



## More multi-city Asian tours

The Philippines and Malaysia lock arms to attract more arrivals across South-east Asia

**By Gracia Chiang, N. Nithyananthan and Marianne Carandang**  
CONVINCED that it should collaborate rather than compete with its South-east Asian neighbours, the Department of Tourism (DoT) Philippines has set about establishing partnerships with the region's NTOs, with Malaysia being the latest as air links between the two neighbours rise significantly.

DoT secretary Ramon R Jimenez Jr said at the core of its cooperation with Malaysia was the development of the Muslim market. "The Philippines is a predominantly Christian country, so we have much to learn in terms of attracting and taking care of Muslim tourists," he said.

Jimenez hopes the country can also leverage on Malaysia's strength in the Europe market, while Malaysia will benefit from the Philippines' US connection.

He also revealed that similar discussions had been held with his Singapore counterpart, with the goal of creating packages combining both destinations. "We are determined to form a

**"I often joke that my favourite airport for the Philippines is Changi."**

team who will create high-end packages: Europeans can fly into Singapore for a city tour, go to Boracay to get their tan and tattoo, then fly to Singapore again."

Jimenez said: "I often joke that my favourite airport for the Philippines is Changi Airport...Now every (country in South-east Asia) is a possible gateway."

From March 25, Malaysia Air-

lines is increasing its flights to the Philippines to thrice daily, while SEAir will launch a thrice-weekly Clark-KK service on May 1. Cebu Air has reportedly filed paperwork for flights to Kuching, while Zest Air is looking to mount flights to KL mid-year.

Tourism Malaysia's acting director-general Azizan Nordin added that the NTO was also widening the number of airlines it worked with. To attract more tourists from the US and Russia, for instance, it will work with the Philippines and South Korea.

The trade, however, has its eye focused closer home, on the Malaysian and the Philippine markets themselves. "As Manila and Clark are just an hour-and-a-half flight away from KK, it will be easy to persuade Sabahans to visit the Philippines," said Borneo Trails Tours & Travel general manager, Tan Kok Liang.

### Infrastructure will also be a focus

ASIDE from growing demand, the Philippines is embarking on capacity building, said Department of Tourism secretary Ramon R Jimenez Jr.

With a new law being implemented this year, 21 areas have been declared tourism enterprise zones, where investors will be offered incentives such as a moratorium on income tax for a property's first year of operation and no limit to the hiring of expatriate executives, said Jimenez. This is in addition to international airports that are being built and the expansion of cruise terminals across the country, the former meant to boost international arrivals, and the latter, South-east Asian arrivals.

Jimenez also revealed that a Singapore group had already expressed interest in turning the former post office in Manila into The Fullerton Hotel, similar to the one in Singapore. — Gracia Chiang

Travel Warehouse Philippines general manager, Jaison Yang, said: "Filipinos are discovering new destinations. The launch of new budget hotels within the US\$75 range is also going to help with travel to Malaysia."

As for inbound, Elizabeth

Pablico, president and general manager of Wintrex Travel Philippines said: "We have many customers from Sabah. They like to see churches in Manila and Pampanga. Catholic Malaysians are also interested in going as far as Batangas."

## Competition heats up on Kuala Lumpur-Samui route

**By Raini Hamdi**

BANGKOK Airways' daily Kuala Lumpur (KL)-Samui flights from March 31, along with its aim to seal Malaysia Airlines (MAS) as its latest codeshare partner by then, sees Firefly flying into action to protect its Samui marketshare.

Both airlines are banking on the medium and longhaul markets. Firefly has announced it is "working closely with the Tourism Authority of Thailand to promote Samui as an upmarket leisure destination as well as a

destination for weddings, honeymoons, corporate team-building and incentive travel".

Firefly's head of marketing and communications, Angelina C Fernandez, said there was demand for destination weddings and honeymoons from medium and longhaul markets. "These foreigners arrive in KL, spend a few nights...in Malaysia and then continue their holiday to Samui to fulfill their wedding and/or honeymoon plans."

Bangkok Airways, which is courting the same market, may

have the upper hand as it flies from Kuala Lumpur International Airport whereas Firefly operates from Subang. With a planned airfare of "US\$170 to US\$180 one-way", its president, Puttipong Prasarttong-Osoth, said he was confident of a load factor of "60 per cent plus" in the first year and "close to 70 per cent" by 2013.

Firefly's load factor is above 80 per cent since the airline started the service on October 26, 2008. Its only competition now on the route is Berjaya Air, which also

operates to Samui from Subang.

Prasarttong-Osoth said he picked KL because "we should open more gateways and expand the number of our codeshare partners. We have Hong Kong, Singapore and now KL, which is a potential hub for us, as there are flights from Europe, Australia and Africa (which could connect passengers to Bangkok Airways)".

Samui is by far its most profitable route, accounting for 40 per cent of total traffic. This year, the airline will also increase its

Samui-Hong Kong service from daily to 10 flights a week. Other expansion includes an extra flight from Bangkok to Chiang Mai and Phuket and 12 weekly direct flights from Bangkok to Lampang, all from March 25.

Prasarttong-Osoth said Europe should continue to be "big" for Asian destinations. "Look at Germany – 70 per cent of Germans travel. If we can only attract 10 per cent to come to Asia, that's a lot already. The south may be having a crisis, but north Europe is still travelling."

### Sound bites

"We are the best-kept secret in South-east Asia, but we're tired of being a secret. There's no money being a secret."

**Ramon R Jimenez Jr**, secretary, Department of Tourism Philippines, on how the destination simply needs more awareness in order to grow its international arrivals. He said the Philippines deserved more than its current share of European traffic, which saw double-digit growth for the first three months of this year, but this was from a low base.



The Department of Tourism Philippines makes a big splash with its new campaign, *It's more fun in the Philippines*, at ITB, the first international travel trade show to see the new country branding.

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## In brief

**The Saff now a Naumi**  
SINGAPORE will get a second Naumi hotel by June as the former Saff hotel will be rebranded as Naumi Liora. Located in Chinatown, the heritage property is undergoing a multimillion-dollar renovation and will emerge with 79 rooms and suites, a reconfigured lobby and fitness spaces.

**Jumeirah's hat trick**  
DUBAI-based Jumeirah Group has opened three new properties in Europe – the 116-key Jumeirah Grand Hotel Via Veneto in Rome, the 133-unit Grosvenor House Apartments by Jumeirah Living in London and the 120-key Jumeirah Port Soller Hotel & Spa in Mallorca.

**Check in before arrival**  
GUESTS of Singapore's Marina Bay Sands integrated resort can now check in onboard the hotel's complimentary coach from any of Changi Airport's four terminals. A guest service agent will register details via handheld tablets, and the full check-in experience will be offered to guests, complete with credit card verification and key card collection.

# Malaysia turns luxe

## A new branding courts well-heeled shoppers from abroad

**By Brian Higgs**

MALAYSIA is going for the high-end jugular with its new Luxury Malaysia branding, targeting key Asian markets and Europe.

Speaking during a press conference to introduce the branding at ITB Berlin, Malaysia's tourism minister Ng Yen Yen said efforts were being made to turn the country into a premier duty-free shopping destination, including the abolishing of all import duties on cosmetics, jewellery, watches and electronic goods starting this year.

Other initiatives implemented to draw high-end visitors include the organising of annual fashion and cultural events such as the 1Malaysia International Shoe Festival, as well as premier sporting events like the CIMB Asia Pacific Classic Malaysia golf tournament.

Junaida Lee Abdullah, deputy secretary general-management & monitoring, Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, said: "The Luxury Malaysia initiative will allow us to inform people abroad that you can have a luxurious holiday



**Cheah: yield, not numbers**

in Malaysia. We have a lot of potential to offer as a high-end destination, with plenty of first-class products, dining options, hotels and attractions, but they may not have been marketed so well before."

Despite strong competition from the two integrated resorts in Singapore, Abdullah said strong arrivals for Malaysia's neighbour presented an opportunity.

"We look at it positively...as a chance to get these high-end tourists to cross the causeway and spend a few days in Malaysia. We are working with tour operators in Singapore to see how we can do this, to perhaps get them to visit the new outlet shopping mall in Johor Bahru," she explained.

Ken Cheah, assistant vice president-sales, Resorts World Genting, said: "The focus on

raising yield is similar to what we have been practising – gradually increasing rates across all our properties.

Last year, for example, we saw a six to eight per cent reduction in the number of rooms sold compared to the year before, but we still managed to record an eight to 10 per cent increase in revenue."

Susan Soong, assistant general manager, Borneo Eco Tours Kota Kinabalu, said she was planning to introduce more luxury products soon.

"Sabah has many tour operators catering to high-end clients, and also plenty of luxury jungle resorts and five-star accommodation options. Up to 40 per cent of our clients are high-end," she added.

Francis Lee, vice president business development/sales & marketing, Swiss-Garden International Hotels, Resorts & Inns said: "I believe (the new marketing initiative) will not only benefit the top-end of the market but also (hotels in the) four-star category."

## Focusing on China is myopic

**By Raini Hamdi**

UK SPECIALIST Chic Locations has urged Asian resorts to exercise caution about accepting too many Chinese clients, arguing that any property dominated by one market will lose its appeal.

Partner David Kevan said: "The real upscale clients want recognition within the resort, but they also want to observe other nationalities. The desire for short-term occupancy needs to be balanced with long-term appeal, and to differing markets."

Kevan's call comes as, by his own admission, "arrivals from Europe (will) probably drop" and as European buyers at ITB Berlin press a case with hoteliers in Asia for rates to be maintained – even though markets such as China are picking up the slack.

He said: "(This year) has started well, although every enquiry probably has up to five operators chasing the same client. With some destinations like Dubai, clients have an even more scattergun approach to operators. Price is all that appears to matter."

Kevan added that UK clients were still travelling, with Thailand, Malaysia and Indochina proving particularly popular.





