission or discount arrangement with, between or among them, will be set forth, or will be calculable from the information set forth, in an accompanying prospectus supplement. For more detailed information, see "Plan of Distribution" beginning on page 27. No securities may be sold without delivery of a prospectus supplement describing the method and terms of the offering of those securities.

Our common shares are listed on the New York Stock Exchange, or the NYSE, under the symbol "RLJ." On August 21, 2012, the last reported sale price of our common shares on the NYSE was \$18.02 per share. Our principal executive offices are located at 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 1000, Maryland 20814, and our telephone number is (301) 280-7777.

You should carefully read this entire prospectus, the documents that are incorporated by reference in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement before you invest in any of these securities.

Investing in our securities involves risks. You should carefully consider the risks described under "Risk Factors" on page 4 of this prospectus, as well as the other information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, before making a decision to invest in our securities.

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

This prospectus is dated August 22, 2012

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--|-------------|
| <u>About This Prospectus</u> | <u>1</u> |
| <u>Forward-Looking Statements</u> | <u>2</u> |
| <u>Our Company</u> | <u>3</u> |
| <u>Risk Factors</u> | <u>4</u> |
| <u>Use of Proceeds</u> | <u>5</u> |
| <u>Ratio of Earnings to Combined Fixed Charges and Preferred Dividends</u> | <u>6</u> |
| <u>Description of Capital Shares</u> | <u>7</u> |
| <u>Description of Common Shares</u> | <u>7</u> |
| <u>Description of Preferred Shares</u> | <u>15</u> |
| <u>Description of Depositary Shares</u> | <u>17</u> |
| <u>Description of Warrants</u> | <u>21</u> |
| <u>Description of Rights</u> | <u>22</u> |
| <u>Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer</u> | <u>23</u> |
| <u>Book-Entry Securities</u> | <u>26</u> |
| <u>Plan of Distribution</u> | <u>28</u> |
| <u>Legal Matters</u> | <u>30</u> |
| <u>Experts</u> | <u>30</u> |
| <u>Where You Can Find More Information and Incorporation by Reference</u> | <u>30</u> |

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, utilizing a "shelf" registration process. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer at any time, from time to time, in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides only a general description of the securities we may offer and is not meant to provide a complete description of each security. As a result, each time we offer securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that contains specific information about the terms of those securities, which we will attach to this prospectus. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus.

You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement. To the extent there are any inconsistencies between the information in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the applicable prospectus supplement. You should rely only on the information provided or information to which we have referred you, including any information incorporated by reference in this prospectus or any applicable prospectus supplement. We have not authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. We are not making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale of these securities is not permitted. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus, any free writing prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement prepared by us or the other documents incorporated by reference herein or therein is accurate only as of their respective dates or on the date or dates that are specified in these documents. Our business, financial condition, liquidity, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

You should read carefully the entire prospectus, as well as the documents incorporated by reference in the prospectus, which we have referred you to in "Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference" below, before making an investment decision. Information incorporated by reference after the date of this prospectus may add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. Statements contained or deemed to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus or any applicable prospectus supplement as to the content of any contract or other document are not necessarily complete, and in each instance we refer you to the copy of the contract or other document filed as an exhibit to a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus or such prospectus supplement, each such statement being qualified in all respects by such reference. Any information in such subsequent filings that is inconsistent with this prospectus will supersede the information in this prospectus or any earlier prospectus supplement.

Unless the context requires otherwise, references in this prospectus to "we," "our," "us" and "our company" refer to RLJ Lodging Trust, a Maryland real estate investment trust, together with its consolidated subsidiaries, including RLJ Lodging Trust, L.P., a Delaware limited partnership, which we refer to as "our operating partnership."

Table of Contents

CAUTIONARY NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

We make forward-looking statements in this prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein that are subject to risks and uncertainties. These forward-looking statements include information about possible or assumed future results of our business, financial condition, liquidity, cash flows, EBITDA, FFO, results of operations, and plans and objectives. When we use the words "believe," "expect," "anticipate," "estimate," "plan," "continue," "intend," "should," "may" or similar expressions, we intend to identify forward-looking statements. Statements regarding the following subjects, among others, may be forward-looking:

the state of the U.S. economy generally or in specific geographic regions in which we operate, and the effect of general economic conditions on the lodging industry in particular;

market trends in our industry, interest rates, real estate values and the capital markets;

our investment and growth strategies and, particularly, our ability to identify and complete hotel acquisitions;

the results of our rebranding initiatives with respect to five of our hotels;

our projected operating results and cash available for distribution;

actions and initiatives of the U.S. government and changes to U.S. government policies and the execution and impact of these actions, initiatives and policies;

our ability to manage our relationships with our management companies, as well as franchisors;

the expected opening date of our hotel under renovation;

our ability to obtain and maintain financing arrangements on attractive terms;

changes in the value of our hotels;

impact of and changes in governmental regulations, tax law and rates, accounting guidance and similar matters;

our ability, and the ability of each of our subsidiary real estate investment trusts, or REITs, to continue to satisfy complex rules under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the Code, in order to maintain REIT status for federal income tax purposes, the ability of our operating partnership to satisfy the rules in order to maintain its status as a partnership for federal income tax purposes, the ability of certain of our subsidiaries to maintain their status as taxable REIT subsidiaries, or TRSs, for federal income tax purposes, and our ability and the ability of our subsidiaries to operate effectively within the limitations imposed by these rules;

changes in personnel and availability of qualified personnel;

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

general volatility and liquidity of the market price of our common shares; and

degree and nature of our competition.

For a detailed discussion of the risks and uncertainties that may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to differ materially from those expressed or implied by forward-looking statements, see the section entitled "Risk Factors" in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011, our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarterly periods ended March 31, 2012 and June 30, 2012 and in other documents that we may file from time to time in the future with the SEC. Moreover, because we operate in a very competitive and rapidly changing environment, new risk factors are likely to emerge from time to time. Given these risks and uncertainties, investors should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements as a prediction of actual results.

Table of Contents

OUR COMPANY

We are a self-advised and self-administered Maryland REIT that invests primarily in premium-branded, focused-service and compact full-service hotels. We are one of the largest U.S. publicly-traded lodging REITs in terms of both number of hotels and number of rooms. Our hotels are concentrated in urban and dense suburban markets that we believe exhibit multiple demand generators and high barriers to entry. We believe focused-service and compact full-service hotels with these characteristics generate high levels of RevPAR, strong operating margins and attractive returns.

As of June 30, 2012, we, through wholly-owned subsidiaries, owned 100% of the interests in 143 hotels and a 95% interest in one hotel. Our 144 hotels are made up of 21,342 suites/rooms and are located in 20 states and the District of Columbia.

Our strategy is to invest primarily in premium-branded, focused-service and compact full-service hotels. Focused-service and compact full-service hotels typically generate most of their revenue from room rentals, have limited food and beverage outlets and meeting space and require fewer employees than traditional full-service hotels. We believe premium-branded, focused-service hotels have the potential to generate attractive returns relative to other types of hotels due to their ability to achieve revenue per available room levels at or close to those achieved by traditional full-service hotels while achieving higher profit margins due to their more efficient operating model and less volatile cash flows. We also may invest in compact full-service hotels, which have operating characteristics that resemble those of focused-service hotels. International lodging brands that are consistent with our premium-branded investment strategy include, among others, Courtyard by MarriottTM, Residence Inn by MarriottTM, Hilton Garden InnTM, Homewood Suites by HiltonTM, Hyatt PlaceTM and Embassy SuitesTM.

We intend to elect to be taxed as a REIT, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, commencing with the portion of our taxable year ended December 31, 2011, when we file our federal income tax return for that taxable period. Substantially all of our assets are held by, and all of our operations are conducted through, our operating partnership. We are the sole general partner of our operating partnership. As of June 30, 2012, we owned, through a combination of direct and indirect interests, 99.2% of the OP units in our operating partnership.

