

China boycotts travel mart

Tourism emerges as the big loser in political standoff between China and the Philippines

By Brian Higgs

THE ongoing China-Philippines spat over a group of islands in the South China Sea has left a dent on this year's PATA Travel Mart in the form of reduced participation from the Asian giant.

The China National Tourism Administration and Macau Government Tourist Office withdrew their participation from this year's mart, prompting an exodus of sellers from mainland and the SAR. Compared to last year's edition in New Delhi, there are only two sellers from China and four from Macau this time, down from 60 China sellers and 25 Macau sellers previously.

PATA CEO, Martin Craigs, told the *Daily* there was little the association could do. "We got

the first indications (of the non-participations) about a month after our AGM in April, just as we were about to close the bookings for the mart. The timing was very unfortunate, but that's their decision and we obviously can't reverse it," he said.

Raquel Ruth A Tria, project officer, MICE & business development unit, Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), Department of Tourism (DoT) Philippines, said: "We are saddened that there are fewer participants compared to last year's mart. The pullout has particularly affected PATA, because exhibitors are a source of income for them...Even Chengdu, the host city for next year's mart, is out of the picture."

Most buyers and sellers the

Daily spoke to also painted a bleak picture of bilateral tourism between the two countries.

Wang Ziteng, sales manager, MICE department, Suzhou China International Travel Service, which used to send an average of two 25-30 pax leisure groups to the Philippines each month, said: "In the last three to four months, nobody (from China) was keen on travelling to the Philippines. Even our government clients, who prefer to pick the Philippines for MICE, have been reluctant to do so because of the (political) situation."

Crown Regency Resort & Convention Centre and Crown Regency Beach Resort in Boracay – each of which typically secures 60 rooms worth of Chinese

bookings a day, as well as Crown Regency Hotel & Towers in Cebu – which usually books 90-100 rooms of Chinese customers a day, have been badly hit by the drop in arrivals, said Wenie E Maligaya, director of sales-Luzon, Crown Regency Hotel & Resorts.

"Now our Chinese business is almost zero – two to three rooms a day at each hotel and only FITs. Our properties are being affected to a great extent. Millions of pesos are being lost," he said, adding that he had turned to markets like Taiwan and South Korea for the shortfall.

Domingo Ramon C Enerio III, assistant secretary, Tourism Planning & Promotions and COO, TPB, chose to retain a pos-

itive outlook, however. "We (still) posted growth from China (for the year up until) end-July, and Chinese inbound was up significantly (before the dispute). The situation has already begun to improve, and we expect Chinese arrivals to be at least the same level as last year," he said, pointing out that the Philippines had also recently ramped up promotions in South-east Asia, India, Australia, the US and Canada.

"We're doing a lot of work in Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand, whereas previously it was only Singapore and Malaysia. We're also making a big push for the mainstream US market, since we already receive a lot of returning Filipinos with American passports," he added.



Unfastening tourism opportunities

The PATA Travel Mart 2012 was opened yesterday by PATA vice-chairman Rick Antonson (left) and Department of Tourism Philippines' undersecretary, Tourism Planning and Promotions, Daniel G Corpuz. At the press briefing, Antonson touched on the industry-wide need for more sustainable and inclusive tourism.

Viewpoint

Has the reduction in number of Chinese sellers affected you?



"I am disappointed because I wanted to meet some Chinese sellers. The dispute between China and the Philippines is a political one, and I don't see why tourism should get involved. It feels strange because there are not many buyers and sellers from China at the mart."

Chenda Kheng
Executive director
50ceans Cambodia



"It's not that big a loss for me. I already have my own contacts in China, and the suppliers tend to come to us. We don't expect them to be here (at the mart)."

Cindy Yam
Vice president
Essential Travel & Tours
US

Phil pushes for airport development

By Marianne Carandang

THE Philippines' Department of Tourism (DoT) secretary, Ramon R Jimenez Jr, outlined the progress on the implementation of infrastructure plans under the country's National Tourism Development Plan at a media briefing yesterday.

He said: "A lot of (tourism infrastructure in the Philippines) is still in the bidding stage, but the decision to go forward to develop infrastructure for seamless trav-

el...(is) in the works and will be coming onstream sometime in 2016 or earlier."

The Philippine government has recently given the green light for the construction of two new airports, one in Daraga, Albay, and the other in Panglao, Bohol. The latter airport will receive funding support from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency.

The Daraga airport will replace the existing Legazpi Air-

port, which sees up to 10 per cent flight cancellations each year due to the microclimate of nearby Mount Mayon, said outgoing transportation and communication secretary, Mar Roxas, in a separate briefing. The new Panglao airport will replace Tagbilaran Airport, where runway expansion is no longer possible.

Jimenez added that Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) remains top priority, as the DoT has converged

efforts with other departments to address issues of "congestion, safety, taxes and fees".

The completion of renovations at NAIA Terminal 3 has been delayed until the later part of 2013, after which several international carriers are expected to transfer their operations from NAIA Terminal 1.

Meanwhile, airports in Mactan, Kalibo, Iloilo, Davao and Puerto Princesa are also on the priority list for upgrades.

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M'sia loses lustre for Indians

Gripes are same-old destinations being promoted and hike in airfares

By S Puvaneswary

HIGH airfares, limited seat capacity linking the major cities of New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai to Kuala Lumpur during the peak summer season, and the lack of new attractions in Malaysia have combined to make the country less sellable to Indian travellers.

According to Kuala Lumpur-based Tina Travel managing director, Adam Kamal, Malaysia Airlines' (MAS) airfares on these routes cost some Rs10,000 (US\$187) more than airfares to Bangkok and Singapore.

The higher airfares are also a result of the service tax imposed by the Indian government on every outbound traveller since July and the depreciation of the Indian rupee against the Malaysian ringgit by some 16 per cent since January.

MAS now has a monopoly on routes connecting Kuala Lumpur to New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai since AirAsia X and Jet Airways exited these destinations earlier this year.

Kamal said his incentive busi-

ness had dipped by 20 per cent year-on-year from the three cities due to the reduction in air seats, and that the Indian market had fallen by 10 per cent overall.

Buyer from New Delhi, Guldeep Singh Sahni, managing di-

rector of the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India, added: "Tourism Malaysia seems to be working with a few top (consultants) in India instead of a lot of (consultants) like before. (It) should not forget the smaller

"Malaysia used to be a must-do destination (for Indians to South-east Asia), but now you don't hear about it."

Guldeep Singh Sahni

Managing director, Weldon Tours & Travels India

rector of Weldon Tours & Travels, also saw a 25 per cent and 30 per cent year-on-year drop in leisure travel and outbound MICE respectively.

He warned: "If airfares to Kuala Lumpur remain high and companies move their dealer incentive programmes to another destination, it will be difficult to get them back as many companies have a policy (of repeating) destinations."

Sahni, who is also the presi-

(ones)."

"Tourism Malaysia and the airlines should also work together to promote new destinations apart from traditional destinations, such as Kuala Lumpur, Genting, Penang and Langkawi," he suggested.

Another buyer, Rajat Sawhney, Rave Tours & Travels New Delhi managing director, said: "Our biggest problem selling Malaysia as a leisure destination to repeat visitors is the lack of new attrac-

tions. There is nothing new coming up in Kuala Lumpur, Genting, Penang and Langkawi.

"Sabah, Sarawak and Taman Negara are new destinations with a lot to offer to the Indian traveller and should be given a push in a bigger manner. Sabah and Sarawak will involve additional domestic airfares from Kuala Lumpur but Indians are willing to travel if the destination is nice."

An outbound leisure and MICE travel expert from Mumbai, Classis Travels & Tours director, Rajendra Dhumma, agreed that new destinations in Malaysia have to be given more attention. He also called on the NTO to organise more fam trips beyond Kuala Lumpur and Genting.

"There are new attractions that are opening in Johor, such as Legoland Malaysia and some theme parks, but there are insufficient promotions to Indian agents. We see the sellers here at PATA Travel Mart, but they should also be promoting at Indian travel marts," said Dhumma.

Hawaii nets incentives

By Linda Haden

THE Hawaiian Tourism Authority (HTA) will step up marketing to attract more Asian incentives, which have shown potential especially in the North-east.

Jemy See, director-Taiwan and other Asia, HTA, said: "The Asian incentive market in Hawaii has grown by around 20 per cent year on year since 2006, driven partly by improved connections, especially from Japan, China, South Korea and the Philippines, as well as the increasing spending arsenal of Asian businesses."

"China, Taiwan and South Korea are our fastest-growing sources, although we are also seeing a steady increase in demand from South-east Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, albeit in small groups."

He added that the NTO would be attempting to engage directly with the media, event planners, tour consultants as well as corporates. Plans have been drawn up to promote Hawaii as an incentive destination at tradeshow and trade missions in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China and the Philippines.

Turning fun into results

SELLERS said they had seen a stronger demand for the destination since the launch of the *It's more fun in the Philippines* campaign.

Maria Corazon Jorda-Apo, Department of Tourism (DoT) director and group head, North America and Asia Pacific, said: "Previously, we were not on the holiday radar for many source markets, but the campaign has aroused curiosity about the Philippines, and we are getting noticed."