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# On good footing

Park Hotel Hong Kong's Peggy Lo and Pauline Cheung, Park Hotel Group Singapore's Mohd K Rafin and Cindy Goo, and Grand Park Orchard Singapore's Joanne Chan



Exhibitors gear up to dazzle buyers on the first day of business at ITB. By **Patrick Tan**



Onyx Hospitality Group Thailand's Thorsten Ries and Kullapranee Sawareephol, Travco UK's Andrew Moore, Amari Hua Hin's Simon Dell, Onyx Hospitality Group's Debrah Pascoe and Amari Watergate Bangkok's Pierre-André Pelletier



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## Swissôtel eyes Asia for expansion and development

By Karen Yue

ASIA will feature strongly in Swissôtel Hotels and Resorts' expansion over the next few years, with a property due to open each in Bangalore and Chengdu in 2014, and a management contract inked recently for a Mumbai hotel.

Jürg Siegenthaler, Swissôtel's vice president marketing and sales, told the *Daily* that the hotel group was looking to expand its presence in secondary Chinese cities. "China's domestic tourist numbers has exceeded two bil-

lion, and that's great news for our expansion plans in China."

He said the group's four Chinese properties were enjoying good occupancies. "Our Shanghai and Beijing hotels are getting strong international corporate business, while the two in Foshan and Kunshan are doing well with the domestic market."

As well, the 1,562-key Swissôtel Makkah, Saudi Arabia will open this year, alongside the Makkah Clock Royal Tower by Fairmont and the Raffles Makkah Palace Saudi Arabia.

Sales efforts in Asia have also been boosted by last year's opening of an office in India and the recent hiring of more sales staff for the Singapore office.

Siegenthaler said Swissôtel would not be turning its back on Europe although "shortfalls in business from European markets (due to their economic woes) will be filled by Asian bookings".

On April 1, the 235-key Swissôtel Dresden Am Schloss will open. Sales efforts targeting European markets will also be maintained.

### Titlle tattle

## Marketing 101

**How does one attract the attention of German-speaking travellers? The answer may be simpler than you think.**

By registering your website with the domain name .reise, it would already stand a better chance of being picked up by search engines.

The word 'reise', which means 'travel' in German, is often used in online research for travel products by German-speaking consumers, said German company Dotreise, who has applied to the California-based Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers for the right to be administrator of the .reise top-level domain end. If successful, profit-seeking companies would not be able to sell .reise for an atrocious price, said general manager Axel Schwiersch, who added that usage of the domain end would cost 100 euros (US\$131) a year, a fee paid to the local or regional registrar.

Some 200-300 travel companies such as Schauinsland Reisen have voiced their support.

— Karen Yue

# Accor's year of China

## Adjustments to brand and products made in an effort to woo the Chinese

By Mimi Hudoyo

ACCOR has shined the spotlight on China's outbound market and is putting its full weight behind efforts to achieve double-digit growth in bookings for its properties in Asia, Australia and Europe.

"This is the year of China," said Accor senior vice president sales and marketing, Graham Wilson, in an interview with the *Daily*.

"We are targeting an increase of 16.8 per cent in Chinese business to France this year, 18.2 per cent to the UK and 18 per cent to Germany. In Asia, we are looking at an increase of 11 per cent in Thailand and about 20 per cent in South Korea."

As part of its efforts to develop the Chinese market, Accor has relaunched its Grand Mercure brand in China as Mei Jue, mainly targeting the domestic market. It has also appointed Samuel Shih as Accor China chairman and CEO to develop partnerships with operators in

key cities such as Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, as well as Hong Kong. These partnerships will look at developing both the domestic and outbound markets.

To grow the Chinese outbound market for Accor properties worldwide, the company intends to expand the reach of its China Optimum Service Standards, a programme that sees hotels design its services specifically for the Chinese market. The programme, created in consultation with leading tour and travel operators from China, made its debut in Australia last year.

"We are introducing congee and *dim sum* in our hotels in France and Germany, for example. We are also introducing information in Mandarin, and offering Mandarin TV shows in the guestrooms," said Wilson.

He added: "The Chinese outbound market is projected to

reach 100 million by 2020 and Accor has 4,000 hotels worldwide, so we want to make sure we capture the whole spectrum of the market. We have a wide range of products for all markets, so we are trying to differentiate and make sure there is an emotional connection between the brand



Wilson: aiming for double-digit growth

and guest experience.

"(Chinese) guests do not care much about the size of the room; they care about the location and the experience they get for the price," he said.

Ayers Rock Resort in Australia is a successful example of Accor's courtship of the Chinese outbound market. It received its first charter flight from China on Chinese New Year's eve, with 155 mid-market travellers from Guangzhou who stayed three nights at the resort.

The win was attributed to the resort's introduction of the China Optimum Service Standards

and property manager Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia's partnership with Chinese tour operator Beijing China Travel Service.

Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia executive general manager sales, marketing, distribution, Ray Stone, said: "It took us six months to tap the Chinese market before we got this. I wanted to start with charter flights to gauge the reaction of travellers. They came with their (sophisticated) cameras and were amazed by the views."

Apart from working with tour operators, Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia also leveraged social media.

Going forward, Stone will develop the market through more charter flights. He intends to capture Chinese travellers who are visiting Australia through other gateways.

Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia has also launched a Mandarin website for Ayers Rock Resort.

# Bali sellers bet on Kiwi market

By Mimi Hudoyo

AIR New Zealand will operate direct twice-weekly services between Auckland and Denpasar, for a start only during the peak period from June to October.

The new service, using a Boeing 767-300 aircraft, will add some 600 weekly seats to the island during the peak international and domestic holiday season when rooms, especially in Bali's south like Kuta and Tuban, are usually crowded.

As it cuts the travel time by at least four hours, the trade sees it as an opportunity to boost traffic from New Zealand.

"Travellers from New Zealand previously needed 12-14 hours to get to Bali without a direct flight, averaging about 700 passengers per week. With the direct eight-hour flight, we are confident we can double the number," said Herdy Sayoga, Bali Village marketing group executive director. Bali Village will work with Air New Zealand on a roadshow in Auckland this

May to drum up support for the direct service.

The AOT Group, which owns 50 per cent of Air New Zealand Holidays, has appointed Pacto to handle rooms and transfers for its groups in Bali. Umberto Cadamuro, Pacto director of operations and business development, said: "At the moment we hold an allotment of 150 rooms daily, and are still negotiating with several hotels to reach the target of 300 rooms daily so as to satisfy demand."

The appointment comes as Pacto works to reduce its dependence on the traditional European market and expand its share of the Asia-Pacific market.

Concerns of overcrowding in Bali are dismissed by the trade, which contends the island can accommodate the expected influx of travellers from the new service.

Ismullah Lahsin, general manager of White Rose Bali Hotel & Villas and Sun Island Boutique Villa & Spa, said: "General-

ly, there is a room crunch in Bali, especially in the southern area, and the domestic market is huge. On the other hand, there are many new two- and three-star hotels opening in areas off the beachfront, and the domestic market likes to stay there."

Bali Village's Sayoga said the number of travellers might not be that big, but "they are willing to spend more and stay an average of 10 days". He expects both business travellers and holiday-makers to use the new direct service.

Nia Niscaya, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy director of international promotion, said the direct flight offers "the opportunity to boost the (New Zealand) market".

"Hopefully the flights will not stop after one season only," she said.

Meanwhile, the ministry is collaborating with the Indonesian Embassy in organising cultural and culinary events in Auckland and Wellington in April.

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## Cambodia

### Sihanoukville soars

Sihanoukville – a former hangout for the Cambodian elite and more recently a renowned backpacker haven – has been reignited by the relaunch of its airport and the construction of high-end resorts.

Sihanoukville’s tourism sector is unanimous in its belief that the launch of flag carrier Cambodia Angkor Air’s Siem Reap to Sihanoukville route in December would change the face of tourism to the resort destination in the Bay of Thailand.

Diethelm Travel Cambodia managing director, Pierre Jungo, said: “We can expect Sihanoukville to get much more attention than it has seen in recent years. Until now, it has been a difficult destination to reach.

“However, limitations in the number of hotel rooms available could cause problems.”

He said the beach resort currently had only two hotels with four-star or above ratings – Independence Hotel and Sokha Beach Resort.

Although recent reports suggested that cruise ship arrivals fell 31 per cent year-on-year, Sihanoukville had seen a steady rise in arrivals over recent years, according to Jungo.

“Sihanoukville can attract more visitors with an increase in advertising to raise awareness. The opening of Song Saa Resort in February offers international exposure to the rest of the coast,” he said.

Members of the hotel sector also welcomed the increase in access. Sokha Beach Resort general manager, Friedhelm Detjen, said: “We sometimes don’t have enough rooms available during the high-season, and with the opening of the airport we expect to attract more visitors.



Courtesy of Sihanoukville

“Our new lakeside bungalows will accommodate the predicted growth.”

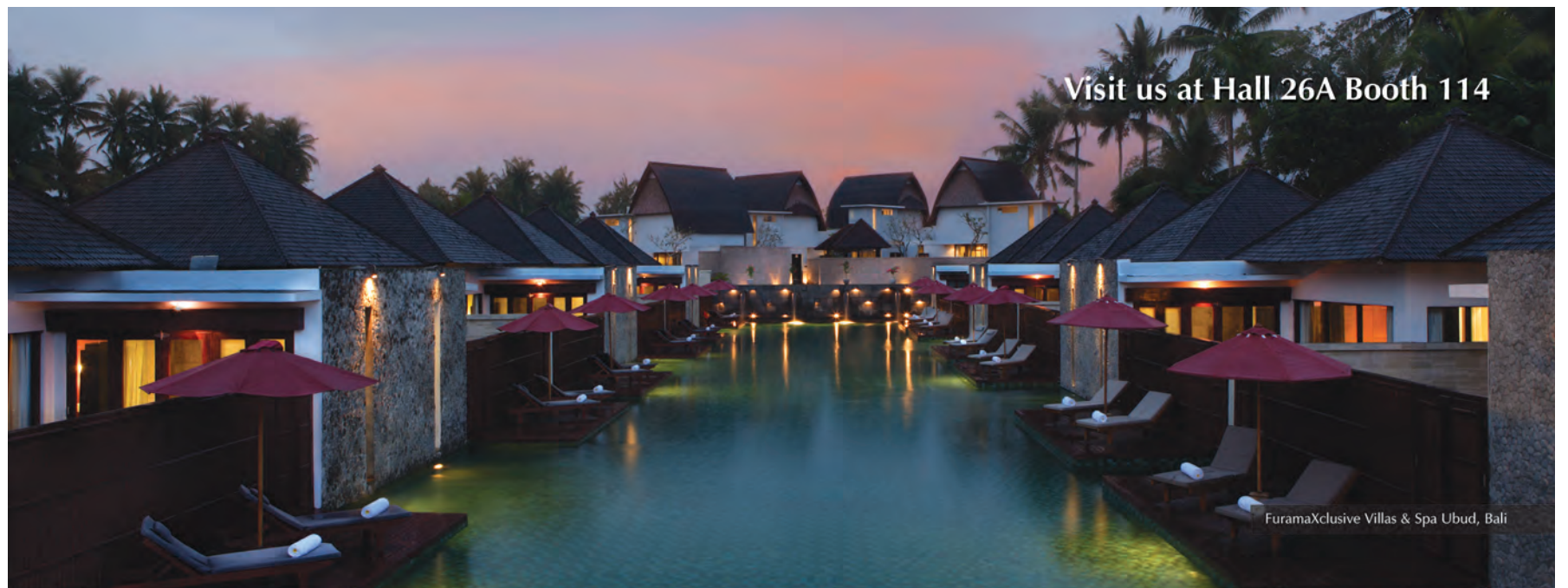
He hoped that Sihanoukville would attract those tourists who in the past would go to Thailand’s beaches after taking in the sights of Angkor Wat.