Our principal executive offices are located at 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 1000, Bethesda, Maryland 20814. Our telephone number is (301) 280-7777. Our website is located at www.rljlodgingtrust.com. The information found on or accessible through our website is not incorporated into, and does not form a part of, this prospectus or any applicable prospectus supplement. We have included our website address as an inactive textual reference and do not intend it to be an active link to our website.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully consider the risk factors set forth in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011 and our Quarterly Reports for the quarterly periods ended March 31, 2012 and June 30, 2012, together with all the other information contained or incorporated by reference into this prospectus, including the discussion of material federal income tax considerations applicable to us and holders of our common shares incorporated by reference from our Form 8-K dated August 22, 2012, and the risks we have highlighted in other sections of this prospectus, before making an investment decision to purchase our securities. The occurrence of any of the events described could materially and adversely affect our business, prospects, financial condition, results of operations and our ability to make cash distributions to our shareholders, which could cause you to lose all or a significant part of your investment in our securities. Some statements in this prospectus constitute forward-looking statements. Please refer to the section entitled "Forward-Looking Statements."

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise described in the applicable prospectus supplement to this prospectus used to offer specific securities, we intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of securities under this prospectus for general corporate purposes, which may include acquisitions of additional properties, the repayment of outstanding indebtedness, capital expenditures, the expansion, redevelopment and/or improvement of properties in our portfolio, working capital and other general purposes.

Table of Contents**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO COMBINED FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED DIVIDENDS**

The following table sets forth our ratios of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividends for each of the periods presented. For the purpose of computing the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividends, and the amount of coverage deficiency, earnings have been calculated by adding fixed charges (excluding capitalized interest), to pre-tax income (loss) from continuing operations before noncontrolling interests in our operating partnership, distributions of income from equity investees, noncontrolling interest and income from majority-owned unconsolidated entities and deducting income from unconsolidated entities. Fixed charges consist of interest costs, whether expensed or capitalized, amortization of debt issuance costs, fixed charges of majority-owned unconsolidated entities and estimated interest within rental expense. This information is given on an unaudited historical basis (in millions, except ratio amounts).

| | Six Months Ended June 30, 2012(1) | Years Ended December 31, | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------|
| | | 2011(2) | 2010(3) | 2009(3) | 2008(3) | 2007(3) |
| Ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred share dividends | 1.95x | | | | | 1.18x |
| Deficiency of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred share dividends | \$ | \$ (9.4) | \$ (41.3) | \$ (123.0) | \$ (29.1) | \$ |

(1) Reflects the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividends for our company.

(2) Due to the timing of our initial public offering, which was completed on May 16, 2011, the ratio of earnings to fixed charges and preferred dividends for the year ended December 31, 2011, reflects the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividends for our company together with our predecessor. Our predecessor was not a legal entity, but rather a combination of the real estate hospitality assets, liabilities and operations of RLJ Development, LLC, or RLJ Development, and two lodging-focused private equity funds that were sponsored and managed by RLJ Development, RLJ Lodging Fund II, L.P. (and its parallel fund) and RLJ Real Estate Fund III, L.P. (and its parallel fund).

(3) Reflects the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividends for our predecessor.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL SHARES

General

Our declaration of trust provides that we may issue up to 450,000,000 common shares, par value \$0.01 per share, and 50,000,000 preferred shares, par value \$0.01 per share. Our declaration of trust authorizes our board of trustees to amend our declaration of trust to increase or decrease the aggregate number of authorized common shares or the number of shares of any class or series without shareholder approval. As of August 17, 2012, 106,608,336 common shares were issued and outstanding and zero preferred shares were issued and outstanding.

Maryland law provides, and our declaration of trust provides, that none of our shareholders is personally liable for any of our obligations solely as a result of that shareholder's status as a shareholder.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON SHARES

Voting Rights of Common Shares

Subject to the provisions of our declaration of trust regarding the restrictions on transfer and ownership of shares of beneficial interest and except as may otherwise be specified in the terms of any class or series of shares of beneficial interest, each outstanding common share entitles the holder to one vote on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders, including the election of trustees, and, except as provided with respect to any other class or series of shares of beneficial interest, the holders of such common shares will possess the exclusive voting power. There is no cumulative voting in the election of trustees.

Under the Maryland statute governing real estate investment trusts formed under the laws of that state, or the Maryland REIT law, a Maryland real estate investment trust generally cannot amend its declaration of trust or merge with another entity unless declared advisable by a majority of its board of trustees and approved by the affirmative vote of shareholders holding at least two-thirds of the shares entitled to vote on the matter unless a lesser percentage (but not less than a majority of all the votes entitled to be cast on the matter) is set forth in the real estate investment trust's declaration of trust. Our declaration of trust provides that these actions (other than certain amendments to the provisions of the declaration of trust related to the removal of trustees, the restrictions on ownership and transfer of shares and the termination of our existence) may be taken if declared advisable by a majority of our board of trustees and approved by the vote of shareholders holding a majority of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

Dividends, Distributions, Liquidation and Other Rights

Subject to the preferential rights of any other class or series of shares and to the provisions of our declaration of trust regarding the restrictions on transfer and ownership of shares, holders of our common shares are entitled to receive dividends on such common shares if, as and when authorized by the board of trustees, and declared by us out of assets legally available therefor. Such holders also are entitled to share ratably in the assets of our company legally available for distribution to shareholders in the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up after payment or establishment of reserves for all debts and other liabilities of our company and any shares with preferential rights related thereto.

Holders of common shares have no preference, conversion, exchange, sinking fund or redemption rights, have no preemptive rights to subscribe for any securities of our company and have no appraisal rights. Subject to the provisions of our declaration of trust regarding the restrictions on transfer and ownership of shares, common shares will have equal dividend, liquidation and other rights.

Table of Contents

Power to Reclassify Our Unissued Common Shares or Preferred Shares

Our declaration of trust authorizes our board of trustees to classify and reclassify any unissued common shares or preferred shares into other classes or series of shares and to establish the number of shares in each class or series and to set the preferences, conversion and other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends or other distributions, qualifications or terms or conditions of redemption for each such class or series.

Power to Increase or Decrease Authorized Common Shares and Issue Additional Common and Preferred Shares

We believe that the power of our board of trustees to amend our declaration of trust to increase or decrease the number of authorized shares, to issue additional authorized but unissued common shares or preferred shares and to classify or reclassify unissued common shares or preferred shares and thereafter to cause to issue such classified or reclassified shares will provide us with increased flexibility in structuring possible future financings and acquisitions and in meeting other needs that might arise. The additional classes or series will be available for issuance without further action by our shareholders, unless such action is required by applicable law or the rules of any stock exchange or automated quotation system on which our securities may be listed or traded.

Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer

With certain exceptions, our declaration of trust generally prohibits any person or entity (other than a person or entity who has been granted an exception) from directly or indirectly, beneficially or constructively, owning more than 9.8% of the aggregate of our outstanding common shares, by value or by number of shares, whichever is more restrictive. However, our declaration of trust permits (but does not require) exceptions to be made for shareholders provided that our board of trustees determines that such exceptions will not jeopardize our qualification as a REIT. For more information regarding these ownership restrictions and certain other restrictions intended to protect our qualification as a REIT, see "Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer."

Stock Exchange Listing

Our common shares are listed on the NYSE under the symbol "RLJ."

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common shares is Wells Fargo Shareowners Services, a division of Wells Fargo Bank N.A.

Certain Provisions of Maryland Law and Our Declaration of Trust and Bylaws

The following summary of certain provisions of Maryland law and our declaration of trust and bylaws does not purport to be complete and is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to Maryland law and to our declaration of trust and bylaws, copies of which are filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. See "Where You Can Find More Information."

Our Board of Trustees

Our declaration of trust and bylaws provide that the number of trustees of our company may be established by our board of trustees, but may not be fewer than two nor more than 15. Our declaration of trust and bylaws provide that any vacancy, including a vacancy created by an increase in the number of trustees, may be filled only by a majority of the remaining trustees, even if the remaining trustees do

Table of Contents

not constitute a quorum. Any individual elected to fill such vacancy will serve for the remainder of the full term and until a successor is duly elected and qualifies.

Pursuant to our bylaws, each of our trustees will be elected by our shareholders to serve until the next annual meeting of shareholders and until his or her successor is duly elected and qualifies under Maryland law. Holders of our common shares will have no right to cumulative voting in the election of trustees. Trustees will be elected by a plurality of the votes cast.

Our bylaws provide that at least a majority of our trustees must be "independent," with independence being defined in the manner established by our board of trustees and in a manner consistent with listing standards established by the NYSE.