According to DoT statistics, the country welcomed 2.5 million visitors in the first seven months of 2012, a 10.5 per cent rise from last year, ensuring it is on track to reach 4.6 million arrivals by end-2012.

"Mindsets have changed – now we are seen by international tourists as a fun and interesting destination," said Angel Bognot, president and managing director of Afro Asian Travel and Tours Philippines, which has recorded double-digit growth in bookings since January, compared to the same period in 2011.

For Eric Boroy, senior manager-sales and reservations, Baron Travel Corporation Philippines, the campaign has gener-

ated more enquiries and bookings from non-traditional source markets like Malaysia, Indonesia, Poland, Vietnam, Cambodia and India.

However, overseas buyers are still skeptical over the campaign's impact on outbound business to the Philippines.

"The rising availability of direct flights between Indonesia has played a greater role in boosting tourism numbers to Philippines than the campaign," said Panca Sarungu, CEO, Hon-

eymoon.asia Indonesia. He added that the viral nature of the campaign had probably spurred "independent bookings, rather than bookings made through travel firms".

Mita Lim, managing director, ICE Holidays Malaysia, agreed: "The campaign has only had limited impact, as promotion initiatives are weak in Malaysia."

However, Bognot believed DoT's recent appointment of the Tourism Promotion Board to handle all destination marketing for the Philippines, alongside a US\$63 million marketing budget, was a strategic one. "The will is certainly there for the Philippines to reach its fullest potential," she said. – Linda Haden



Bognot: double-digit growth

In brief

PATA stems membership outflow

PATA is readying a recruitment initiative, utilising what PATA CEO, Martin Craigs, describes as a "proposition pack".

A nifty package containing leaflets, testimonials, a modern foldout brochure and a USB filled with videos of various PATA Hub City Forums and mPOWER data will replace an old-fashioned A4 folder.

Due to be reviewed during the execu-

tive board and board meetings this weekend, the packs will be used for recruitment presentations and distributed to PATA members, in the hope that they will encourage others to join the association.

Craigs said the number of sign-ups in the last few months had increased. From the start of the year up until September 19, PATA signed on 81 new members from Asia. – Brian Higgs



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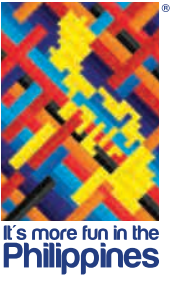
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Phil moves to grab Indian biz

DoT on a drive to correct slowdown, as market is plagued by awareness, visa issues

By Marianne Carandang

DESPITE the introduction of a new visa policy for Indian travellers, the Philippines is seeing little growth from the market, which it hopes to address with the help of the silver screen.

According to latest statistics from the Department of Tourism (DoT), year-on-year arrival growth from India for January-July over the same period last year was a meagre 3.8 per cent, with 27,336 visitors. The Philippines saw an explosive growth of 23.9 per cent for the whole of 2011 over 2010, but it is only expecting 12 per cent for 2012.

Next month, DoT will participate in *Locations 2012*, a locations-hunting event/film production tradeshow in Mumbai, together with Philippine Film Studios, which holds the overall *Survivor* franchise contract in the Philippines. The company also handled location shooting for *The Bourne Legacy* in Manila and El Nido, Palawan.

"We are counting on the Film Development Council of the Philippines to recommend

which destinations are ready (for foreign producers)," Glen Agustin, head of DoT's Team India remarked.

Last month, the NTO conducted a roadshow in Chennai and Bangalore, where it has not

Small increment

4

Arrivals growth, in per cent, from India for the first seven months

marketed actively before, as well as Mumbai and Delhi. It has also been actively collaborating with firms with regional branches like Thomas Cook in Mumbai on tour packages.

Earlier in the year, the destination announced the introduc-

tion of a 14-day visa-free facility into Manila for Indian nationals holding existing Australia, Japan, Canada, US, UK, Singapore and Schengen visas.

However, many Indian tourists are still unaware of the visa-free facility. "There are (also) some glitches along the way, in terms of documents to submit, and despite the fact there are agencies who say these are real tour groups coming here," said Arjun Shroff, managing director, Shroff International Travel Care Philippines. The tour operator is exerting extra effort vouching for clients and facilitating paperwork, with the help of the DoT.

The trend is not helped by Philippine Airlines' (PAL) reduction of service for its Manila-New Delhi route. The route was launched in March 2011 as six times weekly, with three direct flights and three through Bangkok. However, PAL reduced the service to three times weekly via Bangkok and cut capacity further by shifting from Airbus A330/340 to A320 aircraft early this year.

"The direct flight connection is a bit of a problem. (PAL flights are) via Bangkok. If flights could be (re)introduced from Delhi and (Mumbai) to Manila, that would be a good way of promoting the Philippines," said Aman Sharma, senior executive, private travel, Abercrombie & Kent India. "Last-minute travellers can also come to the Philippines if they can get visa on arrival," he added.

Rajesh Sethi, managing director, Carnation Holidays India, said: "We missed the right kind of opportunity when (PAL) direct flights started. There should've been a real 'bang' offer that would have had a big impact."

For others, it is awareness that needs to be drummed up. Shakeel Rizvi, general manager, marketing communications, Windex India, said he was planning a group to the Philippines next year, but cited a general lack of knowledge of specific destinations. "If you have virgin destinations or something exciting, highlight them," Rizvi suggested.

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S Puvanewary Editor, Malaysia/Brunei
Patrick Tan Photographer
Redmond Sia, Tan Kok Yong Creative Designers
Lina Tan Editorial Assistant

CONTRIBUTORS

Hong Xu, Marianne Carandang, Prudence Lui, Rohit Kaul, Timothy France

SALES & MARKETING

Michael Chow Group Publisher
Katherine Ng Associate Publisher
Marisa Chen Senior Business Manager
Karen Cheung Business Manager
Cheryl Tan Corporate Marketing Manager
Tan Ee Hiang Marketing Executive
Eduardo S. Bassig Media Representative

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Russia, China shine for Phuket

PHUKET is seeing emerging source markets, particularly Russia and China.

Phuket is now the second-most popular destination for Russian tourists after Pattaya, according to Visanu Jaroensilp, director—the Americas marketing division of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), who was handling the Russian market until a month ago.

He said: "The Russian market has seen exponential growth since 2008 when TAT set up an office in Moscow. Russian outbound has climbed from 280,000 in 2008 to one million in 2011. Of these, about 20 per cent would visit Phuket."

Testifying to the popularity of Phuket is Liudmila Baranskaya, general manager of Milor Tour Russia. The island has risen to be among "one of the main destinations in Thailand" her clients are interested in, owing to an increase in flights.

At the same time, Phuket is seeing stellar growth from another market – China. Asian Trails, strong in the Europe market, launched a Chinese department three months ago to capture the large chunk of upmarket FITs, deputy managing director,

Claudio Kellenberger, said.

Centara Hotels & Resorts corporate director of sales, Krosakorn Rokrungraj, also observed that China has been making steady inroads into Phuket. For instance, since taking over the management of Centara Grand West Sands Resort and Villas in Phuket last year, the resort has recorded high interest among the Chinese, particularly families who are drawn to the water park. Amnuay Thiamkeerakul, TAT's director-East Asia marketing division, said Chinese arrivals had been increasing at an average of 50 per cent each year.

However, some tour operators expressed concerns of existing markets being squeezed out.

Asian Trails' Kellenberger remarked: "With more Russians, the Scandinavian market is now shifting to smaller destinations like Koh Lanta and Krabi."

Go Thailand Tours managing director, Raimund Wellenhofer, added that some suppliers have also shown preference to the Russians, making it harder for him to secure rooms for his European clients during the high season. – **Liang Xinyi**



Kellenberger: China FIT eyed

Hot leads

New travel booking site launched

WORLD Express Tours Malaysia has launched a new product, LinkToBook.com. This real-time online booking system enables travel consultants to make online bookings for hotel accommodation, transfers, sightseeing and tour packages. All online bookings are secured with instant confirmation, automatic invoicing and other related travel vouchers.

Philippine suppliers wanted

GREAT Destinations, a Sacramento-based outbound operator specialising in scuba and adventure travel, is looking for suppliers in the Philippines able to offer itineraries in Palawan, Batangas, Cebu, Puerto Galera and beyond. The company sends about 20 FIT and leisure groups of 15-24 pax a year to Asia-Pacific. Contact Nancy Gimblin at scuba@skindiver.com



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From spas to shipwrecks, **Marianne Carandang** scopes out the best getaway locations in the Philippines



From left: Bohol; El Nido Lagen, Palawan; the District Boracay

BOHOL

The island of Bohol offers amazing variety as an eco-tourist and heritage destination. Scenic drives around the island showcase well-preserved Jesuit and Augustinian missionary churches built

from the 17th century onward; the famous dome-shaped Chocolate Hills; vast natural as well as man-made mangrove forests, and Bohol's tarsiers, one of the world's smallest primates.