He said that although there was a slight decline in visitors from markets such as Scandinavia, the resort attracted both domestic tourists and customers from Europe,

China and Japan.

Mohan Gunti, advisor to the Cambodia Association of Travel Agents and a member of the government’s tourism working group, believed direct flights to neighbouring countries, such as Thailand and Vietnam, would benefit the city and region on the whole.

“The region is expected to attract a high number of tourists and investors, becoming a major province and generating a high income for the economy.” – **Liam Barnes**



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# Indonesia

German numbers are expected to be steady for the archipelago but experts say travellers will wait till the last minute to book. **Mimi Hudoyo** reports

Indonesia's inbound industry expects Germans to continue to visit despite the economic crisis in Europe.

Although group tour numbers are predicted to fall, travel consultants were optimistic that FIT and special interest business would hold.

While Bali would continue to be the main destination, travellers were looking for new destinations and itineraries. Travel consultants also expected to see a rise in last-minute bookings.

Aneka Kartika Tours & Travel operations manager, Adjie Wahjono, said that buyers at ASEAN Tourism Forum's Travex had been looking for new itineraries for special interest tours, including study tours.

He said: "Demand for Asia for such tours is high. Ikarus Reisen, for example, has five pages on Indonesia alone in its brochure this year.

"The number of travellers per departure is small, but they stay longer and visit places that are off the well-trodden tourist itineraries."

Pacto director of business development, Umberto Cadamuro, said: "People are still travelling but we expect to see more last-minute bookings as travellers are taking time and looking for the best options."

Approximately a third of bookings were now made in the same month as travel.

Adjie said that to secure mar-



"The group tour market is still unpredictable, but our FIT market from Germany is performing at the same level as last year. January was even better than the same period last year."

**Umberto Cadamuro**  
Director of business development  
Pacto

ketshare, he needed to continuously come up with new ideas and tweak products.

For example, he said, most Mt Bromo tours only last one night climaxing with the sunrise. Aneka Kartika Tours, however, has longer tours with added visits to the eco resort at the Slope of Mt Arjuno, Cemara Lawang, Bromo Tengger National Park and Tengger villages.

Panorama Destination general manager, Raka Ramayana, said the company was trying to maintain rates for selected business partners this year. As Bali's hotel rates are likely to rise, it is trying to keep down the costs of other components, such as transportation.

"Basically we are ready to lower our margin to reach a price which is acceptable to both us and our partners and get the market going."

Panorama also planned to offer promotional fares. He said: "For example, for a package of 10 days at US\$1,000, or US\$100 per day, we extend it to 14 days at US\$1,120. If you look at the per-day spend it is lower but the total amount we earn is up."

However, Cadamuro said: "Dropping prices for the land arrangements will not have much effect. The key to win the market is having the capacity to handle last-minute bookings."

"Therefore, what we are doing at Pacto is increasing capacity and providing a 24-hour service."

## Promotional efforts being kept up to maintain German interest

By Mimi Hudoyo

INDONESIA'S Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy will keep up its marketing efforts in Europe, including Germany, this year as it considers the market still economically viable.

Indonesia Deputy Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Sapta Nirwandar, said: "Germany is still a giant economy; its unemployment rate is only about five per cent. With an average income of US\$15,000 to US\$35,000, Germany is still a strong market."

While the volume of traffic is expected to slow down, those with money would still travel although they would be more conscious about their spending.



**Sapta: imminent slowdown**

and 150,000 German arrivals.

Sapta said: "Our marketing focus will be in Asia, Australia and Russia, whose economies are viable."

"In Europe we will not be offensive in our marketing efforts but will be taking

The ministry's 2011 target for German arrivals was 160,000 and the latest data available at press time, for January-October last year, showed arrivals at 121,966.

This year, the tourism authority's target is for between 146,000

and 150,000 German arrivals.

action to maintain the markets instead." Apart from participating in ITB Berlin and a sales mission to the key European countries, the ministry is also going to organise an orchestra tour in Germany.

The tour, in cooperation with Indonesian embassies and consulates, will be in September.

This is part of its promotional efforts in Europe, and the orchestra will also visit Belgium, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria.

"This is the first time that a modern Indonesian orchestra has toured," Sapta said. "The tour will highlight our promotions in Europe. We would like to show that Indonesia does not only have tradi-

tional music but also award-winning contemporary musicians as well."

Meanwhile, the tourism authority is planning to become the co-host of ITB Berlin in 2013, following two successful years as the co-host of Vakantiebeurs in Utrecht.

This would allow Indonesia to co-organise events and be included in the promotion of ITB.

He said: "The benefits for Indonesia are the wide range of promotions and the yield will be the news value which it will generate for Indonesia."

"ITB Berlin is much bigger and more established than Vakantiebeurs, so we expect better results."



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# Hotels look beyond Bali

Mood across the country is optimistic as development booms

**By Mimi Hudoyo**

INDONESIAN hoteliers expect European numbers to stabilise at 2011 level despite the eurozone crisis.

They also believe more travellers will venture beyond Bali thanks to improved infrastructure and accessibility. This means more business for chains with properties spread out across the country.

Aston International vice president sales and marketing, Norbert Vas, said: "Europeans are travelling beyond Bali. Kalimantan, Sumatera and Java overland are becoming more popular thanks to the improved infrastructure, including new hotel developments in secondary destinations."

Aston will open 17 hotels this year, many in secondary locations including Bekasi, Cirebon, Jambi Makassar and Kupang. In 2011, it opened hotels in destinations popular with Europeans such as Solo and Jogjakarta.

Vas said improvements in the reputation of domestic airlines, particularly Garuda Indonesia, were also boosting travel.

Other major markets such as Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, China and Russia are expected to grow. "The dominant growth factor in Indonesia, however, is the domestic market," he added.

"It is not only a huge market but domestic tourists are also becoming more sophisticated, more demanding and spending more money. In Bali we are receiving a higher average room rate from the Indonesian market than the German market, for example."

Swiss-Belhotel International senior vice president operations and development for Indonesia and Malaysia, Emmanuel Guillard, said: "Indonesia's economy is very strong so demand is high.

"We are opening properties in tertiary destinations such as Pangkalan Bun in Central Kalimantan and Kupang in East

Nusa Tenggara. Our hotels in Jayapura, Palu and Samarinda are doing very well, above 80 per cent, while country-wise our average occupancy is 70 per cent."

Santika Indonesia Hotels & Resorts corporate director of marketing, Guido Andriano, said that continued expansion in mining and agriculture in 2012 and beyond would see an increase in demand for "good, clean and safe accommodation in remote areas".

Swiss-Belhotel International has 20 hotels offering 3,000 rooms with 27 more under development, representing a further 5,000 rooms by the end of 2013. It has also introduced budget brand Zest Hotels in Indonesia and aims to have 30 of these properties within three years. Accor, which operates 43 hotels in Indonesia, has more than 30 projects in various stages of development. These will add more than 4,500 rooms in the next few years.



Swiss-Belinn Medan

In Bali, a C9 Hotelworks' report showed there were up to 5,000 luxury condotel units under development or in the planning stage, many with international brand names.

Home-grown brands such as Whiz Hotels and PHM Hospitality, which belongs to Panorama Group, are also making their way into the market.

Some management companies based in secondary destinations, such as Kagum Hotels, in Bandung, West Java, Dafam Hotels & Resorts in Semarang, Central Java, and Grand Zuri in

Riau, are growing their brands near home before reaching out to other parts of Indonesia.

Despite the new rooms coming online, hoteliers are optimistic. Guido said Santika's economy Amaris brand ran at an average occupancy of 73 per cent last year while three- to four-star brands registered 83 per cent.

"In Bali, the upper tier brands reached 85 per cent occupancy, despite the new upmarket properties on the island," he said.

Hoteliers plan to raise rates by five per cent or more to cover increased costs.

## Destination by the numbers

**7.6** Tourism contributed US\$7.6 billion to the economy in 2010, ranking it fifth behind oil and gas, palm oil, coal and rubber. Australia, Singapore and Malaysia were the top revenue generators. Among European markets, Germany ranked third, after the Netherlands and France, generating US\$217 million, according to Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy data.

**5.19** Tourism accounted for 5.19 per cent of total investment in the country during the last six years. The majority of investment was in the hotel and restaurant industry, especially in Java and Bali.

**8** Despite the global economic crisis, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has set an optimistic target of eight million arrivals this year. Apart from the top markets of Singapore, Malaysia and Australia, countries with strong economies – China, South Korea, Russia and India – will be the focus this year.

**2.57** Tourist arrivals to Bali between January and November 2010 (the latest available figures) reached 2.57 million, a 9.55 per cent increase over the same period in 2009. Statistics Indonesia Bali Office projected total 2011 arrivals would hit the 2.7 million target.

**230** Lion Air has ordered 230 new Boeing aircraft to be delivered between 2017 and 2025. The US\$21.7 billion order is for 201 B737 MAXs and B737-900ERs.