Removal of Trustees

Our declaration of trust provides that, subject to the rights of holders of one or more classes or series of preferred shares to elect or remove one or more trustees, a trustee may be removed only for cause (as defined in our declaration of trust) and only by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast generally in the election of trustees and that our board of trustees has the exclusive power to fill vacant trusteeships, even if the remaining trustees do not constitute a quorum. These provisions may preclude shareholders from removing incumbent trustees and filling the vacancies created by such removal with their own nominees.

Business Combinations

Under provisions of the MGCL that apply to Maryland real estate investment trusts, certain "business combinations" (including a merger, consolidation, share exchange or, in certain circumstances specified under the statute, an asset transfer or issuance or reclassification of equity securities) between a Maryland real estate investment trust and any interested shareholder, or an affiliate of such an interested shareholder, are prohibited for five years after the most recent date on which the interested shareholder becomes an interested shareholder. Maryland law defines an interested shareholder as:

any person who beneficially owns, directly or indirectly, 10% or more of the voting power of the trust's outstanding voting shares; or

an affiliate or associate of the trust who, at any time within the two-year period prior to the date in question, was the beneficial owner, directly or indirectly, of 10% or more of the voting power of the then-outstanding voting shares of the trust.

A person is not an interested shareholder under the statute if the board of trustees approves in advance the transaction by which the person otherwise would have become an interested shareholder. In approving a transaction, however, the board of trustees may provide that its approval is subject to compliance at or after the time of the approval, with any terms and conditions determined by the board of trustees.

After the five-year prohibition, unless, among other conditions, the trust's common shareholders receive a minimum price (as described under Maryland law) for their shares and the consideration is received in cash or in the same form as previously paid by the interested shareholder for its shares, any business combination between the trust and an interested shareholder generally must be recommended by the board of trustees and approved by the affirmative vote of at least:

80% of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of outstanding voting shares of the trust; and

two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of voting shares of the trust other than shares held by the interested shareholder with whom (or with whose affiliate) the business combination is to be effected or shares held by an affiliate or associate of the interested shareholder.

Table of Contents

These provisions of the MGCL do not apply, however, to business combinations that are approved or exempted by a trust's board of trustees prior to the time that the interested shareholder becomes an interested shareholder. Our board of trustees, pursuant to the statute, has determined to opt out of the business combination provisions of the MGCL and, consequently, the five-year prohibition and, accordingly, the supermajority vote requirements will not apply to business combinations between us and an interested shareholder, unless our board in the future alters or repeals this resolution. As a result, any person who later becomes an interested shareholder may be able to enter into business combinations with our company without compliance by us with the supermajority vote requirements and the other provisions of the statute.

We cannot assure you that our board of trustees will not determine to become subject to such business combination provisions in the future. However, an alteration or repeal of the resolution of our board of trustees will not have any effect on any business combinations that have been consummated or upon any agreements existing at the time of such modification or repeal.

Control Share Acquisitions

Maryland law provides that "control shares" of a Maryland real estate investment trust acquired in a "control share acquisition" have no voting rights except to the extent approved at a special meeting of shareholders by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter, excluding shares in a Maryland real estate investment trust in respect of which any of the following persons is entitled to exercise or direct the exercise of the voting power of such shares in the election of trustees: (1) a person who makes or proposes to make a control share acquisition; (2) an officer of the trust; or (3) an employee of the trust who is also a trustee of the trust. "Control shares" are voting shares that, if aggregated with all other such shares previously acquired by the acquirer or in respect of which the acquirer is able to exercise or direct the exercise of voting power (except solely by virtue of a revocable proxy), would entitle the acquirer to exercise voting power in electing trustees within one of the following ranges of voting power:

one-tenth or more but less than one-third;

one-third or more but less than a majority; or

a majority or more of all voting power.

Control shares do not include shares the acquiring person is then entitled to vote as a result of having previously obtained shareholder approval. A "control share acquisition" means the acquisition, directly or indirectly, of ownership of, or the power to direct the exercise of voting power with respect to, issued and outstanding control shares, subject to certain exceptions.

A person who has made or proposes to make a control share acquisition, upon satisfaction of certain conditions (including an undertaking to pay expenses and making an "acquiring person statement" as described in the MGCL), may compel our board of trustees to call a special meeting of shareholders to be held within 50 days of demand to consider the voting rights of the control shares. If no request for a special meeting is made, we may present the question at any shareholders meeting.

If voting rights of control shares are not approved at the meeting or if the acquiring person does not deliver an "acquiring person statement" as required by Maryland law, then, subject to certain conditions and limitations, the trust may redeem any or all of the control shares (except those for which voting rights have previously been approved) for fair value. Fair value is determined, without regard to the absence of voting rights for the control shares, as of the date of the last control share acquisition by the acquirer or of any meeting of shareholders at which the voting rights of such shares are considered and not approved. If voting rights for control shares are approved at a shareholders meeting and the acquirer becomes entitled to vote a majority of the shares entitled to vote, all other shareholders may exercise appraisal rights, unless appraisal rights are eliminated under the declaration

Table of Contents

of trust. Our declaration of trust eliminates all appraisal rights of shareholders. The control share acquisition statute does not apply (1) to shares acquired in a merger, consolidation or share exchange if we are a party to the transaction or (2) to acquisitions approved or exempted by the declaration of trust or bylaws of the trust.

Our bylaws contain a provision exempting from the control share acquisition statute any and all acquisitions by any person of our common shares. There is no assurance, however, that our board of trustees will not amend or eliminate such provision at any time in the future.

Subtitle 8

Subtitle 8 of Title 3 of the MGCL permits a Maryland real estate investment trust with a class of equity securities registered under the Exchange Act and at least three independent trustees to elect to be subject, by provision in its declaration of trust or bylaws or a resolution of its board of trustees and notwithstanding any contrary provision in the declaration of trust or bylaws, to any or all of the following five provisions:

a classified board;

a two-thirds shareholder vote requirement for removing a trustee;

a requirement that the number of trustees be fixed only by vote of the trustees;

a requirement that a vacancy on the board be filled only by the remaining trustees and for the remainder of the full term of the class of trustees in which the vacancy occurred; and

a requirement that requires the request of the holders of at least a majority of all votes entitled to be cast to call a special meeting of shareholders.

Our declaration of trust provides that, at such time as we become eligible to make a Subtitle 8 election, we elect to be subject to the provisions of Subtitle 8 relating to the filling of vacancies on our board of trustees. Through provisions in our declaration of trust and bylaws unrelated to Subtitle 8, we also (1) require the affirmative vote of the holders of not less than two-thirds of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter for the removal of any trustee from our board, which removal will be allowed only for cause, (2) vest in our board the exclusive power to fix the number of trusteeships, subject to limitations set forth in our declaration of trust and bylaws, and fill vacancies and (3) require, unless called by the Executive Chairman of our board of trustees, the President or Chief Executive Officer or our board of trustees, the written request of shareholders entitled to cast a majority of all votes entitled to be cast at such meeting to call a special meeting. We have not elected to create a classified board. In the future, our board of trustees may elect, without shareholder approval, to create a classified board or adopt one or more of the other provisions of Subtitle 8.

Amendment of Our Declaration of Trust and Bylaws and Approval of Extraordinary Transactions

Under the Maryland REIT law, a Maryland real estate investment trust generally cannot amend its declaration of trust or merge with another entity unless declared advisable by a majority of the board of trustees and approved by the affirmative vote of shareholders entitled to cast at least two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter unless a lesser percentage, but not less than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter, is set forth in the real estate investment trust's declaration of trust. Our declaration of trust provides that such actions (other than certain amendments to the provisions of our declaration of trust related to the removal of trustees, the restrictions on ownership and transfer of our shares and termination of the trust) may be taken if declared advisable by a majority of our board of trustees and approved by the vote of shareholders holding a majority of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

Table of Contents

Our board of trustees has the exclusive power to adopt, alter or repeal any provision of our bylaws and to make new bylaws.

Meetings of Shareholders

Under our bylaws, annual meetings of shareholders will be held each year at a date and time as determined by our board of trustees. Special meetings of shareholders may be called only by a majority of the trustees then in office, by the executive chairman of our board of trustees, our president or our chief executive officer. Additionally, subject to the provisions of our bylaws, special meetings of the shareholders shall be called by our secretary upon the written request of shareholders entitled to cast at least a majority of the votes entitled to be cast at such meeting. Only matters set forth in the notice of the special meeting may be considered and acted upon at such a meeting. Maryland law and our bylaws provide that any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of shareholders may be taken without a meeting by unanimous written consent, if that consent sets forth that action and is signed by each shareholder entitled to vote on the matter.