Bohol's light, clear waters make it a prime destination of choice for divers,

who aim for the marine sanctuary of Balicasag Island, which is among the best diving spots in the Philippines. Whale shark watching at sunrise in Pamalican, about an hour from Bohol's mainland, is also not to be missed. The season begins in the early part of the year, from February to May or June. A popular stop on most tours is the Bohol Bee Farm Resort & Restaurant, a charming bed and breakfast with an organic farm, a popular restaurant serving organic fare, and locally made ethnic handicrafts.

On the nearby island of Panglao, many quiet resorts dot the perimeter of its pristine beaches, featuring infinity pools and spa treatments. Some, like Eskaya Beach Resort & Spa, offer stunning elevated views of the ocean. Other popular home away from homes include Amorita Resort, Amarella Resort, and the Bohol Beach Club. Active beach lovers and partygoers will enjoy the energy of Alona Beach, especially at night.

Bohol is up-and-coming as an accessible, long-stay resort getaway, and is reachable by ferry from Cebu (about 1.5 hours), or via a direct flight from Manila.

& Bluewater Newcoast Boracay, on the quieter side of the island and formerly a members-only resort, has expanded to hold 252 rooms and is renovating its par 72 Graham Marsh golf course.

Spa treatments on the island are a must, the best being the international award-winning Mandala Spa and the newer Tirta Spa. Both are also resorts and provide individual and his-and-her treatments. Frequent returnees will recommend Discovery Shores and the Shangri-la for the most private romantic getaways.

PALAWAN

Palawan was for many years a backpackers' paradise or an expensive getaway accessible to few. Now, divers make regular live-aboard trips to Tubbataha's pristine coral reefs, a UNESCO World Heritage site, while most visitors land up in either Puerto Princesa or Coron, Busuanga.

In the south, Puerto Princesa Underground River's recent naming as one of the New7Wonders of Nature has increased Puerto Princesa's profile dramatically, prompting airlines to increase flights – now 21 daily – and requiring tour operators to book river tours in advance. Island tours to Honda Bay, ziplining, and farm tours are usually part of the itinerary.

To the north, visitors stop at Coron, popular for its Japanese-shipwreck diving; Kayangan Lake, nestled within majestic limestone cliffs; and Calauit Island, a safari destination. Luxury hideaway resorts include Aman Resorts' Amanpulo in Pamalican Island or El Nido resorts in Taytay or the El Nido islands of Lagen and Miniloc.

The race is on to open new resorts in Palawan. Two will begin welcoming guests by end 2012: El Nido Resorts is opening its third resort in El Nido called Pangulasian, with 42 luxury cottages and villas, while Mövenpick will launch its Huma Island resort, which has 82 over-water bungalows and is accessible by sea-plane or speedboat from Coron. Safety is assured at these resorts; discreet security guardposts and staff may not be readily in sight, but their presence will be felt.

Flights are to Coron and Puerto



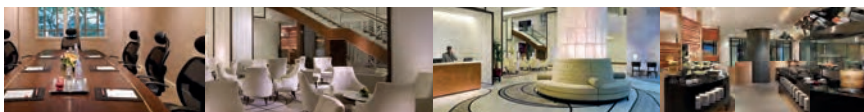
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GETAWAY DESTINATIONS

Princesa are plentiful, and while no commercial flights connect Puerto Princesa to Taytay or El Nido as of yet, low-cost carrier SEAir 1 is looking to fill this gap in the market. For now, intrepid visitors usually brave an eight-hour bus ride (six hours by rented van) between Puerto Princesa and Taytay, but most eventually opt to fly back to Manila and then into Palawan.

BATANES

Often compared to Scotland for its wide open landscapes and breathtaking views, other Philippine destinations pale in comparison to Batanes. A minimum of four days should be allotted to see at least three islands: the mainland of Basco; Sabtang, which has some of the best-preserved Ivatan stone house villages; and weather permitting, Itbayat.

Batanes marries the beauty of unspoilt, uninhabited beaches with views from vast limestone cliffs, heritage churches with the friendly culture of the Ivatan. Seafood is cheap and available in abundance. If you make it to Sabtang, a beachside meal at Nakabuang Beach can be enjoyed for P350 (US\$8.30). It includes succulent lobster.

High-end accommodation

is very scarce. Fundacion Pacita Batanes Nature Lodge is probably your only choice, and bookings are best made six months in advance. Government-owned Batanes Resort is spartan but serviceable and the local tourism office has a list of homestay options with Ivatan families for visitors seeking more “immersive” vacations.

Batanes is accessible from Manila via small aircraft operated by SkyPasada flying to Basco. SkyPasada also offers trips from Northern Luzon – Laoag City in Ilocos and Tuguegarao in Cagayan Valley. While possible, travel on a tight schedule is not encouraged during typhoon season, which starts as early as June and ends in October. It is possible to get stranded for a few days during stormy weather, as flights may be cancelled based on weather conditions. Be prepared for a choppy ferry ride to make it to Sabtang as well. Some visitors come in December to enjoy the cold weather.

CEBU

Another top-ranked destination in the Philippines, Cebu gives Boracay a run for its money with its easy accessibility and the availability of beautiful world-class resorts within an hour of

Cebu’s city limits. Downtown sights include the Santo Niño Shrine, the Taoist Temple, and the Yap-Sandiego Ancestral House, built in the 1700s.

Many top hotel brands are present in the city, such as Radisson Blu, Marco Polo and Marriott. Mactan Island, where the airport is located, has many of Cebu’s best resorts, such as the Shangri-la’s Mactan Resort & Spa, Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort & Spa, and Abaca Boutique Resort. Mövenpick’s resort in Mactan is undergoing a six-month renovation and is set to reopen by mid-December.

Many resorts are also found outside of Cebu, such as Bluewater Sumilon, about two hours away. Whale shark watching tours have been organised by Bluewater and neighbouring resorts, since the gentle mammals’ appearance in Cebu waters over a year ago. Visitors with more time to spare can take bus rides and ferries to Bantayan island (about three hours away) for thresher shark and manta ray watching, and Malapascua (about six to seven hours) to join a tour.

Cebu is a culinary destination in its own right, and visitors must sample their *sutukil*



Clockwise from top: Batanes; Davao Cultural Show; Yap-Sandiego House, Cebu;



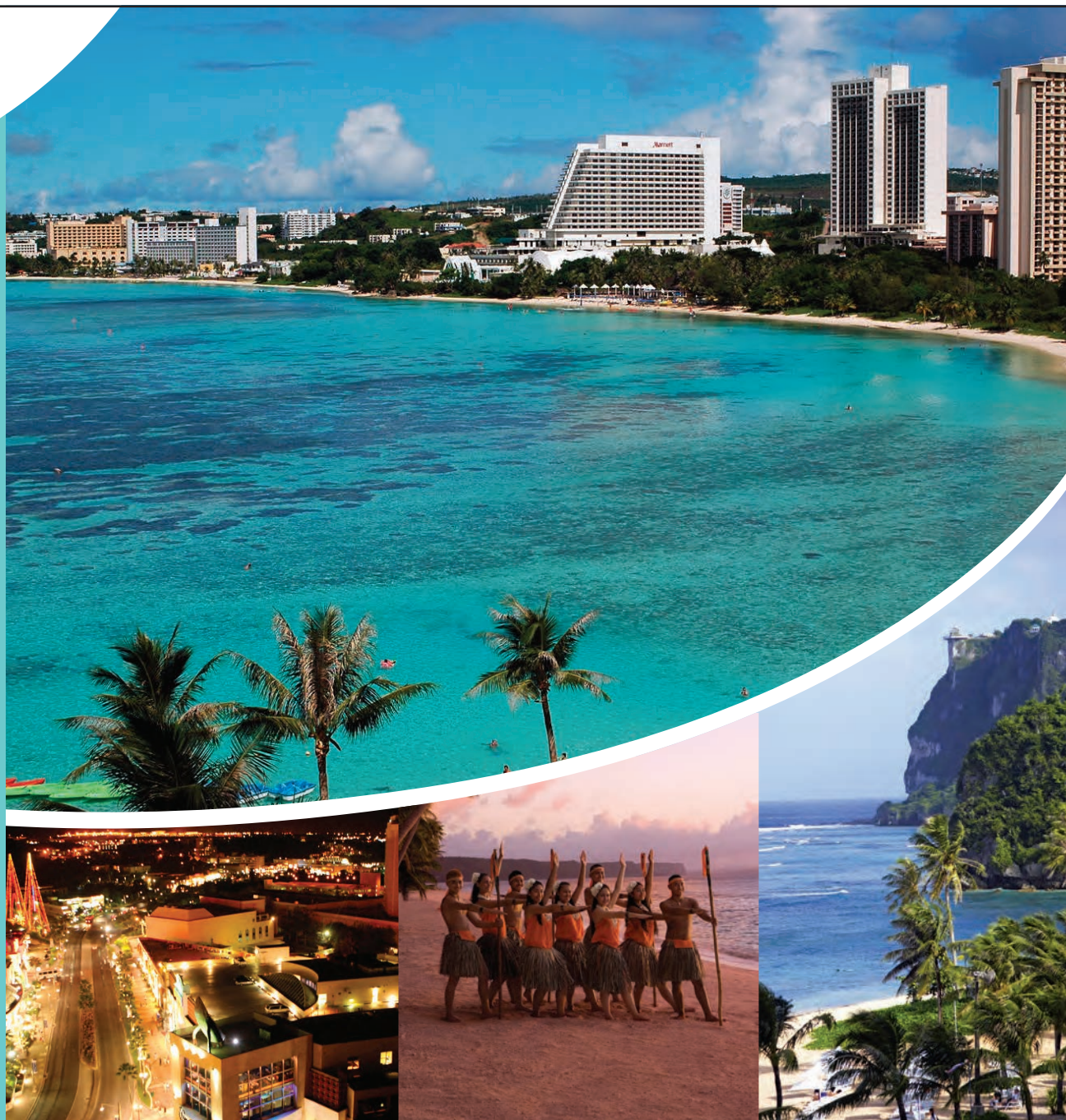
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(grills/soups/ceviche) selections. Cebu is especially proud of its *lechon*, or roasted pig on a spit, and high-quality fresh seafood, prepared simply in a variety of styles.