**928** Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is to develop up to 928 tourism villages in 33 provinces this year.

**1,500** There are around 1,500 rooms under construction in Lombok to open by 2012, adding to the current 2,000 star-rated rooms.

## Products

# Airport expansion on the cards along with a host of new adventure tours

## Ngurah Rai Airport expansion

**What** Expansion plans at Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport will see both the domestic and international terminals expand and capacity increase from 11 million to 25 million passengers annually by 2013.

**Contact**  
Web: [www.angkasapura1.co.id](http://www.angkasapura1.co.id)

## Trekking in North Sulawesi

Manado-based Virgo Express has created a trekking tour visiting Mount Mahawu, east of Mount Lokon. The day tour includes a four-hour trek on the mountain. Packages are from US\$57.22 per person

## 4WD Safari into East Java's remote spots

**What** Aneka Kartika Tours & Travel has a new six-day Exotic Plantations, Fantastic Sunrise &

Tropical Jungle package, taking travellers into remote East Java in a comfortable 4x4. The driving and trekking tour visits Mt Bromo, Kalibaru plantations, Meru Betiri National Park, Ijen Crater, Ketapang and Bali.

**Contact**  
Email: [adjie@aneka-tours.co.id](mailto:adjie@aneka-tours.co.id)  
Web: [www.aneka-tours.co.id](http://www.aneka-tours.co.id)

## Bali road building

**What** To ease congestion a toll road and underpass are being



Royal Javanese tea time

built. Both are due to open in May next year. The 12km toll road will connect Benoa harbour and Ngurah Rai Airport while the 450m Dewa Ruci underpass will ease congestion at the Dewa Ruci junction.

**Contact**  
Web: [www.jasamarga.com](http://www.jasamarga.com)

## Jakarta Airport revitalisation

**What** Renovations to Terminals 1 and 2, the completion of Terminal 3 and a new cargo terminal at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport will see capacity increase to 62 million passengers annually.

**Contact**  
[www.angkasapura2.co.id](http://www.angkasapura2.co.id)

## Reviving the Javanese royal tradition

**What** Royal Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta, the newly-reopened heritage hotel in Jogjakarta, is

offering guests afternoon tea served the royal way. *Patehan*, tea time in Javanese, is free every Friday.

**Contact**  
Email: [info@ambarrukmopalacehotel.com](mailto:info@ambarrukmopalacehotel.com)  
Web: [www.ambarrukmopalacehotel.com](http://www.ambarrukmopalacehotel.com)

## Sepinggan Airport expansion

**What** Sepinggan International Airport at Balikpapan in East Kalimantan is expanding to cater for up to 10 million passengers per year by 2020.

**Contact**  
Web: [www.angkasapura1.co.id](http://www.angkasapura1.co.id)

## Horse riding in Bali

**What** A True Balinese Experience offers horse-riding tours taking travellers on horseback from Saba Bay Stable along the black volcanic sands of Saba beach. Hotel transfers, profes-



Mt Bromo

sional guides and US\$150,000 insurance are included.

**Contact**  
Email: [info@atruebalineseexperience.com](mailto:info@atruebalineseexperience.com)

## Information centre in North Sulawesi

**What** North Sulawesi Regional Government is building a tourist information centre at the Grand Kawanua International City. It is due to open later this year.

**Contact**  
Email: [info@north-sulawesi.org](mailto:info@north-sulawesi.org)  
Web: [www.north-sulawesi.org](http://www.north-sulawesi.org)



# Thailand

European visitor numbers are expected to grow by just five per cent this year, reflecting the gloomy market outlook

The Thai travel trade will focus on niche market segments to compensate for the anticipated decline in mainstream European visitor numbers due to worries over the economic situation.

Asia World managing director, Stephen McEvoy, said Thailand's value-for-money reputation was helping it weather the impact of the eurozone crisis.

He said Asia World continued to record growth as it promoted the kingdom's deluxe products and focused on high-end leisure, incentive, and wedding and honeymoon segments.

However, he said now was not

the time for Thai hotels to increase room rates as the destination was still under pressure from the eurozone crisis, coupled with increasing supply from Thai hotels and rising competition from neighbouring countries.

The increasing importance of niche market segments has been recognised by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), which is organising a mart-within-a-mart for niche tour operators at ITB Berlin. TAT's move has been hailed by travel consultants as a good move to maintain growth from Europe.

SI Tours CEO, Suwart Jitjornongmate, said whether the

mart-within-a-mart project yields business remains to be seen, but the initiative would certainly help expand Thai sellers' reach to small- and medium-sized niche tourism players.

Despite agreeing with TAT's idea to tap niche tourist segments, SI Tours is foregoing medical, honeymoon, golf and green markets to focus on senior citizens.

Suwart said Europeans were on tighter budgets because of the eurozone crisis, with increased demand for three-star hotels and a loss of appetite for four- and five-star properties. "The average length of stay has also been

shortened as guests are tightening their belts. So we are looking at senior citizens as they have both the time and money," he explained.

Go Vacation Thailand managing director, Christoph Mueller, said the company started seeing bookings return to normal in January, following "a significant" drop last November and December due to the flooding in Thailand. However, he said: "It is still too early to predict the outlook for May onwards."

ICS Travel Group sales officer, Sabine Widmann, said although profit was down, volume remained "significant".

## Far East Hospitality Group of Hotels gains recognition with travellers

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QUINCY HOTEL in Singapore, has won three awards from TripAdvisor 2012 Travellers' Choice award, namely, "Trendiest Hotel in Asia" "Top 10 Hotels in Singapore" and "Top 20 Luxury Hotels in Singapore".

The 108-room Quincy Hotel is a boutique hotel, managed by Far East Hospitality Group in Singapore. It is located in the charming enclave of Mount Elizabeth, right in the heart of Singapore's premier shopping district.

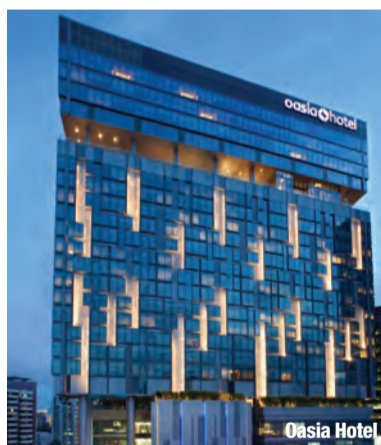
Other standalone hotels managed by Far East, include the newly renovated Elizabeth Hotel. The Group have just invested over S\$3.5 million to uplift its executive rooms with modern furnishings including 40-inch LED HD TVs and rain showers, to provide a contemporary feel for guests

Besides managing the individual hotels, Far East also owns two other renowned hotel brands.

### Village Hotels & Residences launched in 2009

Its *Village Hotels & Residences* was launched in 2009 and comprises four hotels, namely, the Albert Court Village Hotel, Changi Village Hotel, Landmark Village Hotel and the newly added East Village Hotel.

Far East Organization's Executive Director Mr Chia Boon Kuah said, "The articulation of our Village brand signals Far East Organization's aspiration and readiness to grow its hospitality presence, locally and overseas."



Oasia Hotel



Changi Village Hotel



Quincy Hotel

On the other hand, the latest hotel brand launched by the Group - the Oasia Brand - revolves around three key values that encapsulate all of Asian Hospitality - thoughtfulness, respect and care - and these have been translated across all facets of the property from its hotel and room design, through to its service and guest experience.

### Oasia Brand launched in October 2011

The opening of Oasia Hotel Singapore in Novena last October marked the first hotel launched under that brand. A key feature of Oasia Hotel is its Club lounge on the 22nd floor, *The Living Room*, whereby Oasia Club guests can swim and unwind in its pool

amid panoramic skyline views and lush greenery.

Oasia Hotel is located at the Novena MRT Station which is just two stops away from Orchard Station, the hub of Singapore's luxury shopping district.

"For busy travellers, we wanted to create a feeling of warmth and coziness," said Mr Raphael Saw, Chief Operating Officer, Hospitality Business Group at Far East Organization. "Staying at Oasia, guests will be truly looked after, and feel rejuvenated and relaxed."

Singapore's largest private property developer, Far East Organization owns Far East Hospitality Group with eight hotels and 11 residences and offers a wide array of accommodation options located all over the island in prime locations.



# Hotel industry to shake off past woes

Bangkok may face a price war but popular beach destinations led by Phuket should continue to soar

THE Thai hotel industry is hoping 2012 will be better than 2011 – barring further crises.

Thai Hotels Association president, Prakrit Chinamourphong, said hotels across the country should see room rates rise by five to 10 per cent from 2011-2012 high season levels. Five-star hotels' rates should increase from 3,500-4,500 baht (US\$110-US\$142) to around 4,500-5,000 baht this year. He said this was possible because "Thai hotels have not increased rates in the last four years".

The average occupancy rate across the country in 2012 is also anticipated to be better than the 62-65 per cent last year and 53 per cent in 2010, according to Prakrit.

Competition is also increasing as Bangkok and other key tourism destinations saw a flood of



Amari Residences Sukhumvit

hotel supply in 2011, on top of openings planned for 2012 and new projects in the pipeline over the next few years.

In 2011, the Thai capital saw the opening of 22 new hotels with 4,440 rooms and three re-branded properties with 1,286 rooms. This came on top of the 100,000 existing rooms and ahead of some 26 hotels and 6,000 rooms in the pipeline.

Bangkok hotels were running

between 50-70 per cent occupancy from January to early-November 2011 at a RevPAR of between 600 baht and 1,490 baht.

Onyx Hospitality Group senior vice-president, Suravut Thongtham, said the group's properties would be able to achieve the usual five to seven per cent annual increase on room rates as pricing was of secondary importance after quality

of product and standards.

Thongtham said: "Bangkok will remain the main volume destination. Similarly, we expect to see continued growth within the resort destinations of Koh Samui, Phuket, Koh Chang, Chiang Mai and Krabi."

Destination Asia CEO and group managing director, James Reed, believes oversupply could mean a price war in Bangkok. However, he added: "I expect room rates in Koh Samui, Phuket and Krabi to go up by 10 per cent."

Marriott South-east Asia area vice president, Philip Bryson, agreed: "We expect Phuket to drive revenues through both occupancy and rate in 2012. Group and wholesale segments will remain very important in order to grow revenues."