Advance Notice of Trustee Nominations and New Business

Our bylaws provide that, with respect to an annual meeting of shareholders, nominations of persons for election to our board of trustees and the proposal of business to be considered by shareholders at the annual meeting may be made only:

pursuant to our notice of the meeting;

by or at the direction of our board of trustees; or

by a shareholder who was a shareholder of record both at the time of giving of the notice of the meeting and at the time of the annual meeting, who is entitled to vote at the meeting and who has complied with the advance notice procedures set forth in our bylaws.

With respect to special meetings of shareholders, only the business specified in our notice of meeting may be brought before the meeting of shareholders. Nominations of persons for election to our board of trustees may be made only:

pursuant to our notice of the meeting;

by or at the direction of our board of trustees; or

provided that our board of trustees has determined that trustees shall be elected at such meeting, by a shareholder who is a shareholder of record both at the time of giving of the notice required by our bylaws and at the time of the meeting, who is entitled to vote at the meeting and who has complied with the advance notice provisions set forth in our bylaws.

The purpose of requiring shareholders to give advance notice of nominations and other proposals is to afford our board of trustees the opportunity to consider the qualifications of the proposed nominees or the advisability of the other proposals and, to the extent considered necessary by our board of trustees, to inform shareholders and make recommendations regarding the nominations or other proposals. The advance notice procedures also permit a more orderly procedure for conducting our shareholder meetings. Although our bylaws do not give our board of trustees the power to disapprove timely shareholder nominations and proposals, our bylaws may have the effect of precluding a contest for the election of trustees or proposals for other action if the proper procedures are not followed, and of discouraging or deterring a third party from conducting a solicitation of proxies to elect its own slate of trustees to our board of trustees or to approve its own proposal.

Table of Contents

Anti-takeover Effect of Certain Provisions of Maryland Law and Our Declaration of Trust and Bylaws

The provisions of our declaration of trust on removal of trustees and the advance notice provisions of our bylaws could delay, defer or prevent a transaction or a change in control of our company that might involve a premium price for holders of our common shares or otherwise be in the best interests of our shareholders. Likewise, if our board of trustees were to opt into the business combination provisions of the MGCL or certain of the provisions of Subtitle 8 of Title 3 of the MGCL, or if the provision in our bylaws opting out of the control share acquisition provisions of the MGCL were amended or rescinded, these provisions of the MGCL could have similar anti-takeover effects.

Indemnification and Limitation of Trustees' and Officers' Liability

The Maryland REIT law permits a Maryland real estate investment trust to include in its declaration of trust a provision limiting the liability of its trustees and officers to the trust and its shareholders for money damages except for liability resulting from actual receipt of an improper benefit or profit in money, property or services or active and deliberate dishonesty established by a final judgment as being material to the cause of action. Our declaration of trust contains such a provision that eliminates such liability to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law.

The Maryland REIT law permits a Maryland real estate investment trust to indemnify and advance expenses to its trustees, officers, employees and agents to the same extent as permitted by the MGCL for directors and officers of a Maryland corporation. The MGCL permits a corporation to indemnify its present and former directors and officers, among others, against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements and reasonable expenses actually incurred by them in connection with any proceeding to which they may be made or are threatened to be made a party by reason of their service in those or other capacities unless it is established that:

the act or omission of the director or officer was material to the matter giving rise to the proceeding and (1) was committed in bad faith or (2) was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty;

the director or officer actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services; or

in the case of any criminal proceeding, the director or officer had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful.

However, under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation may not indemnify a director or officer for an adverse judgment in a suit by or in the right of the corporation or if the director or officer was adjudged liable on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received, unless in either case a court orders indemnification and then only for expenses.

In addition, the MGCL permits a corporation to advance reasonable expenses to a director or officer upon the corporation's receipt of:

a written affirmation by such director or officer of his or her good faith belief that he or she has met the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification by the corporation; and

a written undertaking by such director or officer or on such director's or officer's behalf to repay the amount paid or reimbursed by the corporation if it is ultimately determined that the director did not meet the standard of conduct.

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

Table of Contents

Our declaration of trust and bylaws obligate us, to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law in effect from time to time, to indemnify and to pay or reimburse reasonable expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding to:

any present or former trustee or officer (including any individual who, at our request, serves or has served as a director, trustee, officer, partner, member, employee or agent of another real estate investment trust, corporation, partnership, company, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or any other enterprise) against any claim or liability to which he or she may become subject by reason of service in such capacity; and

any present or former trustee or officer who has been successful in the defense of a proceeding to which he or she was made a party by reason of service in such capacity.

Our declaration of trust and bylaws also permit us, with the approval of our board of trustees, to indemnify and advance expenses to any person who served a predecessor of ours in any of the capacities described above and to any employee or agent of our company or a predecessor of our company.

In addition, upon completion of our initial public offering, we entered into indemnification agreements with each of our trustees and executive officers that provide for indemnification to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law.

Insofar as the foregoing provisions permit indemnification of trustees, officers or persons controlling us for liability arising under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act of 1933, we have been informed that, in the opinion of the SEC, this indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act of 1933 and is therefore unenforceable.

REIT Qualification

Our declaration of trust provides that our board of trustees may revoke or otherwise terminate our REIT election, without approval of our shareholders, if we determine that it is no longer in our best interests to attempt to qualify, or to continue to qualify, as a REIT.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED SHARES

The following description sets forth certain general terms of the preferred shares to which any prospectus supplement may relate. This description and the description contained in any prospectus supplement are not complete and are in all respects subject to and qualified in their entirety by reference to our declaration of trust, the applicable articles supplementary that describes the terms of the related class or series of preferred shares, and our bylaws, each of which we will make available upon request.

General

Subject to the limitations prescribed by Maryland law and our declaration of trust and bylaws, our board of trustees is authorized to establish the number of shares constituting each series of preferred shares and to fix the designations and powers, preferences and relative, participating, optional or other special rights and qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereof, including such provisions as may be desired concerning voting, redemption, dividends, dissolution or the distribution of assets, conversion or exchange, and such other subjects or matters as may be fixed by resolution of the board of trustees or duly authorized committee thereof. The preferred shares will, when issued, be fully paid and nonassessable and will not have, or be subject to, any preemptive or similar rights.

The prospectus supplement relating to the series of preferred shares offered thereby will describe the specific terms of such securities, including:

the title and stated value of such preferred shares;

the number of such preferred shares offered, the liquidation preference per share and the offering price of such preferred shares;

the dividend rate(s), period(s) and/or payment date(s) or method(s) of calculation thereof applicable to such preferred shares;

whether dividends shall be cumulative or non-cumulative and, if cumulative, the date from which dividends on such preferred shares shall accumulate;

the procedures for any auction and remarketing, if any, for such preferred shares;

the provisions for a sinking fund, if any, for such preferred shares;

the provisions for redemption, if applicable, of such preferred shares;

any listing of such preferred shares on any securities exchange;

the terms and conditions, if applicable, upon which such preferred shares will be convertible into our common shares, including the conversion price (or manner of calculation thereof) and conversion period;

a discussion of federal income tax considerations applicable to such preferred shares;

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

any limitations on issuance of any series of preferred shares ranking senior to or on a parity with such series of preferred shares as to dividend rights and rights upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs;

in addition to those limitations described below, any other limitations on actual and constructive ownership and restrictions on transfer, in each case as may be appropriate to preserve our status as a REIT; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights, limitations or restrictions of such preferred shares.

Table of Contents

Restrictions on Ownership

With certain exceptions, our declaration of trust generally prohibits any person or entity (other than a person or entity who has been granted an exception) from directly or indirectly, beneficially or constructively, owning more than 9.8% of the aggregate of our outstanding preferred shares of any class or series, by value or by number of shares, whichever is more restrictive. For more information regarding these ownership restrictions and certain other restrictions intended to protect our qualification as a REIT, see "Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer."

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our preferred shares will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Certain Provisions of Maryland Law and Our Charter and Bylaws

See "Description of Common Shares Certain Provisions of Maryland Law and Our Charter and Bylaws."