Visitors to Cebu should take advantage of its connectivity to explore neighbouring destinations like Bohol. Local airlines link Cebu to Iloilo, Boracay, Davao, and Puerto Princesa.

CAMSUR

The province of Camarines Sur (nicknamed “Camsur”) is probably best known internationally for two destinations: the Camsur Watersports Complex (CWC), which has hosted international-level wakeboarding and dragon-boating events, and Ironman triathlons; and the Caramoan islands, the venue of 12 international editions of the reality TV series *Survivor*, and the setting of the most recent *Survivor USA* season, currently airing till December.

Water sports fans can fly into Naga’s Pili Airport, which is only five to 10 minutes from CWC. The complex has a young, laid-back vibe, and a fair range of mid-priced accommodations. Naga city tours rightly include its beautiful cathedrals and basilicas, since the city is a major

pilgrimage destination. The festival of the Lady of Peñafrancia is held in September, with a fluvial procession down Naga River. Visitors to the region must also sample the region’s unique chili dishes.

CWC can arrange road and ferry transfers to Gota Village Resort in Caramoan, where *Survivor’s* TV production was based. There are a number of tourist inns, but only a few high-end resorts such as Hunongan Cove Beach Resort, and the new Tugawe Cove Resort, with cottages nestled in the hills. These add to the area’s exclusivity. Island-hopping tours include snorkelling, scuba diving in partially unchartered, shallow waters, and land exploration around Caramoan’s majestic islets. Take a 1.5-hour ride on a coach bus known as a coaster, or a two-hour bus ride to Sabang Port, then transfer to a ferry for a two-hour ride to Tugawe or Gota.

DAVAO

Davao’s current mayor, as her father before her, has the city on a short leash, guaranteeing the safety and security of all its citizens and visitors. It is larger and safer than Manila, and is firmly established as an eco-

tourist destination. Must-see sights include the Philippine Eagle Foundation, to see the Philippine white eagle; the Malagos Garden Resort, which raises livestock, processes native chocolate and cheese, and makes wine from local berries; and Eden Nature Park, with wildlife areas and hiking trails.

Beach lovers can take a short 20-minute ferry ride to Samal Island’s various resorts. Of these, Pearl Farm Beach Resort is probably the most established, with 73 rooms and casitas, a golf course, and private beaches. The Discovery Group is planning a new resort called Samal Shores, which will feature 88 over-water villas and convention facilities, while Ekran Berhad is looking to build a casino resort of over 100 rooms.

Davao is seeking to capitalise on cultural tourism, with tours to T’Bolo cultural villages, Compostela Valley in Davao del Norte, as well as “voluntourism” and agritourism activities. The city hopes to relaunch international routes to neighbouring destinations such as Singapore and Indonesia. Meanwhile, it is accessible via local carriers from Manila and Cebu. A Iloilo-Davao route was recently launched.

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Asian port encounters

While there is no lack of appealing Asian destinations, port infrastructure is stopping cruise lines from featuring a wider range of itineraries. Compiled by **Linda Haden**

Bangkok, Thailand (top); Inle Lake, Myanmar (bottom left); Penang, Malaysia



towards
new altitudes



Chef Masahiro Mizumoto
JAPANESE



Japanese Braised Pork Belly



Chef Fernando Aracama
FILIPINO



Grilled Chicken in
Lemon Grass Marinade



Chef William "Billy" King
WESTERN



Slow-cooked US Angus Beef



Chef See Cheong Yan
CHINESE



Braised Beef Short Ribs with
Honey Peppercorn Sauce



Chef Suwanna Puangdee
THAI



Deep-fried Fish Fillet in Tamarind Sauce

Signature Cuisine

Philippine Airlines has been known for its impeccable service. True to this tradition, the airline has brought in five of the country's best chefs to add flair and flavor to its in-flight cuisine: Chef Billy King for Western fare; Malaysian chef See Cheong Yan, Chinese dishes; Chef Masahiro Mizumoto, Japanese; Fernando Aracama, Filipino; and Khun Suwanna Puangdee, Asia fusion. The result is a feast of fantastic flavors that absolutely delight.



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Philippine Airlines is the first Asian airline to include iPads in their in-flight entertainment system. Available to both Business and Economy Class passengers, the iPads are yet another reason why flying Philippine Airlines is always a memorable experience.



Philippine Airlines

www.philippineairlines.com

Royal Caribbean International

Kelvin Tan, regional director, Asia-Pacific, Royal Caribbean Cruises



Voyager of the Seas

Which is the most desirable port of call in Asia?

There are many desirable and attractive ports in Asia. Based on our guest ratings, popular destinations in north Asia include Jeju, Kagoshima, Kobe and Okinawa, while in South-east Asia are Halong Bay, Danang, Phuket, Bali and Penang, just to name a few.

Most of these destinations offer great port and tourism infrastructure, as well as impressive cultural, historical and scenic attractions. Not to mention the shopping and gastronomic experiences.

Which is the most challenging port of call in Asia?

Some cities have great tourism appeal but their lack of port infrastructure, such as a cruise terminal located in or near these destinations, have prevented our ships from calling. Seoul, Bangkok and Hanoi are examples.

If you had your way, where would your next port of call in Asia be?

Boracay, Palawan, Yangon and Sandakan are interesting, exotic destinations with a rich variety of historical, cultural and scenic attractions for our guests. We have yet to feature them due to their lack of port infrastructure.

What are you looking for in a potential port of call?

Correct and adequate infrastructure that can support over 3,000 guests and 1,200 crew at the same time. Other important factors to consider are visa policies and immigration procedures.

Silversea

Melvyn Yap, regional director, Asia, Silversea



Silver Whisper

Which is the most desirable port of call in Asia?

For turnaround ports, i.e. Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Bangkok and Shanghai, we desire good air connectivity to the rest of the world.

For ports of call, there should be decent infrastructure to support the berthing of a cruise vessel, enough attractions nearby, and a convenient transportation network.

Taking into consideration the above factors, berthing in Singapore and Hong Kong are equally desirable.

Which is the most challenging port of call in Asia?

Ports in India are the most difficult as the immigration and customs authorities, port operators, tourism board, etc, do not seem to communicate with each other.

If you had your way, where would your next port of call in Asia be?

We made port calls in Myanmar in the past, but had to stop due to political reasons. We hope to return to Myanmar because it is a beautiful country.

There are also many wonderful islands in Japan, but it is a case of too many destinations and too little time as our Asian clients have short vacation duration.

What are you looking for in a potential port of call?

Silversea operates smaller cruise vessels, so we don't have as many prerequisites. That said, good port infrastructure is important so that our guests can go through restricted port areas without hassle. Our guests also appreciate if we can run our own complimentary shuttle buses to town so they do not have to take local taxis.

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Haitao Hotel	WV45496	WV53207	WV520141	WV520141	WV12193
Miramar Apartments	WV69770	WV53192	WV5H001	WV0319	WV12190



Haitao Hotel

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Costa Cruises

Buhdy Bok, vice president, Pacific Asia and China, Costa Crociere



Costa Victoria

Which is the most desirable port of call in Asia?

Asia is such a diverse region that there are many ports that we can define as most desirable. For nice beaches, there are Kagoshima, Wakayama, Langkawi, Kuantan, Penang, Malacca and Sanya. For cultural experiences, Penang and Fukuoka are prime choices. *Costa Victoria* offers itineraries from four to seven nights to these destinations.

Which is the most challenging port of call in Asia?

There isn't a port of call in Asia that we consider challenging. However, we value ports that allow our ships to berth without too much navigational difficulty, and have a terminal that is functionally efficient and with a good land transportation network.

If you had your way, where would your next port of call in Asia be?

We are always exploring new ports as well as seasonal destinations. For example, South Korea's Yeosu, which hosted the 2012 World Expo from May 12 to August 12; and Japan's Hososhima in Miyazaki prefecture, Osaka, Wakayama and the Kanto region. We would also love to explore more destinations, such as Bali and Komodo Island in the near future.