Phuket added about 1,000

rooms and 450 rebranded rooms last year. This was on top of 1,057 rooms added to its 40,000-room total in 2010.

Koh Samui welcomed a host of international brands including Outrigger, Conrad, Le Meridien and InterContinental in 2011 with the opening of six new hotels and 520 rooms. The island's registered supply stood at 14,261 rooms in 2010.

Pattaya, Hua Hin, Krabi and Chiang Mai also received new hotels and rooms in 2011, on top of the registered supply of 38,729, 7,015, 9,985 and 23,292 rooms, respectively.

Accor Thailand director of operations, Paul Stevens, said while there were still opportunities for all hotel segments to grow, the chain is of the opinion that midscale and economy segments will lead the way.

## TAT promotes four niches to Germans

THAILAND is focusing to promote four key niche market segments to traditional European markets, where the economic situation and rising costs are likely to hit demand.

Juthaporn Rerngronasa, TAT deputy governor international marketing – Europe, Africa, Middle East and Americas, said the NTO would work with travel professionals specialising in medical, honeymoon, golf and green tourism during its roadshows and trade show visits.

According to Juthaporn, niche tourism is expected to hold steady despite a number of developments raising costs, including an eight per cent hike in the UK's Air Passenger Duty in April, and the implementation of the European Union Emissions Trading System carbon tax. The upcoming elections in Russia, France, the US and China could also dampen demand



Juthaporn: steady segment

TAT's offices in Europe – Frankfurt, London, Moscow, Paris, Rome and Stockholm – and its lone Middle East office in Dubai are bringing in seven to 10 niche tourist market buyers per office to meet participating Thai suppliers after ITB Berlin's trade day.

Juthaporn said TAT intended to use a similar strategy at other major international trade shows that normally attract large numbers of Thai suppliers, such as the World Travel Market (about 90-100

from these markets.

"We kick-start our mart-within-a-mart project at ITB, where niche tourist market specialists participate in a special table-top session," she said.

TAT's offices in Europe – Frankfurt, London, Moscow, Paris, Rome and Stockholm – and its lone Middle East office in Dubai are bringing in seven to 10 niche tourist market buyers per office to meet participating Thai suppliers after ITB Berlin's trade day.

Juthaporn said TAT intended to use a similar strategy at other major international trade shows that normally attract large numbers of Thai suppliers, such as the World Travel Market (about 90-100

sellers), Arabian Travel Market (about 70-80 sellers) and Russia's Leisure Travel Fair (about 50 sellers).

TAT also plans to work more aggressively with the travel trade in European markets that are not badly affected by the economic crisis, such as Russia, Scandinavia and Switzerland, as well as tap into new markets including Poland, Czech Republic, Tunisia and Israel.

Juthaporn said she was confident that Thailand would achieve its 6.38 per cent growth target for European arrivals, taking them to 5.1 million this year. Last year, Thailand attracted 19.09 million international visitors, up 19.84 per cent over 2010. Of these, 4.94 million (25.91 per cent) were from Europe. Russia became the largest European market with more than one million visitors, surpassing former champion, the UK (844,244).

### Destination by the numbers

**4.38** During the first 11 months of 2011, Thailand welcomed 4.38 million visitors from Europe – 25.65 per cent of the total 17.1 million arrivals. Russia contributed the highest number of European visitors at 851,077 (up 61.52 per cent), followed by the UK at 755,523 (up 4.15 per cent) and Germany at 553,065 (up 1.94 per cent).

**4,078** The average spend per head per day for foreign visitors to Thailand was 4,078 baht (US\$ 128) in 2010. The average length of stay was 9.12 days resulting in 592.79 billion baht gross foreign tourism revenue. This compared to 4,011 baht and 8.99 days, and a total of 510 billion baht, in 2009.

**7.42** In 2010, European visitors contributed US\$7.42 billion in tourism revenue to Thailand, up 23.20 per cent over 2009. East Asia contributed US\$6.56 billion, the Americas US\$1.44 billion and Oceania US\$1.34 billion.

**3,290** Tourism receipts from Europeans in the first quarter of 2011 hit US\$3.290 billion, putting them top during the period.

**686.30** Of the total tourism receipts from the European market in the first quarter of 2011, Russia topped the big spenders at US\$686.30 million (up 117.80 per cent), followed by the UK at US\$428.76 million and Germany at US\$396.55 million.

**15.68** European visitors had the longest stay in Thailand in the first quarter of 2011 at 15.68 days, up 0.40 per cent over 2010.

**113,462** There were 113,462 flights, including 94,944 direct services, into Thailand in 2011, offering some 27.6 million seats, including 21.86 million on direct flights. (Source: OAG Aviation Solutions Schedules Database).

### Products

## Massive new developments add to Thailand's appeal

### Asiatique The Riverfront

**What** Due to open early this year, this attraction is set to become the largest lifestyle integrated riverfront entertainment venue in Asia. Located on the bank of the Chao Phraya River off Charoenkrung Road, it will feature more than 1,500 boutique shops and 40 restaurants, a riverfront pathway, more than 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of open space for concerts and product launches, and a theatre.

**Contact**  
Website: www.thaiasiatique.com (under construction at press time)

### Asian Trails' market tour

**What** Asian Trails has a new half-day tour to Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market in the green heart of Bangkok. The market offers goods including local food,

handicrafts, clothes and decorations.

**Contact**  
Email: res@asiantrails.org  
Website: www.asiantrails.org

### THAI's first A380

**What** Thai Airways International is set to receive the first of six Airbus A380s on order in the third quarter of 2012. The new planes will operate on premier routes between Bangkok and Europe.

**Contact**  
Website: www.thaiairways.com

### THAI Smile Air

**What** THAI Smile Air is a light premium airline that will offer full inflight service at lower air fares than its parent Thai Airways International, but higher than low-cost carriers. It is set to take to the skies in July

2012, operating to five domestic destinations from Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport. From 2013, it will launch flights to India and China, and within South-east Asia.

**Contact**  
Website: www.thaiairways.com

### Mahanakorn Floating Market

**What** Opened in September, the market was developed at a cost of close to 100 million baht (US\$3 million). It features Thai culture from the Rattanakosin Kingdom. The 38,000m<sup>2</sup> site on Lad Krabang Road near Suvarnabhumi Airport boasts replicas of royal palaces and boat trips along canals. Open daily, 9am to 12pm.

**Contact**  
Website: www.mahanakornfloatingmarket.com



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# Brunei

Numbers from German-speaking countries are steadily increasing but they are minor players in the sultanate. **N. Nithiyananthan** reports

**A** lack of flights is holding back major expansion from the German-speaking market. And the major players in Borneo have, until recently, given the market a low priority.

Freme Travel Services inbound and MICE division head, Sugumaran S. Nair, said: "The German-speaking market has slowed down as no airlines fly direct from Europe to Bandar Seri Begawan."

He added: "Most of the groups we get come via Malaysian agents." Freme, which saw a 20 per cent increase in inbound business in 2011 over 2010, had not been to ITB for five years be-

cause of the lack of flights from Germany."

Sunshine Borneo Tours & Travel operations manager, Wong Kee Hing, said: "We are not heavily involved in these markets." As a result Sunshine, which also saw a 20 per cent increase in inbound business last year, did not feel the effects of the economic crisis facing Europe.

Sugumaran agreed: "There is not much impact yet from the eurozone crisis as our traffic from these countries comes from our associates in the region."

Both of these major players gave different reasons for the increases in arrivals in 2011.

Sugumaran said: "The contributory factors have been more cruise ships calling at the deep water port of Muara. An example is the *Sun Princess* which has already visited thrice this year with about 2,000 persons on board."

This had been supplemented by "arrivals from some new markets in Australia, specifically Melbourne and Perth, and from student traffic". For Wong, it was "the economic boom in Australia and increased relations with foreign counterparts" that had boosted arrivals.

Sugumaran said a host of other factors affected inbound into Brunei from the region. "There

was the tsunami and earthquake in Japan and the cutting back of flights by Royal Brunei Airlines (RBA) to Vietnam."

Wong said tourism was boosted by "the efforts of Brunei Tourism promoting Brunei to foreign countries such as Australia and China, and the affordable air fares supplied by RBA". Source markets for both companies were similar. "Most of our customers are from North Asia and certain ASEAN countries, while the cruise segment is mainly from the US," said Sugumaran.

"Our customers are mainly from the Asia-Pacific region," said Wong.

## The skies limit European numbers

**By N. Nithiyananthan**

BRUNEI'S efforts to attract European visitors have been hit by the loss of important direct air routes, particularly those cut in the fourth quarter of 2011.

Brunei Tourism director of marketing, Jean Christophe Robles Espinosa, said: "To compensate, we are making great efforts in working very closely with our tour operators, overseas counterparts as well as other airlines serving the destination to increase the number of tourist arrivals into Brunei."

Arrival numbers into Brunei from German-speaking countries such as Germany (1,713), Austria (88), Switzerland (752) and the Netherlands (1,127) totalled 3,680 in 2010. Although these were low numbers they represent an increase of 26 per cent compared to the 2,927 arrivals in 2009.

When compared to total arrivals, they amounted to just 1.7 per cent of the 2010 total compared to 1.9 per cent in 2009.

This small but steady inflow had been compensated for by a rise in other markets, especially ASEAN and Asia.

"Brunei Tourism will continue with the same formula for 2012, as in 2011, with perhaps more focus given to ASEAN markets – particularly Singapore due to its proximity, China and Australia," Espinosa said.

"Several roadshows, sales missions and exhibitions have already been planned for 2012 in those markets," he added.

Brunei Tourism's marketing representation offices also happen to be located in Singapore, China and Australia.

Diving has been identified as a new niche product to be promoted by Brunei Tourism. This niche will have an appeal for the German market.

"Interest in Brunei as a new destination for divers is picking up due to the fact our reefs are mostly pristine and that, unknown to many divers, there are a number of interesting shipwrecks," Espinosa said. "This is appealing especially to more experienced divers, technical divers and those with a passion for macro photography."