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

General

We may issue receipts for depositary shares, each of which will represent a fractional interest of a preferred share of a particular series, as specified in the applicable prospectus supplement. Preferred shares of each series represented by depositary shares will be deposited under a separate deposit agreement among us, the depositary named therein and the holders from time to time of the depositary receipts. Subject to the terms of the applicable deposit agreement, each owner of a depositary receipt will be entitled, in proportion to the fractional interest of a preferred share of a particular series represented by the depositary shares evidenced by such depositary receipt, to all the rights and preferences of the preferred shares represented by such depositary shares (including dividend, voting, conversion, redemption and liquidation rights).

The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to the applicable deposit agreement. Immediately following the issuance and delivery of the preferred shares by us to a preferred share depositary, we will cause such preferred shares depositary to issue, on our behalf, the depositary receipts. Copies of the applicable form of deposit agreement and depositary receipt may be obtained from us upon request, and the statements made hereunder relating to the deposit agreement and the depositary receipts to be issued thereunder are summaries of certain provisions thereof and do not purport to be complete and are subject to, and qualified in their entirety by reference to, all of the provisions of the applicable deposit agreement and related depositary receipts.

Dividends and Other Distributions

The preferred share depositary will distribute all cash dividends or other cash distributions received in respect of the preferred shares to the record holders of depositary receipts evidencing the related depositary shares in proportion to the number of such depositary receipts owned by such holders, subject to certain obligations of holders to file proofs, certificates and other information and to pay certain charges and expenses to the preferred shares depositary.

In the event of a distribution other than in cash, the preferred shares depositary will distribute property received by it to the record holders of depositary receipts entitled thereto, subject to certain obligations of holders to file proofs, certificates and other information and to pay certain charges and expenses to the preferred shares depositary, unless the preferred shares depositary determines that it is not feasible to make such distribution, in which case the preferred shares depositary may, with our approval, sell such property and distribute the net proceeds from such sale to such holders.

No distribution will be made in respect of any depositary share to the extent that it represents any preferred shares converted into other securities.

Withdrawal of Shares

Upon surrender of the depositary receipts at the corporate trust office of the applicable preferred shares depositary (unless the related depositary shares have previously been called for redemption or converted into other securities), the holders thereof will be entitled to delivery at such office, to or upon such holder's order, of the number of whole or fractional preferred shares and any money or other property represented by the depositary shares evidenced by such depositary receipts. Holders of depositary receipts will be entitled to receive whole or fractional preferred shares on the basis of the proportion of preferred shares represented by each depositary share as specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, but holders of such preferred shares will not thereafter be entitled to receive depositary shares therefor. If the depositary receipts delivered by the holder evidence a number of depositary shares in excess of the number of depositary shares representing the number of preferred

Table of Contents

shares to be withdrawn, the preferred shares depositary will deliver to such holder at the same time a new depositary receipt evidencing such excess number of depositary shares.

Redemption of Depositary Shares

Whenever we redeem preferred shares held by the preferred shares depositary, the preferred shares depositary will redeem as of the same redemption date the number of depositary shares representing preferred shares so redeemed, provided we shall have paid in full to the preferred shares depositary the redemption price of the preferred shares to be redeemed plus an amount equal to any accrued and unpaid dividends thereon to the date fixed for redemption. The redemption price per depositary share will be equal to the corresponding proportion of the redemption price and any other amounts per share payable with respect to the preferred shares. If fewer than all the depositary shares are to be redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected pro rata (as nearly as may be practicable without creating fractional depositary shares) or by any other equitable method determined by us that will not result in a violation of the ownership restrictions in our declaration of trust. See "Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer."

From and after the date fixed for redemption, all dividends in respect of the preferred shares so called for redemption will cease to accrue, the depositary shares so called for redemption will no longer be deemed to be outstanding and all rights of the holders of the depositary receipts evidencing the depositary shares so called for redemption will cease, except the right to receive any moneys payable upon such redemption and any money or other property to which the holders of such depositary receipts were entitled upon such redemption and surrender thereof to the preferred shares depositary.

Voting of the Preferred Shares

Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which the holders of the applicable preferred shares are entitled to vote, the preferred shares depositary will mail the information contained in such notice of meeting to the record holders of the depositary receipts evidencing the depositary shares which represent such preferred shares. Each record holder of depositary receipts evidencing depositary shares on the record date (which will be the same date as the record date for the preferred shares) will be entitled to instruct the preferred shares depositary as to the exercise of the voting rights pertaining to the amount of preferred shares represented by such holder's depositary shares. The preferred shares depositary will vote the amount of preferred shares represented by such depositary shares in accordance with such instructions, and we will agree to take all reasonable action which may be deemed necessary by the preferred shares depositary in order to enable the preferred shares depositary to do so. The preferred shares depositary will abstain from voting the amount of preferred shares represented by such depositary shares to the extent it does not receive specific instructions from the holders of depositary receipts evidencing such depositary shares. The preferred shares depositary shall not be responsible for any failure to carry out any instruction to vote, or for the manner or effect of any such vote made, as long as any such action or non-action is in good faith and does not result from negligence or willful misconduct of the preferred shares depositary.

Liquidation Preference

In the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, whether voluntary or involuntary, the holders of each depositary receipt will be entitled to the fraction of the liquidation preference accorded each preferred share represented by the depositary shares evidenced by such depositary receipt, as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

Conversion of Preferred Shares

The depositary shares, as such, are not convertible into common shares or any of our other securities or property. Nevertheless, if so specified in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to an offering of depositary shares, the depositary receipts may be surrendered by holders thereof to the preferred shares depositary with written instructions to the preferred shares depositary to instruct us to cause conversion of the preferred shares represented by the depositary shares evidenced by such depositary receipts into whole common shares, other preferred shares, and we have agreed that upon receipt of such instructions and any amounts payable in respect thereof, we will cause the conversion thereof utilizing the same procedures as those provided for delivery of preferred shares to effect such conversion. If the depositary shares evidenced by a depositary receipt are to be converted in part only, a new depositary receipt or receipts will be issued for any depositary shares not to be converted. No fractional common shares will be issued upon conversion, and if such conversion would result in a fractional share being issued, an amount will be paid in cash by us equal to the value of the fractional interest based upon the closing price of the common shares on the last business day prior to the conversion.

Amendment and Termination of Deposit Agreement

The form of depositary receipt evidencing the depositary shares which represent the preferred shares and any provision of the deposit agreement may at any time be amended by agreement between us and the preferred shares depositary. However, any amendment that materially and adversely alters the rights of the holders of depositary receipts or that would be materially and adversely inconsistent with the rights granted to the holders of the related preferred shares will not be effective unless such amendment has been approved by the existing holders of at least two-thirds of the applicable depositary shares evidenced by the applicable depositary receipts then outstanding. No amendment shall impair the right, subject to certain exceptions in the deposit agreement, of any holder of depositary receipts to surrender any depositary receipt with instructions to deliver to the holder the related preferred shares and all money and other property, if any, represented thereby, except in order to comply with law. Every holder of an outstanding depositary receipt at the time any such amendment becomes effective shall be deemed, by continuing to hold such receipt, to consent and agree to such amendment and to be bound by the deposit agreement as amended thereby.

The deposit agreement may be terminated by us upon not less than 30 days' prior written notice to the preferred shares depositary if (i) such termination is necessary to preserve our status as a REIT or (ii) a majority of each series of preferred shares affected by such termination consents to such termination, whereupon the preferred shares depositary shall deliver or make available to each holder of depositary receipts, upon surrender of the depositary receipts held by such holder, such number of whole or fractional preferred shares as are represented by the depositary shares evidenced by such depositary receipts together with any other property held by the preferred shares depositary with respect to such depositary receipts. We have agreed that if the deposit agreement is terminated to preserve our status as a REIT, then we will use our best efforts to list the preferred shares issued upon surrender of the related depositary shares on a national securities exchange. In addition, the deposit agreement will automatically terminate if (i) all outstanding depositary shares shall have been redeemed, (ii) there shall have been a final distribution in respect of the related preferred shares in connection with our liquidation, dissolution or winding up and such distribution shall have been distributed to the holders of depositary receipts evidencing the depositary shares representing such preferred shares or (iii) each related preferred share shall have been converted into our securities not so represented by depositary shares.