The only limitation to Costa's expansion is port infrastructure, and we will continue to expand our itineraries as and when ports address size and capacity issues.

What are you looking for in a potential port of call?

Our concerns are infrastructure, accessibility, proximity and popularity of destinations.

Star Cruises

Michael Goh, senior vice president, sales, Star Cruises



SuperStar Virgo

Which is the most desirable port of call in Asia?

Popular Asian hotspots include Redang, Penang, Langkawi, Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Phuket, Koh Samui, Bangkok and Krabi. These exotic destinations have a fascinating blend of culture, history and adventure.

Redang is an all-time favourite, made famous by the Hong Kong movie *Summer Holiday*. It has pristine beaches for diving and a colourful underwater sealife for snorkelling.

Which is the most challenging port of call in Asia?

Although Redang is popular among both local and overseas passengers, *SuperStar Virgo* can only call at this port in the summer from April to September each year due to the north-east monsoon season.

If you had your way, where would your next port of call in Asia be?

No answer given.

What are you looking for in a potential port of call?

Factors are key tourist attractions, good infrastructure, extensive air, sea and land connectivity, and convenience based on visa exemption for international guests. For example, Malaysian ports practise a 72-hour visa-free policy for some nationalities.



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MALAYSIA RIDES ON FAMILY FUN

Malaysia has set its sights on becoming the leading family destination within the Southeast Asia region with the launch of several new theme parks this year.

KidZania – Mutiara Damansara, Kuala Lumpur

KidZania, a child-focused educational entertainment centre, is a place where kids learn about the “adult” world through exciting role-play and guided activities. Opened early this year, KidZania offers 90 types of games and role-play activities in a fun and safe environment. Specially targeted at kids aged from 4 to 14 years old, here, the little ones take on adult roles – as pilot, doctor, nurse, firefighter – in a city built especially for them.



KIDZANIA - MUTIARA DAMANSARA, KUALA LUMPUR

Legoland Malaysia - Medini, Nusajaya

Legoland Malaysia is the sixth Legoland theme park in the world and the first in Asia. Opened in mid-September 2012, it caters to families with children between the ages of two and 12 years. The park features the iconic children's building bricks and more than 40 rides and attractions including rollercoasters and interactive shows, as well as 4D theatre, F&B outlets and retail outlets.

Puteri Harbour Family Theme Park - Nusajaya

The theme park, opening in November, will feature well-loved local and international characters within a fun and interactive environment.

• Sanrio Hello Kitty Town

The Sanrio Hello Kitty Town will be the first Hello Kitty theme park outside Japan. It consists of walk-through attractions, play structures, hi-tech interactive theme experiences, live performances and a Hello Kitty theme ride.

• The Little Big Club

The Little Big Club is an indoor

children's attraction that offers interactive activities and rides themed around HIT Entertainment characters, Bob the Builder, Barney, Angelina Ballerina, Pingu and Thomas & Friends. This is the first time in the world that these five popular children's characters will be featured in one themed attraction.

• LAT's Place

LAT's Place is an animated themed restaurant based on Malaysian cartoonist LAT or Dato' Mohd Nor Khalid's story, Kampung Boy. Apart from enjoying delicious cuisine, guests can look forward to the enchanting design of the restaurant and meet the cast of LAT's cartoon characters.

Also to open in Johor's Desaru Coast by 2015 are the Ocean Quest Marine Park and Ocean Splash Water Park. Plans are also in the pipeline to develop an integrated cultural theme park in Kuala Lumpur that will comprise of food and beverage, retail, and cultural experiences built around the theme of Malaysia Truly Asia.



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Lost World of Tambun Ipoh, Perak

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Bukit Merah Laketown Resort Taiping, Perak

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LEGOLAND Malaysia Nusajaya, Johor

Experience 40 rides, shows and attractions in the first LEGOLAND in Asia.



A'Famosa Resort Melaka

Exhaust the kids at the Water World theme park, Animal World safari and Cowboy Town.



Malaysia
Truly Asia

Novel but not evergreen

Singapore's newest 'supertrees' attraction has not flourished as much as anticipated. **Linda Haden** reports

The first phase of Singapore's futuristic horticultural icon, Gardens by the Bay, opened to massive fanfare on June 29.

This 101-hectare mega project, which is tipped to attract around five million visitors in its first year, is expected to play a definitive role in enhancing the city's attractiveness as a destination in the highly competitive global tourism stakes, according to the travel trade.

"The Gardens adds to the amazing transformation taking place within Singapore's tourism landscape as we continue to 'wow' the world with new attractions. It will certainly help to draw overseas visitors, especially the luxury segment, as it offers a unique experience," said Judy Lum, Tour East's group vice president of sales & marketing.

From a MICE standpoint, Gardens by the Bay offers corporate clients an exciting and highly marketable alternative to run-of-the-mill venues.



Gardens by the Bay

Gardens by the Bay's pricey admission rates have not worked to its advantage

Aonia's managing director, Daniel Chua, said: "The Gardens certainly presents a lovely one-of-a-kind setting for events. There are a good selection of indoor and outdoor event spaces alongside ample parking, giving MICE organisers lots of leeway to be creative."

But despite the warm recep-

tion from industry players and the potential the Gardens has as a MICE venue and leisure attraction, some consultants conveyed that they have received only a trickle of enquiries about the superpark, casting doubt over the attraction's ability to sustain its appeal in the long term.

Siam Express's managing di-

rector, Jaclyn Yeoh, highlighted that the admission fee charged to visit the Gardens' centrepieces – a pair of cooled conservatories dubbed the Flower Dome and Cloud Forest – was the prime factor deterring Asian tourists from listing the attraction as a definite must-see.

She said: "With tickets costing

up to S\$28 (US\$22) per adult at Gardens by the Bay, Asian visitors, in my opinion, are more likely to visit the Botanic Gardens instead, where tickets for the National Orchid Garden are much more reasonably priced."

"Only the Japanese seem to be keen on Gardens by the Bay. Chinese and South-east Asian clients have been much less enthused. In fact, we have more enquiries about upcoming attractions such as the River Safari and Marine Life Park."

Interest among non-Asians have been rather lukewarm too.

European tourists are less inclined to visit the Gardens as it showcases flora and fauna indigenous to their countries, Isabella Hon, City DMC's marketing manager explained.

"Most of our (European) clients prefer National Orchid Garden as it features exotic flora from the Far East. The comparatively higher admission fee charged by Gardens by the Bay can be quite off-putting too."

Viewpoints

Singapore

Compiled by
Linda Haden



Judy Lum
Group vice president,
sales & marketing
Tour East

What is your business outlook for the next six months?

At the moment, our core (FIT) markets from the UK and Europe are not doing too well, and as a whole, the total arrivals for the leisure segment are down. Thank goodness that Australia remains strong! On a brighter note, we are looking at healthy growth for MICE as the number of our RFPs have increased compared to last year.

What would you like to see happening to rates in the next six months?

Hotels in Singapore are still running at high occupancies. However, I foresee that rates might stabilise a bit over the next six months, as numbers from the US, the UK and Europe struggle to pick up.

What is your biggest concern in the next six months?

We are sitting tight and hoping that the eurozone crisis does not worsen, otherwise, demand from the UK and Europe will sink further, resulting in lower consumer and corporate expenditure and confidence, which will ultimately erode business.



Jaclyn Yeoh
Managing director
Siam Express

Due to the uncertain wider economic environment, we anticipate a slowdown in demand in all our core markets except Japan, which is showing clear signs of a revival after a significant dip last year. Both leisure and MICE bookings for the 1H2012 have been somewhat muted compared to the same period in 2011. We are not optimistic.

It would be good if they could fall to more realistic levels. However, my guess is that rates will just hold steady instead in 2H2012. Nonetheless, it has become slightly easier to negotiate better rates now – perhaps hotels are also feeling the pinch from the slowdown in demand.

The eurozone crisis, and the threat it poses to the world economy, hangs over our heads – it has already made a discernible (negative) impact on our business.



Mohd K Rafin
Senior vice president
Park Hotel Group

Rates have stabilised and we are performing better than last year. Overall, we are cautiously optimistic about our prospects, and are expecting rates to go up by around six to 10 per cent in the immediate term, barring any extenuating factors.

As a hotelier, we obviously would like to see rates and occupancy rise. Orchard Road hotels have lost a few points to the two integrated resorts, but the area remains a must-see for tourists. Once the area's facelift is completed, Orchard Road hotels are bound to see a spike in occupancy and rates.

Sustaining our level of growth in an uncertain climate is our main priority, alongside capacity building by recruiting and retaining quality human capital. We are concerned about the potential fallout from the financial turmoil in the eurozone. We are taking steps to build our business and to capitalise on Asia's projected growth of tourism.



Chakrapong Paladsongkram
General manager
Furama RiverFront

Rates at our hotel are now 15 per cent higher than last year. Tellingly, 2012 has been a good year so far for Furama, and we believe that rates will continue to hold for the foreseeable future.