**Robles: compensating**

### Destination by the numbers

**20** The projected percentage increase in total tourist arrivals to Brunei in 2011 over 2010.

**36** The overall percentage increase in total tourist arrivals to Brunei in 2010 compared to 2009.

**2,000** The number of passengers onboard Princess Cruises ship, *Sun Princess*, which visited the deep

water port of Muara in Brunei three times last year.

**3** Countries in which Brunei Tourism has marketing representation offices – Australia, China and Singapore.

**4** The number of flights a week from Bandar Seri Begawan to Melbourne, a route launched by Royal Brunei Airlines in 2011.

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# Hotels are on the way up

Room rates, occupancies rising, say major players

By N. Nithiyanthan

Leading hotels in Brunei, which experienced an increase in both room and occupancy rates in 2011 compared to the previous year, expect the trend to continue into 2012.

“At the end of September 2011, we experienced an increase of at least 10 per cent in both average rate and occupancy compared to July 2010,” said Evangeline Imperial, director of sales & marketing at The Empire Hotel & Country Club, Brunei.

She added: “We are expecting an increase for 2012 due to renovations. We are improving all rooms in the atrium building.”



Radisson Hotel Brunei

The Radisson Hotel Brunei had also performed positively in 2011. Director of sales, Paula Munoz, said: “This is in line with Brunei’s economy, which is growing at a steady rate. Our corporate segment is the main contributing factor in the positive outlook of the hotel.”

She added: “We remain positive and optimistic for 2012 and look forward to increasing brand awareness in this region.”

The German-speaking market did not feature prominently for either property, however.

“Accessibility is a big factor. The German-speaking market is small for us due to the lack of flights or no direct flights from Germany,” Imperial said.

This was echoed by Munoz who said: “We have not seen an increase in this market as our top market feeder is from the South-east Asia region.”

The region is expected to remain the main contributor for business.

Imperial said marketing efforts for 2012 would be “targeting more Middle East markets, China, the Asia-Pacific region and Hong Kong.”

This thrust followed the appointment, in early 2011, of representative offices in the Middle East, China and Australia and of a public relations agency in Hong Kong.

“This was to further promote and support The Empire Hotel and Brunei in these markets,” Imperial added.

While the Radisson anticipated an increase in corporate business for 2012, Munoz said: “We anticipate a decline in the leisure market due to the cancellation of Royal Brunei Airlines’ flights from key markets such as Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Vietnam.”

As a result its main target market for 2012 would be the corporate sector.

## Products

# Not sleepy at all when it comes to product

### Waterfront sights

Opened in 2011, the Waterfront of Brunei’s capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, is a pedestrian promenade which offers sights of historical interest and a variety of restaurants. As it overlooks the water village, *Kampong Ayer*, it is a popular place for a stroll, especially in the evening.

### Times Hotel appeal

This three-star property, opened in 2011, is next to the airport and convention centre.

Facilities at the hotel, which is within the Times Square Shopping Centre, include a swimming pool. With a strong focus on f&b, the Times Square mall offers a supermarket and food court,

restaurants and fast food outlets, as well as good shopping.

### Brunei Hotel reopens

Located in the centre of Bandar Seri Begawan, close to the central business district and city-centre attractions, this hotel reopened in 2011 as a 62-room boutique property.

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# Vietnam

Trade players and the tourism board make Germany their priority as they set their sights on growth from the European Union. **John Wong** reports

Vietnamese travel trade professionals are hoping to benefit from an anticipated growth in the German inbound market.

Pham Ha, founder and CEO of Luxury Travel Vietnam, which caters to high-end travellers, said: "I think there will be more German travellers to Vietnam in 2012, an increase of five to 10 per cent."

Citing analysis by German trade media, Pham said: "Some people worry about the difficulties in the eurozone but Germany's economy is the strongest in the zone."

Pham said the opening this year of Berlin Brandenburg Airport, with direct Hanoi flights, was a further plus.

Luxury Travel Vietnam is attending its fourth ITB and is planning a representative office in Germany. It has launched a German-language brochure for travel professionals and a website offering 10 new tours.

Buffalo Tours marketing director, Bev Taylor, expects an 85 per cent increase in German inbound sales. "We are seeing an increase in returning German tourists who have already toured the highlights of Vietnam and are looking for a greater insight into Vietnamese culture and off-



"Our priority in the German market is to help the German trade sell Vietnam. They have the expertise in the German market and we have the local expertise in Vietnam."

**Bev Taylor**  
Marketing director  
Buffalo Tours

the-beaten track experiences," she said.

Taylor said destination marketing and differentiation were the keys to success and should be the priorities of Vietnam National Administration of Tourism and Vietnam Airlines.

Enriko d' La Mancha, owner of Amigos Divers in the beach resort of Nha Trang, which serves the diving niche, said: "Germans spend as long as two weeks travelling north or south with five days of diving."

La Mancha, who spent 20 years in Germany, said German tourists expected facilities and services to have high standards, low costs and to be environmentally friendly. "Vietnam is authentic but the tourism infrastructure is not ready. It is complicated to travel in Vietnam," he added.

He suggested that although Vietnam was cheap, German families might be constrained by the costs of flights and visas. "Russian inbound numbers increased by 30 per cent with direct flights and visa exemption," he said.

State-run Saigontourist, which dominates the market for passengers on tours from international cruise ships, also expects to benefit from the expected increases from Germany.

## Charm offensive on Europe

By John Wong

GERMANY is the main target of Vietnam's new campaign to attract more European visitors.

The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism's (VNAT) development strategy focuses on co-operation with European Union nations, with Germany as an important partner.

Le Tuan Anh, head of marketing of VNAT, said: "ITB Berlin is one of the most important international tourism fairs that Vietnam tourism is focusing on."

"We hope to promote Vietnam in Europe, especially to German people, who are well-known as responsible tourists."

Vietnam will highlight its new tourism symbol, a lotus with five petals, and slogan, 'Vietnam - Timeless Charm', at ITB. At the time of writing there were 20 Vietnamese participants booked for ITB,

including a dozen tour operators and resorts. Le hoped that during ITB contracts would be set up for the long term.

He said VNAT wanted to see an improvement in the quality of facilities and services on offer in Vietnam. This would in turn mean more products geared to European tastes.

Le added that Vietnam's tourism products should respond to international visitor trends capitalising on Vietnam's many beaches, rich culture and ecological diversity. They should also emphasise the hospitality of the people and the safety of the destination as well as the factors that differentiate Vietnam from other destinations in the region.

Noting the long distances involved in travelling the length of Vietnam, Le said: "Transport is getting better and better. Of course, it still takes more time than in Eu-



Halong Bay

rope over the same distances but it offers a more emotionally-fulfilling experience for visitors."

In 1999, only 21,719 Germans visited Vietnam. However, inbound numbers rose steadily reaching the 100,000 mark in 2007. In the 2009, due to the global economic crisis, Germans visitor num-

bers fell from a 2008 high to 101,834. The uptrend, however, resumed with 123,177 arrivals in 2010.

Germany is among the top three European source markets which account for about a tenth of total arrivals to Vietnam which in 2011 grew by 19.1 per cent to 6,014,032.





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# Rates continue to climb

Prices are rising despite increasing number of openings

**By John Wong**

VIETNAM hotels have seen average occupancy and room rates across the country climb every year since 2009.

Hoteliers interviewed by *TTG Asia ITB Daily* said occupancies in 2012 at three- to five-star hotels would average 60 per cent. Last year, some hotels reported levels of 70 per cent.

Sofitel Legend Metropole, Hanoi general manager, Kai Speth, said the hotel expected to run at 70 per cent – the same level as 2011 – “with perhaps a one per cent increase”.

He said room rates would be raised by about five per cent this year. He added: “Adjustments have to be made because of high inflation.”

Speth said the rate rises would not affect occupancy and had been factored into contracts valid for a year.

According to hoteliers and property research firms, room rates are set to increase by an average of five per cent this year. Some hotels, however, will maintain their rates at previous levels to stay competitive.

Evasion Ana Mandara Nha Trang and Six Senses Ninh Van Bay Nha Trang, where a large proportion of guests are Germans with average 10-day stays, will maintain last year’s rates, according a spokesperson.

Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) is expected to continue climbing from 2010 levels, when four- and five-star hotels

achieved between 10 and 15 per cent increases and three-star hotels 5.8 per cent.

Sheraton Nha Trang sales and marketing director, Debbie Chee, said the resort would continue to put its emphasis on destination marketing via cluster sales offices around the world.

“We expect double-digit growth in occupancies this year with guests staying four to six nights,” she said. “Nha Trang has a lot to offer; we have websites in seven languages and offer bonus nights and incentives,” she added.

Competition has increased with a number of hotels opening in the last two years.

Sheraton Nha Trang and Six Senses Con Dao opened in 2010,



**Vietnam hoteliers are optimistic**

and Hyatt Regency Danang and Hotel Nikko Saigon, opened last year, added to Vietnam’s high-end hotels and resorts. Marriott International will open two hotels in Nha Trang and Hanoi this year.

Despite the increased inventory, hoteliers and property re-

search firms said the indications were that Ho Chi Minh City would maintain the lead in occupancies this year while Hanoi and Dalat could expect a surge in demand. Danang and Hoi An might see modest improvements but occupancies might be lower in Phan Thiet, hoteliers said.

## Destination by the numbers

**10.1** Although 50 per cent of Europeans booked trips on the Internet in 2011, online hotel bookings in Vietnam represented only 10.1 per cent of total business in 2010. (Grant Thornton Vietnam Hotel Survey 2011)

**6** Vietnam welcomed more than six million international visitors in 2011. Thailand recorded 5.8 million arrivals in 2010, providing a regional perspective on Vietnam’s inbound tourism growth. Vietnam has a repeat visitor rate of five per cent compared to Thailand’s 50 per cent.

**56.5** China was the top inbound market in 2011 with 1.4 million arrivals, up 56.5 per cent on 2010. South Korea and Japan were second and third.