Table of Contents

Charges of Preferred Shares Depositary

We will pay all transfer and other taxes and governmental charges arising solely from the existence of the deposit agreement. In addition, we will pay the fees and expenses of the preferred shares depositary in connection with the performance of its duties under the deposit agreement. However, holders of depositary receipts will pay the fees and expenses of the preferred shares depositary for any duties requested by such holders to be performed which are outside of those expressly provided for in the deposit agreement.

Resignation and Removal of Depositary

The preferred shares depositary may resign at any time by delivering to us notice of its election to do so, and we may at any time remove the preferred shares depositary, any such resignation or removal to take effect upon the appointment of a successor preferred shares depositary. A successor preferred shares depositary must be appointed within 60 days after delivery of the notice of resignation or removal and must be a bank or trust company having its principal office in the United States and having a combined capital and surplus of at least \$10,000,000.

Miscellaneous

The preferred shares depositary will forward to holders of depositary receipts any reports and communications from the Company which are received by the preferred shares depositary with respect to the related preferred shares.

Neither the preferred shares depositary nor the Company will be liable if it is prevented from or delayed in, by law or any circumstances beyond its control, performing its obligations under the deposit agreement. The obligations of us and the preferred shares depositary under the deposit agreement will be limited to performing their duties thereunder in good faith and without negligence (in the case of any action or inaction in the voting of preferred shares represented by the depositary shares), gross negligence or willful misconduct, and we and the preferred shares depositary will not be obligated to prosecute or defend any legal proceeding in respect of any depositary receipts, depositary shares or preferred shares represented thereby unless satisfactory indemnity is furnished. We and the preferred shares depositary may rely on written advice of counsel or accountants, or information provided by persons presenting preferred shares represented thereby for deposit, holders of depositary receipts or other persons believed in good faith to be competent to give such information, and on documents believed in good faith to be genuine and signed by a proper party.

In the event the preferred shares depositary shall receive conflicting claims, requests or instructions from any holders of depositary receipts, on the one hand, and us, on the other hand, the preferred shares depositary shall be entitled to act on such claims, requests or instructions received from us.

Restrictions on Ownership

Holders of depositary receipts will be subject to the ownership restrictions set forth in the declaration of trust. See "Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer."

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may offer by means of this prospectus warrants for the purchase of our preferred shares, depositary shares representing preferred shares or common shares. We may issue warrants separately or together with any other securities offered by means of this prospectus, and the warrants may be attached to or separate from such securities. Each series of warrants will be issued under a separate warrant agreement to be entered into between us and a warrant agent specified therein. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrants of such series and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any holders or beneficial owners of warrants.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the following terms, where applicable, of the warrants in respect of which this prospectus is being delivered:

the title and issuer of such warrants;

the aggregate number of such warrants;

the price or prices at which such warrants will be issued;

the currencies in which the price or prices of such warrants may be payable;

the designation, amount and terms of the securities purchasable upon exercise of such warrants;

the designation and terms of the other securities with which such warrants are issued and the number of such warrants issued with each such security;

if applicable, the date on and after which such warrants and the securities purchasable upon exercise of such warrants will be separately transferable;

the price or prices at which and currency or currencies in which the securities purchasable upon exercise of such warrants may be purchased;

the date on which the right to exercise such warrants shall commence and the date on which such right shall expire;

the minimum or maximum amount of such warrants which may be exercised at any one time;

information with respect to book-entry procedures, if any;

a discussion of material federal income tax considerations; and

any other material terms of such warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of such warrants.

Restrictions on Ownership

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

Holders of warrants will be subject to the ownership restrictions set forth in the declaration of trust. See "Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer."

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF RIGHTS

We may issue rights to our shareholders for the purchase of common shares. Each series of rights will be issued under a separate rights agreement to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company, as rights agent, all as set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the particular issue of rights. The rights agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the certificates relating to the rights of such series and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any holders of rights certificates or beneficial owners of rights. The rights agreement and the rights certificates relating to each series of rights will be filed with the SEC and incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the rights to be issued, including the following, where applicable:

the date for determining the shareholders entitled to the rights distribution;

the aggregate number of common shares purchasable upon exercise of such rights and the exercise price;

the aggregate number of rights being issued;

the date, if any, on and after which such rights may be transferable separately;

the date on which the right to exercise such rights shall commence and the date on which such right shall expire;

any special U.S. federal income tax consequences; and

any other terms of such rights, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the distribution, exchange and exercise of such rights.

Restrictions on Ownership

Holders of rights will be subject to the ownership restrictions set forth in the declaration of trust. See "Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer."

Table of Contents

RESTRICTIONS ON OWNERSHIP AND TRANSFER

In order to qualify as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code, our shares must be beneficially owned by 100 or more persons during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months (other than the first year for which an election to be a REIT has been made) or during a proportionate part of a shorter taxable year. Also, no more than 50% of the value of our outstanding shares (after taking into account options to acquire common shares) may be owned, directly, indirectly, or through attribution, by five or fewer individuals (as defined in the Internal Revenue Code to include certain entities) at any time during the last half of a taxable year (other than the first year for which an election to be a REIT has been made).

Because our board of trustees believes that it is essential for us to qualify as a REIT, our declaration of trust, subject to certain exceptions, contains restrictions on the number of our shares of beneficial interest that a person may own.

In order to assist us in complying with the limitations on the concentration of ownership of our shares imposed by the Code, our declaration of trust generally prohibits any person or entity (other than a person or entity who has been granted an exception) from directly or indirectly, beneficially or constructively, owning more than 9.8% of the aggregate of our outstanding common shares, by value or by number of shares, whichever is more restrictive, or 9.8% of the aggregate of the outstanding preferred shares of any class or series, by value or by number of shares, whichever is more restrictive. However, our declaration of trust permits (but does not require) exceptions to be made for shareholders provided that our board of trustees determines that such exceptions will not jeopardize our qualification as a REIT.

Our declaration of trust will also prohibit any person from (1) beneficially or constructively owning our shares of beneficial interest that would result in our being "closely held" under Section 856(h) of the Code, (2) transferring our shares if such transfer would result in us being beneficially owned by fewer than 100 persons (determined without regard to any rules of attribution), (3) beneficially or constructively owning our shares that would result in our owning (directly or constructively) 10% or more of the ownership interest in a tenant of our real property if income derived from such tenant for our taxable year would result in more than a de minimis amount of non-qualifying income for purposes of the REIT tests that, taking into account any other non-qualifying gross income of ours, would cause us to fail to satisfy an applicable REIT gross income requirement, and (4) beneficially or constructively owning our shares that would cause us otherwise to fail to qualify as a REIT, including, but not limited to, as a result of any "eligible independent contractor" (as defined in Section 856(d)(9)(A) of the Code) that operates a "qualified lodging facility" (as defined in Section 856(d)(9)(D)(i) of the Code) on behalf of a TRS failing to qualify as such. Any person who acquires or attempts or intends to acquire beneficial ownership of our shares that will or may violate any of the foregoing restrictions on transferability and ownership will be required to give notice immediately to us and provide us with such other information as we may request in order to determine the effect of such transfers on our qualification as a REIT. The foregoing restrictions on transferability and ownership will not apply if our board of trustees determines that it is no longer in our best interest to attempt to qualify, or to qualify, or to continue to qualify, as a REIT. In addition, our board of trustees may determine that compliance with the foregoing restrictions is no longer required for our qualification as a REIT.

Our board of trustees, in its sole discretion, may waive the 9.8% ownership limit for common shares or preferred shares for a shareholder that is not an individual if such shareholder provides information and makes representations to the board that are satisfactory to the board, in its reasonable discretion, to establish that such person's ownership in excess of the 9.8% limit for common or preferred shares would not jeopardize our qualification as a REIT. As a condition of granting the waiver, our board of trustees, in its sole discretion, may require a ruling from the IRS or an opinion of

Table of Contents

counsel in either case in form and substance satisfactory to our board of trustees in order to determine or ensure our qualification as a REIT.

In addition, our board of trustees from time to time may increase the share ownership limits. However, the share ownership limits may not be increased if, after giving effect to such increase, five or fewer individuals could own or constructively own in the aggregate, more than 49.9% in value of the shares then outstanding.