It's a delicate balance of occupancy and rates. On the whole, we hope that the rates and occupancy in the upcoming quarters will be in line with what we have planned within our budget.

We expect a slowdown due to the eurozone crisis, but it will not be a sharp one. I am more concerned about how we can sustain our hotel's profitability amid strong (local) competition.

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Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)

Manila, Philippines, 25 - 28 September 2012

CIVETS: hype or real pot

Acronyms seem to be a popular way for grouping countries together for ease of description against one or more variables, and a number have been in use for many years. Most of us are

familiar with the EU, OPEC, G7 and G20, and perhaps even more so with ASEAN, APEC and SAARC.

We even have PIIGS, those European nations with relatively weak economies –

Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain.

BRIC, covering the economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China, has been with us for almost a decade, but has more recently included the Republic of South

Africa to become BRICS.

Joining the list of country groupings now is CIVETS, which comprises Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa. Many financial and investment analysts believe that these six economies could be significant as emerging markets.

The Economist for example supports the notions of potential across the CIVETS group since “these six have large and young populations, diversified economies, relative political stability and decent financial systems. In addition, they are for the most part unhampered by high inflation, trade imbalances or sovereign debt bombs”.

While some people regard these country groupings as a marketing gimmick, others take them very seriously.

In fact, the Standard & Poor’s CIVETS-60 Index, established in 2007, is currently ahead of a number of other emerging market indices, including the Standard and Poor’s BRIC-40, and Emerging BMI measures.

Our interest in these country groupings lies in the potential of these economies to generate international traffic to Asia-Pacific destinations.

Collectively, the six origin markets that make up the CIVETS bloc have been steadily increasing their respective arrival numbers into the region, as shown in Chart 1 on the next page.

It is certainly apparent that there has been a dramatic rise in the collective arrivals count from CIVET source markets since 2005, although this varies widely from sub-region to sub-region, destination to destination, and by individual source market.

Asia is the greatest beneficiary, as measured by average annual growth rates, with North-east and South-east Asia leading the pack with 16 per cent and 14 per cent growth per annum respectively (Chart 2).

A collection of charts on page 20 further illustrates the variation in outbound numbers from each of the six CIVETS nation to Asia-Pacific.

In summary, while the CIVETS bloc can provide a viable volume of both arrivals and growth, it appears that for now at least, the bloc is very selective in terms of origin markets and individual Asia-Pacific destinations. This could change very rapidly, so CIVETS – or at least components of the grouping – should be monitored for signs of reaching a critical mass of international outbound travellers over the next few years.

“Asia is the greatest beneficiary, as measured by average annual growth rates, with North-east and South-east Asia leading the pack with 16 per cent and 14 per cent growth per annum.”

John Koldowski

Special advisor to the CEO,
PATA



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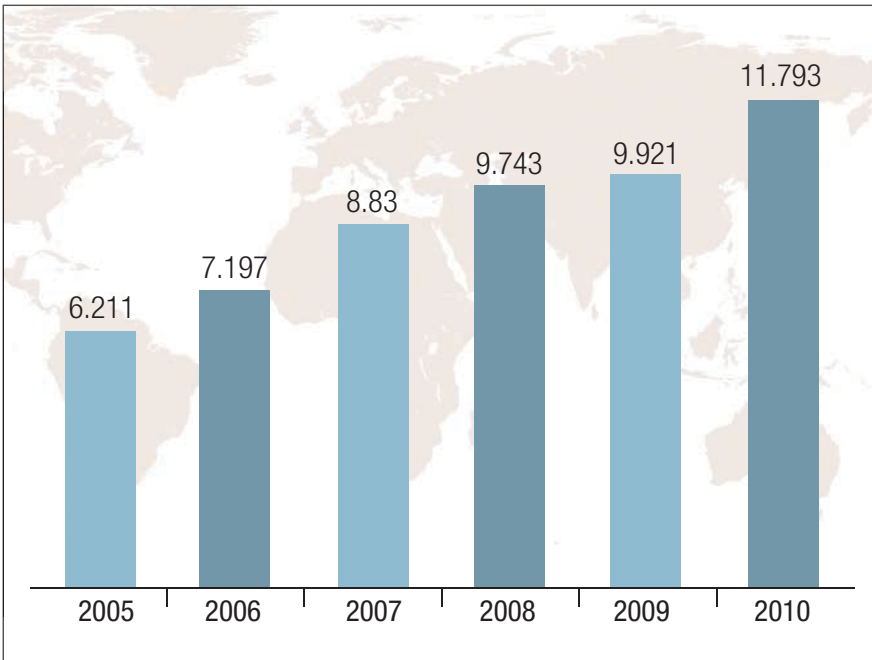
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essential?

John Koldowski, special advisor to the CEO, PATA, looks at how outbound travel from the CIVETS bloc, recognised as an emerging economic power, has benefitted Asia-Pacific

CHART 1

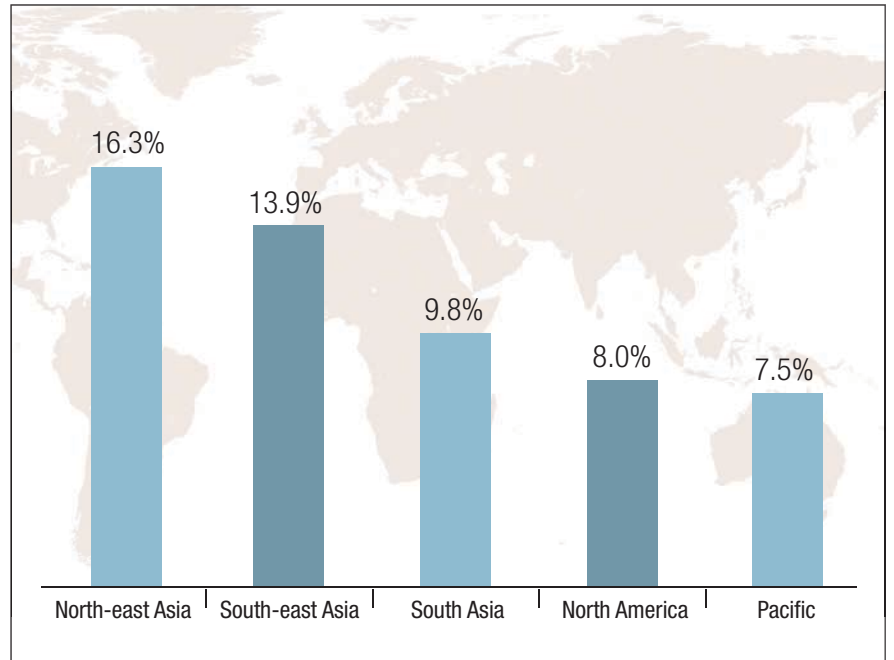
Growth in arrivals from the CIVETS bloc into Asia-Pacific (millions), 2005 to 2010



Note: Origin-Destination pairs with missing data have been removed
Source: Asia-Pacific NTOs & NSOs; compiled by PATA

CHART 2

Growth in international arrivals from the CIVETS bloc to Asia-Pacific sub-regions, AARG%, 2005-2010



Note: AARG is the Average Annual Growth Rate, expressed as a percentage
Source: PATA

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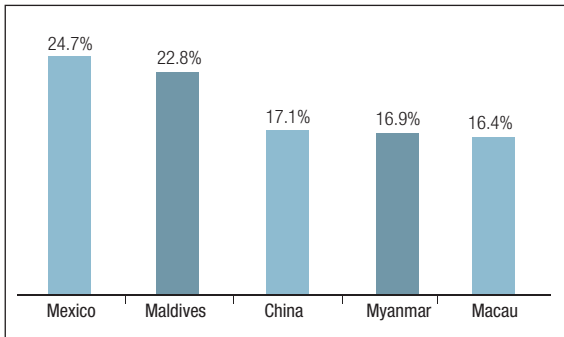
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Tracking CIVETS' outbound flow

COLOMBIA

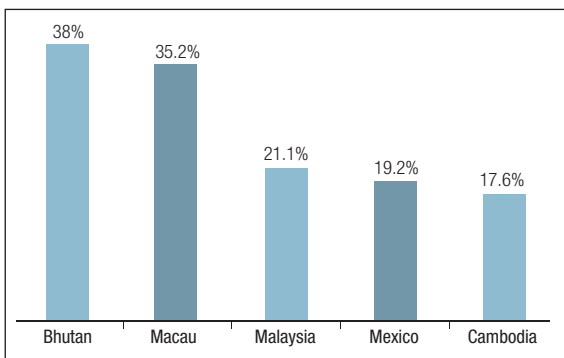


Growth in international arrivals from Colombia to Asia-Pacific, AARG%, 2005-2010

Perhaps not surprisingly, Mexico has performed quite strongly in international arrival growth and volume from Colombia, adding an additional 68,300 arrivals over the period 2005-2010 to reach a peak inbound volume of more than 100,000 in 2010. Preliminary results for calendar year 2011 suggest this momentum is continuing for Mexico, with a year-on-year gain of 23 per cent to reach an inbound volume from Colombia of 125,900 in that year.