**35** The US, Australia and Japan accounted for 35 per cent of all tourist visa transactions in 2009. (VisaVue Travel data, 2009-2010)

**7.3** The tourism economy’s real GDP growth is expected to average 7.3 per cent per year over the next decade. (World Travel and Tourism Council, Travel & Tourism Economic Impact: Vietnam, 2010)

**98** Bookings made about one month before departure from Germany, the strongest EU outbound market, increased 98 per cent in 2010. Vietnam’s cumbersome visa requirements, including “visa on arrival” procedures may deter an increasingly spontaneous international tourism market. (ADAC Reise-Monitor 2011)

**51** In the first quarter of 2010, new visa exemption rules increased inbound tourism spending by 51 per cent from South Korea and 12 per cent from Japan. The second quarter yielded 54 per cent and 36 per cent respectively. (VisaVue Travel data, 2009-2010).

## Products

# Historic restorations and an underground discovery add to attractions



**My Son Sanctuary**

### My Son restoration

**What** A US\$3 million grant from the Indian government will see the restoration of the My Son Sanctuary relics complex, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site comprising about 70 temples and towers built between the fourth and 13th centuries.

The restoration of the Hindu temples will be carried out from 2012 to 2016 by Indian experts as part of the India-Vietnam Friendship Year 2012 that commemorates the 40th anniversary of the two countries’ relations.

### Direct to the beach

**What** Opened early last year, Can Tho International Airport was built with the aim of facili-

tating international tourism to the Mekong Delta and southern beach towns including Phan Thiet and Nha Trang. Visitors who want to bypass the hustle and bustle of Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City can fly direct for a beach experience.

### Work on Ho Dynasty Citadel begins

**What** Thanh Hua’s provincial authority has started the US\$1 million restoration of the Ho Dynasty Citadel, including upgrading its tourism infrastructure. The project is due to be completed in mid-2012 when the citadel will receive its official certificate as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage.

The 14th-century Ho Dynasty Citadel is in Vinh Loc District, about 150km south of Hanoi. Known as Tay Do (the western capital), to distinguish it from Dong Do (the eastern capital or Thang Long-Hanoi), the citadel, measuring 870m by 833m, was built in 1397.

### Invest in Vietnam

**What** Saigontourist is inviting partners to invest in

six major tourism projects worth US\$1.65 billion. Five are slated for completion in 2014-2015 comprising hotels in Danang and Phu Tho; the Rach Chiec Residential Multi-Use Complex and the Saigon South Amusement Park; the Yacht Marina in Ho Chi Minh City; and the Saigon-Cam Ranh Resort in Khanh Hoa. The sixth project, the mixed-use Saigon Sunbay, is expected to be completed in 2018.

### French-style villas

**What** Some 229 French-style villas of the 1,539 remaining in Hanoi have been listed as

architecture that typifies the capital. The villas are in the Ba Dinh District and retain their original architecture.

Authorities are planning to preserve another 432 villas which are also in unique locations but are partly ruined. Another 644 villas, whose original shapes remain intact but whose interiors have been altered, are being considered for restoration.

The remaining villas, which have been completed modified, have been written off the list.

### Airport upgrade

**What** A new terminal in

Danang is now in its final stage of completion, nearly two years behind schedule. It can handle up to six million passengers.

### Cave found in Bac Kan

**What** A new cave, described as very beautiful and mysterious with a complex series of grottos, has been discovered in the northern mountainous province of Bac Kan.

The first cave was found when labourers were building National Highway 38 near Ang Toong Pass. The newly-discovered cave is 20m deep inside the first cave with all its stalactites and features undisturbed.

The first cave is 120m long and is formed by three grottos while the second is 350m long and formed by five caves. The walls are covered with blue stone and in some places are a mix of soil and white stone. Local authorities have alerted related agencies to protect and develop them into a tourist destination.

### Contacts for all products

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Website: [www.vietnamtourism.gov.vn](http://www.vietnamtourism.gov.vn)



**Danang: New airport terminal almost ready**



# Myanmar

Travel industry experts in Yangon believe tourism is entering a new era thanks to the government's agenda of reforms. By **Rahul Khanna**

The growth in tourist arrival numbers is bringing with it a number of potential pitfalls for the industry.

While optimistic about the outlook for tourism, the trade is concerned about the country's lack of hotel and transport capacity, poor infrastructure, high prices and inefficient booking systems.

Dr Aung Myat Kyaw, managing director of Orchestra Travel, said that while European markets were showing more interest in Myanmar, demand had yet to really take off.

He said the tourism industry would need more investment to cope with future increases in

tourist numbers. He added: "It can be said in one sentence: we need to build a much better infrastructure for tourism, such as more hotels, cars, flights, guides and last but not least improved roads so that clients can see this beautiful country overland."

Phyoe Wai Yar Zar, secretary of the Myanmar Marketing Committee (MMC) as well as the managing director of All Asia Exclusive Travel in Yangon, said the industry was "in good spirits" and anticipated an increase of "at least 20-25 per cent" in the 2011-12 fiscal year, which ends March 31.

"They are investing their resources in services and products

in anticipation of increased business in 2012. Provided that the political climate remains relatively stable, based on the trend of increased tourist arrivals we are looking forward to having 350,000 to 375,000 tourists in 2012," he said.

An increase in capacity of both international and domestic air routes would support growth, but further investment in infrastructure was needed to handle a rise in numbers. "We would like to see some European airlines operating directly to Yangon," he said. "To match the growth in air capacity, we will need more hotels and newer vehicles for transportation services."

Su Su Tin, managing director of Exotissimo Travel in Yangon, said: "I noticed some improvement after the general election in November 2010, the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the transfer of power to a new government in March this year."

She added: "As a result, travellers from places such as Scandinavia, Switzerland, the UK and the US were showing interest in Myanmar and tour operators in those countries were selling Myanmar packages.

"Our UK-based partner company never included Myanmar in its offerings. But this year, they have started to add Myanmar as one of their destinations.

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# SEA Games spark boom in hotel openings

Increases in business and leisure travel are expected to raise rates as the country looks for foreign investment

**By Rahul Khanna**

MYANMAR expects 50 new hotels will open across the country ahead of 2013 in preparation for the foreign visitors expected to attend the 27th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games.

According to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar has 691 licensed hotels with more than 23,000 rooms across the country.

Of that total, 22 hotels are backed by foreign equity – with the largest investments coming from Singapore, Thailand and Japan. A further nine properties are government-owned and 678 are privately-owned hotels.

The country has 11 hotel zones: Nay Pyi Taw; Yangon; Mandalay; Bagan; Chaungtha; Ngwesaung; Taunggyi (Inle); Mawlamyine; Bago; Rakhine; and the Golden Triangle regions. More hotel zones are being added to meet travellers demand ahead of the SEA Games.

On a national scale, industry

players said there were sufficient hotel rooms to cater for tourism arrivals.

Chatrium Hotel Yangon assistant general manager, May Myat Mon Win, said rates would “definitely go up” to meet increased demand.

She added: “In 2012, hotels will manage to achieve a higher average daily rate and RevPAR, and I feel that the increase will not be lower than 25 per cent over 2011.”

She said that hotels also expected to see a shift in the market for 2012, with significant increases in the number of tourists from the UK, Scandinavia, the US and Australia. There would also be an increase in the number of business travellers due to the opening up of Myanmar’s economy.

Major leisure destinations such as Bagan, Inle and Ngapali should benefit from an increase in the number of high-end tourists whilst Yangon – positioned



Chatrium Hotel

as the key commercial hub – is anticipated to attract more corporate and meeting travellers.

Frank Janmaat, general manager and country director of KMA Hotels Group, said the company hoped to negotiate a considerably higher percentage increase in room rates than in recent years.

“Tourism has not been very good for the hotels in the past

with average occupancy levels and low room rates,” he said. “We see now that this has changed tremendously over the last few months. FITs are paying top prices for the few rooms which are still available, certainly in Yangon.”

The only major project due to open is the 300-room Centropoint in Yangon. Janmaat said that it seemed local companies

were stretched to the limit with their investments and that foreign investment was urgently needed in the tourism industry.

“I do expect a gap unfortunately. For the time being there are still too many laws in place which are disruptive or not sufficiently clear (which might deter) for foreign capital,” said Janmaat.

He said the shifts were most noticeable in Yangon. Besides the increase of tourists there was also a huge influx in business travellers including the representatives of foreign companies who want to get a feel of the country.

“With the current positive news in the foreign press about political changes and a possibility that in the near future the sanctions will be partly lifted, every self-respecting multinational is preparing itself (to enter). Occupancies in Bagan, Inle and Mandalay are on the rise as well but to a lesser degree than in Yangon,” he added.

## Reforms spur growth, regional partnerships

**By Rahul Khanna**

MYANMAR is set to see a host of tourism infrastructure and marketing developments as the country looks to continued tourism growth thanks to government reforms.

Aung Zaw Win, director general of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MHT), said: “Myanmar is trying to gain more awareness in the international community with the assistance of regional organisations such as ASEAN, GMS (Greater Mekong Sub-region), ACMECS (Ayeyarwady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy) and BIMST-EC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for MultiSectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation).”

He said: “Today, a destination cannot stand alone. The support of countries and organisations in the region is essential and critical. That is why regional marketing

and promotional plans are being planned for the Pacific area.”

MHT plans to enhance the awareness of Myanmar through print and electronic media, participation in major travel fairs and mounting roadshows in major target markets.

The ministry plans to ease travel with developments including an electronic visa system to enable the visitors to enter Myanmar from specific official entry/checkpoints such as airport, seaports and border gates.

In addition, it plans to develop tourism in Dawei and Myeik and launch hotel zones in key destinations. New products such as year-round festivals, and new routes for trekking and cycling tours are also being created to target German-speaking tourists.

Myanmar is co-operating with regional groups, including ASEAN, the Pacific Asia

Travel Association and the countries in the GMS – Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and the Yunnan Province of China to increase tourism.

New regional air services are also in the pipeline, such as Yangon-Jakarta and Yangon-Bali routes.

Traditional events that appeal to visitors include a festival of national races, the Naga New Year and Manaw festivals in the north and the Thingyan Water Festival.

MHT had developed trekking and biking routes around Pindaya, Kalaw, Inle Lake in the Southern Shan State, Kyaing Tong, Lashio and Namsan in the Northern Shan State, Putao in Kachin State and Golden Rock Pagoda in Mon State, Aung said.

According to the MHT, the country attracted 343,000 foreign tourists between January and November 2011, up 26 per cent compared to the same period in 2010.