If any transfer of our shares of beneficial interest occurs which, if effective, would result in any person beneficially or constructively owning shares in excess, or in violation, of the above transfer or ownership limitations, known as a prohibited owner, then that number of shares, the beneficial or constructive ownership of which otherwise would cause such person to violate the transfer or ownership limitations (rounded up to the nearest whole share), will be automatically transferred to a charitable trust for the exclusive benefit of a charitable beneficiary, and the prohibited owner will not acquire any rights in such shares. This automatic transfer will be considered effective as of the close of business on the business day before the violative transfer. If the transfer to the charitable trust would not be effective for any reason to prevent the violation of the above transfer or ownership limitations, then the transfer of that number of shares that otherwise would cause any person to violate the above limitations will be void. Shares held in the charitable trust will continue to constitute issued and outstanding shares. The prohibited owner will not benefit economically from ownership of any shares held in the charitable trust, will have no rights to dividends or other distributions and will not possess any rights to vote or other rights attributable to the shares held in the charitable trust. The trustee of the charitable trust will be designated by us and must be unaffiliated with us or any prohibited owner and will have all voting rights and rights to dividends or other distributions with respect to shares held in the charitable trust, and these rights will be exercised for the exclusive benefit of the trust's charitable beneficiary. Any dividend or other distribution paid before our discovery that shares have been transferred to the trustee will be paid by the recipient of such dividend or distribution to the trustee upon demand, and any dividend or other distribution authorized but unpaid will be paid when due to the trustee. Any dividend or distribution so paid to the trustee will be held in trust for the trust's charitable beneficiary. Subject to Maryland law, effective as of the date that such shares have been transferred to the charitable trust, the trustee, in its sole discretion, will have the authority to:

rescind as void any vote cast by a prohibited owner prior to our discovery that such shares have been transferred to the charitable trust; and

recast such vote in accordance with the desires of the trustee acting for the benefit of the trust's charitable beneficiary.

However, if we have already taken irreversible corporate action, then the trustee will not have the authority to rescind and recast such vote.

Within 20 days of receiving notice from us that shares have been transferred to the charitable trust, and unless we buy the shares first as described below, the trustee will sell the shares held in the charitable trust to a person, designated by the trustee, whose ownership of the shares will not violate the share ownership limits in our declaration of trust. Upon the sale, the interest of the charitable beneficiary in the shares sold will terminate and the trustee will distribute the net proceeds of the sale to the prohibited owner and to the charitable beneficiary. The prohibited owner will receive the lesser of:

the price paid by the prohibited owner for the shares or, if the prohibited owner did not give value for the shares in connection with the event causing the shares to be held in the charitable trust (for example, in the case of a gift or devise), the market price of the shares on the day of the event causing the shares to be held in the charitable trust; and

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

Table of Contents

the price per share received by the trustee from the sale or other disposition of the shares held in the charitable trust (less any commission and other expenses of a sale).

The trustee may reduce the amount payable to the prohibited owner by the amount of dividends and distributions paid to the prohibited owner and owed by the prohibited owner to the trustee. Any net sale proceeds in excess of the amount payable to the prohibited owner will be paid immediately to the charitable beneficiary. If, before our discovery that our shares have been transferred to the charitable trust, such shares are sold by a prohibited owner, then:

such shares will be deemed to have been sold on behalf of the charitable trust; and

to the extent that the prohibited owner received an amount for such shares that exceeds the amount that the prohibited owner was entitled to receive as described above, the excess must be paid to the trustee upon demand.

In addition, shares held in the charitable trust will be deemed to have been offered for sale to us, or our designee, at a price per share equal to the lesser of:

the price per share in the transaction that resulted in such transfer to the charitable trust (or, in the case of a gift or devise, the market price at the time of the gift or devise); and

the market price on the date we, or our designee, accepts such offer.

We may reduce the amount payable to the prohibited owner by the amount of dividends and distributions paid to the prohibited owner and owed by the prohibited owner to the trustee. We may pay the amount of such reduction to the trustee for the benefit of the charitable beneficiary. We will have the right to accept the offer until the trustee has sold the shares held in the charitable trust. Upon such a sale to us, the interest of the charitable beneficiary in the shares sold will terminate and the trustee will distribute the net proceeds of the sale to the prohibited owner and any dividends or other distributions held by the trustee will be paid to the charitable beneficiary.

All certificates representing our shares will bear a legend referring to the restrictions described above.

Every owner of more than 5% (or such lower percentage as required by the Internal Revenue Code or the regulations promulgated thereunder) in value of the outstanding shares will be required to give written notice to us within 30 days after the end of each taxable year stating the name and address of such owner, the number of shares of each class and series of shares that the owner beneficially owns and a description of the manner in which such shares are held. Each such owner shall provide to us such additional information as we may request in order to determine the effect, if any, of such beneficial ownership on our status as a REIT and to ensure compliance with the ownership limitations. In addition, each shareholder shall upon demand be required to provide to us such information as we may request, in good faith, in order to determine our status as a REIT and to comply with the requirements of any taxing authority or governmental authority or to determine such compliance.

These share ownership limitations could delay, deter or prevent a transaction or a change in control that might involve a premium price for holders of our common shares or might otherwise be in the best interest of our shareholders.

Table of Contents

BOOK-ENTRY SECURITIES

We may issue the securities offered by means of this prospectus in whole or in part in book-entry form, meaning that beneficial owners of the securities will not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in the securities, except in the event the book-entry system for the securities is discontinued. If securities are issued in book entry form, they will be evidenced by one or more global securities that will be deposited with, or on behalf of, a depository identified in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to the securities. The Depository Trust Company is expected to serve as depository. Unless and until it is exchanged in whole or in part for the individual securities represented thereby, a global security may not be transferred except as a whole by the depository for the global security to a nominee of such depository or by a nominee of such depository to such depository or another nominee of such depository or by the depository or any nominee of such depository to a successor depository or a nominee of such successor. Global securities may be issued in either registered or bearer form and in either temporary or permanent form. The specific terms of the depository arrangement with respect to a class or series of securities that differ from the terms described here will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we anticipate that the following provisions will apply to depository arrangements.

Upon the issuance of a global security, the depository for the global security or its nominee will credit on its book-entry registration and transfer system the respective principal amounts of the individual securities represented by such global security to the accounts of persons that have accounts with such depository, who are called "participants." Such accounts shall be designated by the underwriters, dealers or agents with respect to the securities or by us if the securities are offered and sold directly by us. Ownership of beneficial interests in a global security will be limited to the depository's participants or persons that may hold interests through such participants. Ownership of beneficial interests in the global security will be shown on, and the transfer of that ownership will be effected only through, records maintained by the applicable depository or its nominee (with respect to beneficial interests of participants) and records of the participants (with respect to beneficial interests of persons who hold through participants). The laws of some states require that certain purchasers of securities take physical delivery of such securities in definitive form. Such limits and laws may impair the ability to own, pledge or transfer beneficial interest in a global security.

So long as the depository for a global security or its nominee is the registered owner of such global security, such depository or nominee, as the case may be, will be considered the sole owner or holder of the securities represented by such global security for all purposes under the applicable instrument defining the rights of a holder of the securities. Except as provided below or in the applicable prospectus supplement, owners of beneficial interest in a global security will not be entitled to have any of the individual securities of the series represented by such global security registered in their names, will not receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of any such securities in definitive form and will not be considered the owners or holders thereof under the applicable instrument defining the rights of the holders of the securities.

Payments of amounts payable with respect to individual securities represented by a global security registered in the name of a depository or its nominee will be made to the depository or its nominee, as the case may be, as the registered owner of the global security representing such securities. None of us, our officers and board members or any trustee, paying agent or security registrar for an individual series of securities will have any responsibility or liability for any aspect of the records relating to or payments made on account of beneficial ownership interests in the global security for such securities or for maintaining, supervising or reviewing any records relating to such beneficial ownership interests.

We expect that the depository for a series of securities offered by means of this prospectus or its nominee, upon receipt of any payment of principal, premium, interest, dividend or other amount in

Table of Contents

respect of a permanent global security representing any of such securities, will immediately credit its participants' accounts with payments in amounts proportionate to their respective beneficial interests in the principal amount of such global security for such securities as shown on the records of such depository or its nominee. We also expect that payments by participants to owners of beneficial interests in such global security held through such participants will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is the case with securities held for the account of customers in bearer form or registered in "street name." Such payments will be the responsibility of such participants.