China is another destination that registers arrival growth and volume gain. Its inbound volume from CIVETS nations was 26,870 in 2010, and had registered a growth of 9,527 in volume from Colombia between 2005 and 2010.

INDONESIA



Destination	Volume 2010	Volume Change 2005-10
Malaysia	2,506,509	1,543,552
Singapore	2,305,149	491,579
China	573,409	195,787
Hong Kong	453,235	192,748
Macau	208,440	162,286

Bhutan leads the pack in terms of international arrivals from Indonesia, but off a very small numeric base.

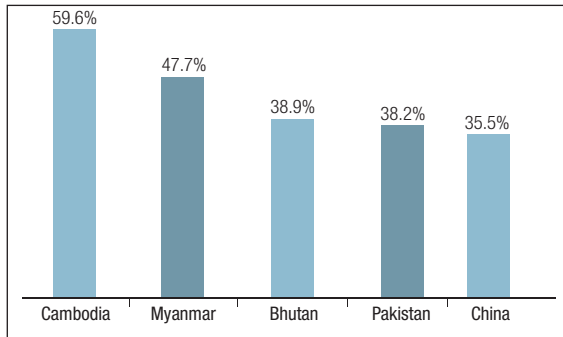
Macau and Malaysia both have strong rates of inbound growth from this market, but it is Malaysia that has welcomed more than 1.5 million additional arrivals from Indonesia between 2005 and 2010.

However, growth is expected to be slow towards 2014, at which time the annual inbound volume from Indonesia into Malaysia is expected to hit a little under three million.

One should consider two issues when looking at Malaysia's massive boom in Indonesian arrivals. Firstly, Indonesians flock to Malaysia for business, leisure and employment. Secondly, the aggregate arrival figures make no distinction between Peninsula Malaysia and the states of Sarawak and Sabah, both of which are quite accessible to Indonesian residents on the island of Borneo. In any case, preliminary 2011 figures suggest a contraction in arrivals from Indonesia with the total inbound volume falling to 2.13 million.

While Macau has a very strong average annual growth rate between 2005 and 2010, figures for 2011 suggest a slowdown in the rate of growth between 2010 and 2011 (+5.7 per cent). There is however an increase in the absolute inbound volume to more than 220,000. PATA's forecasts predict that Macau will receive around 258,000 arrivals annually from Indonesia by 2014.

VIETNAM



The neighbouring destinations of Cambodia and China are the standout destinations for international arrivals from Vietnam, as they show both very strong average growth rates between 2005 and 2010, as well as significant numeric gains over the same period.

Destination	Volume 2010	Volume Change 2005-10
China	919,991	718,885
Cambodia	514,289	464,647
Lao PDR	431,011	265,860
Thailand	380,368	201,125
Singapore	322,853	172,227

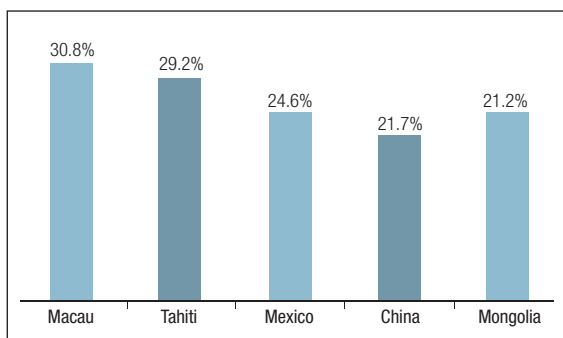
Detailed figures for arrivals to China from Vietnam for 2011 are not yet available. Cambodia on the other hand, saw an increase of more than 100,000 in 2011 and PATA's forecasts predict that it will receive in excess of one million arrivals from Vietnam by 2014.

PATA's forecasts further suggest that by 2014 Singapore will receive close to half a million international arrivals from Vietnam, while Thailand should welcome close to 760,000 Indonesian travellers.



Cambodia saw significant gains in Vietnamese travellers

EGYPT

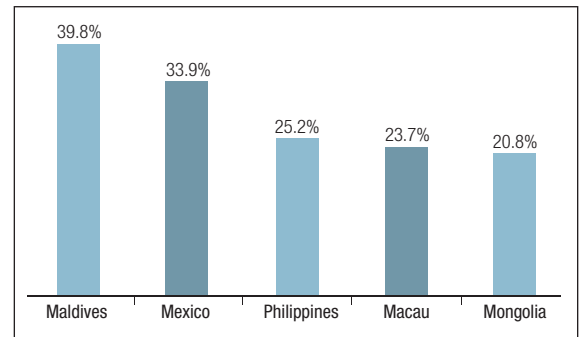


There are some very strong growth rates for traffic from Egypt, but only China manages to fall within the top-five range for both average annual growth and volume increase between 2005 and 2010.

Destination	Volume 2010	Volume Change 2005-10
China	59,119	36,983
USA	41,949	17,901
Thailand	16,729	8,842
India	8,017	3,969
Canada	10,434	2,689

Numbers remain small however and the recovery following the Arab Spring is still in its infancy, so no dramatic increases are expected for a year or two. However, there is still potential from this market over the longer-term.

TURKEY



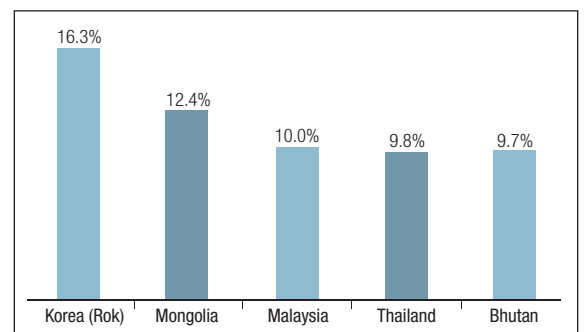
Turkey is another source market that has a different growth profile into Asia-Pacific destinations against the volume growth profile.

While the Maldives and Mexico have shown very strong average annual growth rates over the 2005-2010 period, volumes are relatively small. During 2011 it appears that the Maldives saw a contraction in arrivals from Turkey while Mexico recorded an increase of more than 16 per cent.

Destination	Volume 2010	Volume Change 2005-10
China	84,460	34,350
USA	115,237	30,803
Hong Kong	45,457	18,627
India	15,483	7,577
Canada	12,340	4,556

To date the US is the only Asia-Pacific destination that has reported an annual arrival volume from Turkey of more than 100,000 and the rate of growth, while positive, is expected to remain relatively low over the next few years. Indications at this stage are that arrivals from Turkey into the US will be a little under 150,000 by 2014.

SOUTH AFRICA



The Republic of South Africa (RSA) is another origin market from within the CIVETS bloc that has shown significant growth into some Asia-Pacific destinations, but again from a relatively low base.

Destination	Volume 2010	Volume Change 2005-10
Thailand	57,100	21,352
India	55,688	16,459
China	64,477	12,718
Malaysia	26,395	10,014
Australia	62,170	9,671



Hong Kong is hot for South Africans

The US and Hong Kong actually had the largest inbound volumes from the RSA in 2010 and that momentum continued with the US posting preliminary figures of 86,600 in 2011, while Hong Kong reached close to 80,000.

By 2014, PATA predicts that international arrivals from RSA to the US and Macau will reach close to 100,000 and 91,500 respectively.



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Ramada Camakila & Benoa Bali
Ramada Hotel & Suites Sakala Bali
Santika Indonesia Hotels & Resorts
Sanur Paradise Palza Hotel & Suites
Segara Village Hotel – Bali
- Sun Island - White Rose
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Andaman Princess Resort & Spa
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B-Lay Tong Phuket, MGallery Collection
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Cape Panwa Hotel, Phuket
Century Park Hotel
Chaweng Regent Beach Resort And Melati Beach Resort And Spa
Destination Asia
- Diamond Cliff Resort & Spa
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Meet Point Asia
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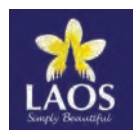
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Meet the buyers

VIATOR



Li Baidi
Product sales manager, Asia

Who are you? Li Baidi, product sales manager, Asia, for Viator.

What do you do? Viator is the most comprehensive online resource for travellers to research, plan and book destination activities. It sells tours and activities through the Viator.com website, iPhone and iPad apps, nine local language sites serving European, South American and Japanese markets, and more than 2,000 affiliated sites. Viator offers the industry's largest selection of tours and activities, all provided by local tour operators handpicked for quality, value and service.

What are you shopping/looking for at the show this year? We are focusing on expanding our product profiles in China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, India and South Korea this year. At the same time, we are planning on launching new destinations such as Bhutan, Nepal, Tibet, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. We are looking to be acquainted with local tour operators, travel companies, CVBs and tourism boards from the aforementioned destinations.

What is your pet peeve at trade shows? Poor food.

CENTENARYCLUB.COM



David Kilgarriff
Chairman and managing director

Who are you? I am David Kilgarriff.

What Do You Do? I am chairman and managing director of a UK-based group of companies which include Centenaryclub.com, a concierge company and luxury branding platform recommending the world's leading facilities in travel, leisure and lifestyles; Kingsley Drummond VIP Events, a high-end golf tour operator; and Roebuck Productions, a MICE company.