If a depository for a series of securities is at any time unwilling, unable or ineligible to continue as depository and a successor depository is not appointed by us within 90 days, we will issue individual securities of such series in exchange for the global security representing such series of securities. In addition, we may, at any time and in our sole discretion, subject to any limitations described in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to such securities, determine not to have any securities of such series represented by one or more global securities and, in such event, will issue individual securities of such series in exchange for the global security or securities representing such series of securities.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

Unless otherwise set forth in a prospectus supplement accompanying this prospectus, we may sell the securities offered pursuant to this prospectus to or through one or more underwriters or dealers, or we may sell the securities to investors directly or through agents. Any such underwriter, dealer or agent involved in the offer and sale of the securities will be named in the applicable prospectus supplement. We may sell securities directly to investors on our own behalf in those jurisdictions where we are authorized to do so.

Underwriters may offer and sell the securities at a fixed price or prices which may be changed, at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to such prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices. We also may, from time to time, authorize dealers or agents to offer and sell the securities upon such terms and conditions as may be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. In connection with the sale of any of the securities, underwriters may receive compensation from us in the form of underwriting discounts or commissions and may also receive commissions from purchasers of the securities for whom they may act as agents. Underwriters may sell the securities to or through dealers, and such dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the underwriters or commissions from the purchasers for whom they may act as agents.

Our common shares may also be sold in one or more of the following transactions: (i) block transactions (which may involve crosses) in which a broker-dealer may sell all or a portion of such shares as agent, but may position and resell all or a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction; (ii) purchases by any such broker-dealer as principal, and resale by such broker-dealer for its own account pursuant to a prospectus supplement; (iii) a special offering, an exchange distribution or a secondary distribution in accordance with applicable NYSE or other stock exchange, quotation system or over-the-counter market rules; (iv) ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which any such broker-dealer solicits purchasers; (v) sales "at the market" to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market, on an exchange or otherwise, for such shares; and (vi) sales in other ways not involving market makers or established trading markets, including direct sales to purchasers.

Any underwriting compensation paid by us to underwriters or agents in connection with the offering of the securities, and any discounts or concessions or commissions allowed by underwriters to participating dealers, will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Dealers and agents participating in the distribution of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters, and any discounts and commissions received by them and any profit realized by them on resale of the securities may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions.

Underwriters, dealers and agents may be entitled, under agreements entered into with us, to indemnification against and contribution toward certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended. Unless otherwise set forth in an accompanying prospectus supplement, the obligations of any underwriters to purchase any of the securities will be subject to certain conditions precedent, and the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all of such securities, if any are purchased.

Underwriters, dealers and agents may engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us and our affiliates in the ordinary course of business.

If indicated in the prospectus supplement, we may authorize underwriters or other agents to solicit offers by institutions to purchase securities from us pursuant to contracts providing for payment and delivery on a future date. Institutions with which we may make these delayed delivery contracts include commercial and savings banks, insurance companies, pension funds, investment companies, educational and charitable institutions and others. The obligations of any purchaser under any such delayed delivery contract will be subject to the condition that the purchase of the securities shall not at the time of

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

Table of Contents

delivery be prohibited under the laws of the jurisdiction to which the purchaser is subject. The underwriters and other agents will not have any responsibility with regard to the validity or performance of these delayed delivery contracts.

In connection with the offering of the securities hereby, certain underwriters, and selling group members and their respective affiliates may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the applicable securities. Such transactions may include stabilization transactions effected in accordance with Rule 104 of Regulation M promulgated by the SEC pursuant to which such persons may bid for or purchase securities for the purpose of stabilizing their market price. The underwriters in an offering of securities may also create a "short position" for their account by selling more securities in connection with the offering than they are committed to purchase from us. In such case, the underwriters could cover all or a portion of such short position by either purchasing securities in the open market following completion of the offering of such securities or by exercising any over-allotment option granted to them by us. In addition, the managing underwriter may impose "penalty bids" under contractual arrangements with other underwriters, which means that they can reclaim from an underwriter (or any selling group member participating in the offering) for the account of the other underwriters, the selling concession with respect to securities that are distributed in the offering but subsequently purchased for the account of the underwriters in the open market. Any of the transactions described in this paragraph or comparable transactions that are described in any accompanying prospectus supplement may result in the maintenance of the price of the securities at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market. None of such transactions described in this paragraph or in an accompanying prospectus supplement are required to be taken by any underwriters and, if they are undertaken, may be discontinued at any time.

We may sell the securities in exchange in whole or part for consideration other than cash. This consideration may consist of services or products, whether tangible or intangible, and including services or products we may use in our business; outstanding debt or equity securities of our company or one or more of its subsidiaries; debt or equity securities or assets of other companies, including in connection with investments, joint ventures or other strategic transactions, or acquisitions; release of claims or settlement of disputes; and satisfaction of obligations, including obligations to make payments to distributors or other suppliers and payment of interest on outstanding obligations. We may sell the securities as part of a transaction in which outstanding debt or equity securities of our company or one or more of our subsidiaries are surrendered, converted, exercised, canceled or transferred.

Our common shares are listed on the NYSE under the symbol "RLJ." Any securities that we issue, other than common shares, will be new issues of securities with no established trading market and may or may not be listed on a national securities exchange, quotation system or over-the-counter market. Any underwriters or agents to or through which securities are sold by us may make a market in such securities, but such underwriters or agents will not be obligated to do so and any of them may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity of or trading market for any securities sold by us.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities offered by means of this prospectus and certain federal income tax matters have been passed upon for us by Hogan Lovells US LLP.

EXPERTS

The financial statements of our predecessors incorporated in this Prospectus by reference to the Annual Report on Form 10-K of RLJ Lodging Trust for the year ended December 31, 2011 and the audited statement of assets acquired and liabilities assumed and statements of revenues and direct operating expenses of Courtyard New York Manhattan/Upper East Side included in RLJ Lodging Trust's Current Report on Form 8-K/A filed August 9, 2012 have been so incorporated in reliance on the reports of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

The consolidated balance sheet and related statements of operations, changes in members' equity and cash flows of APF Emeryville, LLC and Subsidiaries as of and for the year ended December 31, 2011 included in RLJ Lodging Trust's Current Report on Form 8-K/A filed August 6, 2012 have been so incorporated in reliance on the reports of Cornerstone Accounting Group LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION AND INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

We file annual, quarterly, and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy the registration statement and any other documents filed by us at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the Public Reference Room. Our SEC filings are also available to the public at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. Our reference to the SEC's website is intended to be an inactive textual reference only.

This prospectus does not contain all of the information included in the registration statement. If a reference is made in this prospectus or any accompanying prospectus supplement to any of our contracts or other documents, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the exhibits that are a part of or incorporated by reference in the registration statement for a copy of the contract or document.

The SEC allows us to "incorporate by reference" into this prospectus the information we file with the SEC, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. Information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus. Later information filed with the SEC will update and supersede this information.

This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents listed below, all of which have been previously filed with the SEC:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011;

our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2012 and June 30, 2012;

our Definitive Proxy Statement filed with the SEC on March 30, 2012;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on May 10, 2012 (as amended by our Form 8-K/A filed with the SEC on August 2, 2012), May 17, 2012, June 5, 2012 (as amended by our Form 8-K/A filed with the SEC on August 9, 2012), June 15, 2012 (as amended by our Form 8-K/A filed with the SEC on August 6, 2012), and August 22, 2012; and

Edgar Filing: RLJ Lodging Trust - Form 424B5

Table of Contents

the description of our common shares included in our Registration Statement on Form 8-A (SEC File No. 001-35169) filed with the SEC on May 9, 2011 under Section 12(b) of the Exchange Act and including any additional amendment or report filed for the purpose of updating such description.

We also incorporate by reference into this prospectus additional documents that we may file with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14, or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act, as amended, of 1934 from the date of this prospectus until we have sold all of the securities to which this prospectus relates or the offering is otherwise terminated; provided, however that we are not incorporating any information furnished under either Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of any Current Report on Form 8-K.

You may request a copy of these filings, at no cost, by contacting Anita Cooke Wells, Vice President, Administration and Corporate Secretary, 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 1000, Maryland 20814, by telephone at 301-280-7777, by e-mail at awells@rljlodgingtrust.com, or by visiting our website, www.rljlodgingtrust.com. The information contained on our website is not part of this prospectus. Our reference to our website is intended to be an inactive textual reference only.

Table of Contents

11,500,000 Shares

Common Shares

Prospectus Supplement

March , 2013

Barclays

BofA Merrill Lynch

Wells Fargo Securities