What are you shopping/looking for at the show this year? My primary interest is to establish new partnerships and strengthen existing ones in Asia-Pacific, by promoting them to our high net worth consumer members in www.centenaryclub.com. I also expect to meet exhibitors who we can work with through our golf travel company and our MICE facilitator.

What is your pet peeve at trade shows? What really peeves me is turning up for a pre-scheduled appointment to be greeted by a representative whose opening gambit is "Tell me what you do", because he has not taken the time to research my companies' activities when they have had several weeks or months to do so.

HAPPY DAYS



Walid Hnid
Director manager

Who are you? Walid Hnid, manager of Happy Days, a Tunisian travel company.

What Do You Do? Happy Days is a category A travel agency founded in 2005 and a leading destination management company in Tunisia. We are a member of the Tunisian Federation of Travel Agencies and a member of IATA.

Happy Days is managed by a team of young, dynamic and experienced people, with affiliates in the most important tourism zones of Tunisia such as Tunis, Sousse, Hammamet.

We represent local tour operators, provide hotel and Thalasso-therapy reservations, run touristic, cultural and thematic circuits, as well as organise MICE events.

What are you shopping/looking for at the show this year? We are looking to grow our business in inbound travel to Tunisia, as well as develop our database for outbound travel. We also hope to meet new contacts.

What is your pet peeve at trade shows? No response provided.

WIDEX INDIA



Shakeel H Rizvi
General manager-marketing communications

Who are you? Shakeel H Rizvi, general manager-marketing communications at Widex India.

What do you do? I'm a corporate MICE planner at Widex India, a fully-owned subsidiary of Widex A/S Denmark. Widex India is one of the largest suppliers of digital hearing devices in India today.

Headquartered in Chandigarh, Widex India has established its presence across the country through its extensive network of sales offices and service centres in Bangalore, Chandigarh, Delhi and Kolkata, just to name a few.

Widex has 3,000 employees worldwide, 1,000 of which are in Denmark.

What are you shopping/looking for at the show this year? Airlines, hotels, venues, cruises, technology providers and destination management companies.

What is your pet peeve at trade shows? Waiting.

Meet the sellers



CROWN REGENCY HOTELS & RESORTS

What are you promoting at the mart this year: Inspired by the element of water, Crown Regency Resort & Convention Center is a four-hectare property located on Main Road Station 2 in Boracay. The property has 515 guestrooms and a conference centre for 1,200 pax. Guests are invited to discover the property's water park amenities which are set amid a tropical paradise. Visit us at www.crownregency.com

What's your booth number: E9



DESTINATION RESORTS AND HOTELS

What are you promoting at the mart this year: Malaysia's Destination Resorts and Hotels brings together the country's finest luxury resorts, hotels, residences, retail lifestyle malls, theme parks, attractions, and championship golf courses, such as those designed by Ernie Els. Our strategic partners include Amanresorts International, Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, and Datai Hotels & Resorts. Legoland Malaysia is among our developments.

What's your booth number: A2



PRIME PLAZA HOTELS & RESORTS, INDONESIA

What are you promoting at the mart this year: From Java to Bali, from jungle to beach temple, the Prime Plaza Hotels & Resorts group is the standard-bearer of Indonesian hospitality. With seven hotels in Indonesia, each with distinct personalities, travellers will always find something to suit their needs. Our portfolio includes Kota Bukit Indah Plaza Hotel, Jogjakarta Plaza Hotel, Surabaya Plaza Hotel, Sanur Paradise Plaza Hotel & Suites, Bali Dynasty Resort, and Amadea Resort & Villas. Visit www.primeplazahotels.com.

What's your booth number: Sanur Paradise Plaza Hotel & Suites, D11; Jogjakarta Plaza Hotel, D12; Bali Dynasty Resort, D14; Surabaya Plaza Hotel, D16.



SUTERA HARBOUR RESORT, SABAH, MALAYSIA

What are you promoting at the mart this year: Sutera Harbour Resort is an integrated resort comprising two five-star hotels – The Pacific Sutera Hotel and The Magellan Sutera Resort, the Sutera Harbour Marina, Golf and Country Club and the eco-friendly Sutera Sanctuary Lodges. Travel back in time riding the North Borneo Railway vintage steam engine train or charter the Puteri Sutera to enjoy lazy cruises along the South China Sea. For shopaholics, the city centre is just five minutes away. Sutera Harbour Resort is a 10-minute drive from Sabah's Kota Kinabalu International Airport.

What's your booth number: A6



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Networking in full swing

PATA Travel Mart's first day sees the halls crowded with hopeful buyers and sellers, discovers **Patrick Tan**



Tourism Malaysia's Nizam Eshak, Azizan Noordin and Zuhairah Abas



Miramar International Hotel Management Corp Hong Kong's Vireo Yeung, IATA Singapore's Patrina Mak and The Mira Hong Kong's Connie Kwan



Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism Laos' Vongdeuan Keosulivong and Vougdeuan M Pakhongxay Vinavong, and TTG Asia Singapore's Darren Ng



Sinarmas Land Indonesia's Riyo Wisaksono, Teky Mailoa and Anny Janty Gorat



Chateau Travel Service Company Taiwan's Frank Lee, Sands China's Kenny Hong and Utopia Tavel International Taiwan's Chih-Hung Wu



Media Transasia India's Prithvi Marwa, Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corp's Mohan Yadav, Incredible India's Madhu Dubey, Renu Bamrara and O P Meena, and Asia Travel & Tour (India)'s Shailesh Asthana



HS Travel International Hong Kong's Sam Ling and Hazen Tang

Below: Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority Philippines' Mark Lapid, Department of Tourism (DoT) Philippines' Ramon R Jimenez Jr, PATA's Rick Antonson and DoT Philippines' Domingo Enerio III



Marco Polo Hotels Singapore's Roy Yan, Marco Polo Jinjiang's Tom Zhou, Marco Polo Hotels Hong Kong's Putri Istiarini, Marco Polo Davao's Emelyn Mauhay, Bruno Simeoni and Bucks Jimenez, Marco Polo Plaza Cebu's Chino Quintana and Panwa Beach Resort Phuket's Claude Sauter



Searching for value buys

Sellers are eager to impress as buyers hit the show floor for deals. **Patrick Tan** catches them in action



Resorts World Manila's Bennix Bryan Ronquillo, Gaurav Travels India's Rajeev Sabharwal and Resorts World Manila's Christine Ibarreta



Tourism Infrastructure & Enterprise Zone Authority Philippines' Banjie Vicedo, Bing Francisco, Mark Lapid, Jose Ramon Ramos and Patrick Daniel Lyttle Jr



Destinations of the World UAE's Edmund Menezes, and Galaxy Entertainment Group Macau's Abigail Gonzales and Rinky Poon



Au Service de L'Événement France's Serge Tapia, Royal Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta's L Sudarsana, Santika Indonesia's Guido Andriano and Hera Adiwikarta



Philippine Airlines' Lynn Haltland, Reynaldo Garcia, Felix Cruz, Mayette Casanova and Jesus Garcia



The Jayakarta Jakarta Hotel & Spa's I Gusti Rai Tantra and The Jayakarta Suites Bandung Hotel & Spa's Aman Kusdianan



Above: Messe Berlin Singapore's Boo Mei Shyan, Messe Berlin's Rika Jean-Francois and Ad-Voyage Travels India's Sandeep Jain



Rendezvous Grand Hotel Singapore's Lim Mia Kwang and Kellvin Ong



Left: Ministry of Tourism & Creative Economy Indonesia's Nia Niscaya and Pacto Indonesia's Umberto Cadamuro



The Bellevue Hotels & Resorts (BH&R) Philippines' Jerico Feliciano, Elotro Travel Agency Russia's Vitaly Yakushkov, Weltstudio Italy's Mariagrazia Crotti, BH&R's Carlo Gomez and The Bellevue Manila's Kistna Soriano

Showing guests a fun time

Destination host, Philippines, pulled out the stops at the welcome dinner reception. Photos by **Patrick Tan**



A display of local talent: show violinist Juleous Gacang was one of many entertaining performers Below: Classic Travel Russia's Elena Grigorieva and Ekaterina Loshmanova



PATA's Rick Antonson, Department of Tourism Philippines' Ramon R Jimenez Jr and PATA's Martin Craigs



Star Holiday Mart Singapore's Dennis Law, JTB Corp Japan's Shinya Kurosawa, and JTB Global Marketing & Travel Japan's Hisao Yoshimura and Sakano



Incheon Airport's Kwang-Hee Yang, Gun-ho Doh and Hee-Young Cho



Discovery Shores Boracay Island's Joy Anne C Denoga and Tourism Promotions Board Philippines' Tess H Mauricio



Columbus Travels & Services India's Himanshu Agashiwala, Arika Tour & Travels India's Udesh Kejriwal and Harshil Tours & Travels India's Pravin Shah



Centara Hotels & Resorts Thailand's Alisa Saovapong and Krosakorn Rokrungrroj

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