### Destination by the numbers

**40** According to Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) Yangon International Airport’s capacity would increase by 40 per cent when a planned expansion is completed. The project aims to increase the airport’s capacity from 2.7 million to 3.8 million passengers a year.

**26** Figures from Ministry of Hotels and Tourism show that tourists arrival number increased by more than 26 per cent in the first 11 months of 2011. More than 343,000 tourists visited Myanmar between January 1 and November 30, up from 271,547 in the same period in 2010.

**50** Myanmar is forecasting the development of more than 50 new hotels across the country ahead of 2013 in preparation for accommodating foreign guests arriving for the 27th Southeast Asian Games in Naypyidaw, Yangon and Mandalay. The country now has 691 licensed hotels with a total of 23,454 rooms.

**205,266** The majority of visitors to Myanmar – 205,266, or almost two-thirds of the total during the first 11 months of the year – came from Asian nations.

**20** National carrier, Myanmar Airways International (MAI), said the airline captured 20 per cent of market-share on Yangon-Bangkok-Yangon route where it faces competition from Thai Airways International, Bangkok Airways and Air Asia (Bangkok).

**33** MAI’s share on the Yangon-Singapore-Yangon route was 33 per cent where it operates in competition with SilkAir. Myanmar Airways has a greater marketshare on the Yangon-Kuala Lumpur-Yangon with 52 per cent of passengers

### Products

## Real insights via horse-riding tours and river cruises

**Relax with Dora**

**What** The recently-launched luxury motor yacht *Dora* is operating river cruises taking in the rich history and spectacular landscapes of Yangon’s waterways. It offers morning sightseeing and evening sunset cruises along Yangon River. The programme includes two- to three-hour cruises.

**Contact**  
Email: [cruisewithdora@gmail.com](mailto:cruisewithdora@gmail.com)

**Equestrian tour**

**What** Myanmar Equestrian Federation (MEF) and Ayeindamar Travels and Tours, the only local company which spe-

cialises in horse-back tours, have linked up to offer the tours which they hope will attract more high-end foreign tourists into the country.

The tour covers Hmawbi in Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay, Kalaw, Aung Pan and Pintaya.

The equestrian tour includes tourist guides, horse trainers and extra horses. Ten tourist guides are being trained for first aid.

**Contact**  
Email: [ayeindamar@myanmar.com.mm](mailto:ayeindamar@myanmar.com.mm)

**Shwedagon in a new light**

**What** Exploration Travel has developed

a four-hour tour that aims to show the Shwedagon Pagoda from a different angle. The tour also takes the visitors to places surrounding the pagoda that are normally not accessible to the public or are difficult to find and gain access to.

Running Saturdays, the tour includes an English-speaking guide, a traditional Burmese breakfast, entrance fees, offerings to monks and the pagoda, a visit to a fortune teller, offerings of flowers for the day you were born, a picture to remember the trip by and a typical Burmese lunch.

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Malaysia's tourism minister Ng Yen Yen (centre) and Malaysian ambassador to Germany Ibrahim Abdullah (third from right) with the country's exhibitors



Bangkok Airways' Chulin Kocharoen, Piyada Piarad, Peter Wiesner, Suthida Choeypuang, Varong Israsena Na Ayudhya, Keerati Chantree and Sutee Yongudomkit



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See more about Indonesian Culture  
at Indonesian Booth Hall 26 A  
On 7 - 11 March 2012

wonderful  
indonesia





# It's hot on the show floor

Warm smiles and brightly-dressed booths come together to chase Berlin's chill away. By **Patrick Tan**



Ramon R Jimenez Jr (centre) leads his team from the Philippines



Ministry of Culture and Tourism Indonesia's Ayu Amelia Surya and Francesca Nina Soemitro, and Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Indonesia's Nia Niscaya and Molly Prabawaty



Tabula Rasa Travel Netherlands' Martin Schoorl, Pullman Bali Legian Nirwana's Alice Sulistyawati and Accor's Atman Ferdy



Thai Airways International's Nond Kalinta, Sunathee Isvarphornchai and Teerapol Chotichanapibal



Furama Jomtien Beach Thailand's Tatcha Riddhimat, Furama International's Jason Peck, Ivan Chan and Fione Tan and FuramaXclusive Villas & Spa Bali's Ramia Adnyana



Brigitte U Fleischauer (second from left) with her team members from the Singapore Tourism Board



Komaneka Ubud's Kariyana, Panorama Destination Indonesia's Achmad Sufyani and The Seminyak's Cintha Mardanus



Accor's Graham Wilson and his team welcome buyers with open arms



Blue Horizons Travel and Tours' Jayne Lim-Ong and Alexander Stutely (extreme left and right) with T.R.I.P.S. Travel's Felise M Cruz, The Baron Travel Corp's Marlien P Sandejas-Yaptangco and Annset Holiday's Serafina S Joven, all from The Philippines



# TTG Show Daily



Issue

# 2



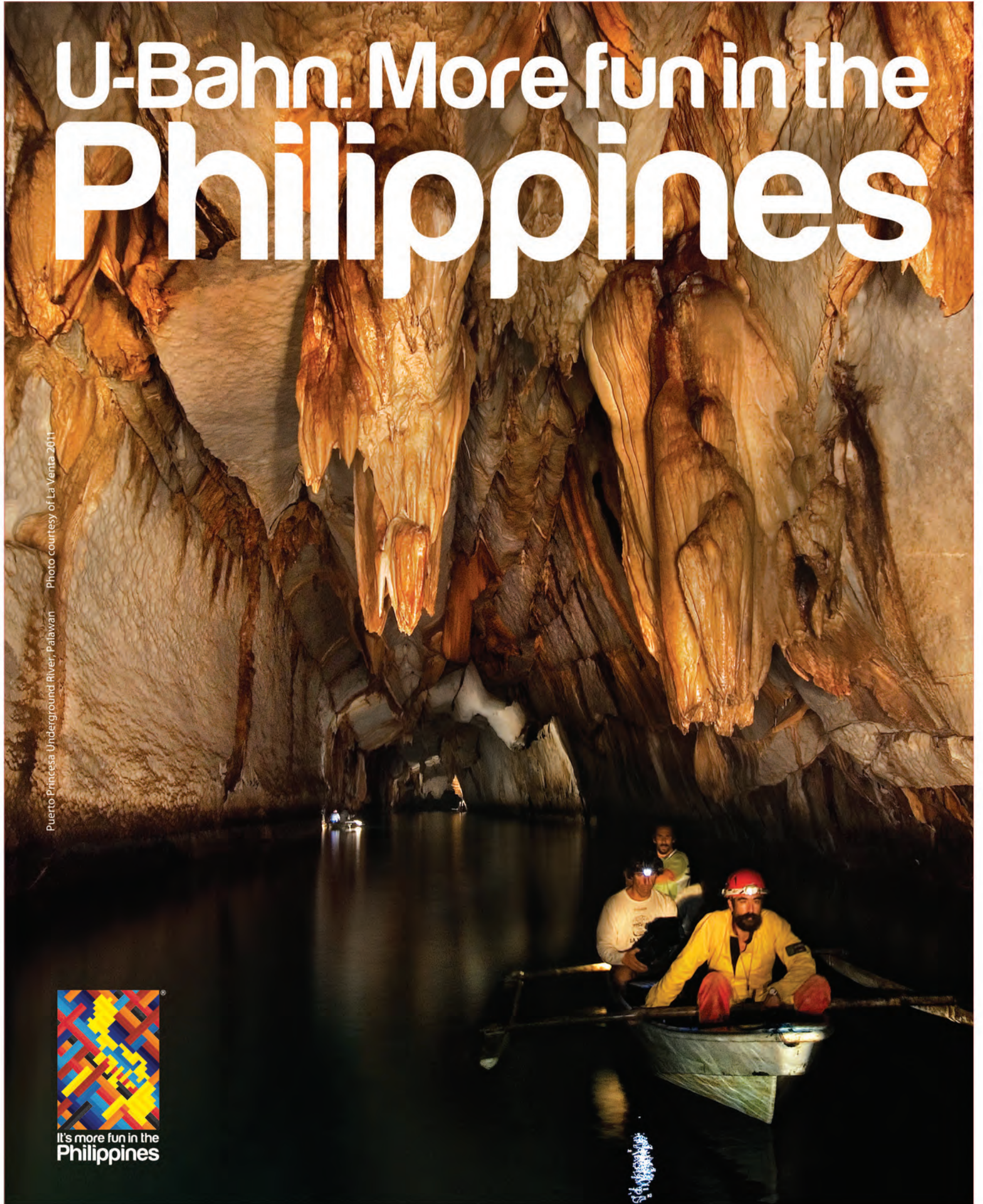
ITB Berlin, Germany  
March 8, 2012

# U-Bahn. More fun in the Philippines

Puerto Princesa Underground River, Palawan Photo courtesy of La Venta 2011



It's more fun in the Philippines





# Umbrellas. M Philipp

Panglao Island, Bohol Photo by George Tapan





# More fun in the Philippines

## VIVA PHILIPPINES!

If you're looking for fun under the tropical sun, people to meet and never forget, or getaways like no other, then you've come to the right place. Welcome to the Philippines!

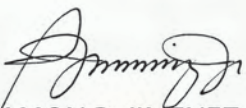
Somewhere here among our 7,107 majestic islands lies an unforgettable adventure waiting to happen. All it takes is an open mind, and maybe a bit of that famed Filipino hospitality to guide you along the way.

Not incidentally – and even more than any of our popular beaches, age-old churches, picturesque vistas and colorful past – our Filipinos are our most prized asset. Nowhere else in the world will you find an irresistible combination of talent, passion and charm like ours. Filipinos definitely make the Philippine experience.

Likewise, we are great believers in people power. Travel stories and photos, blogs and websites, Facebook updates and tweets are the tricks of our new trade. So the next time you hear about the Philippines, it may not even be from us, but from your Filipino friend, neighbor or co-worker – all equally excited about their country and equally convincing.

With that, we hope you enjoy your stay in our beautiful Philippines. Don't be surprised if you end up coming back or staying longer than you planned. We won't be.

Mabuhay!

  
RAMON R. JIMENEZ, JR.  
Secretary





# Commuting. More fun in the Philippines

Photo courtesy of El Nido Resorts

Big Lagoon, Palawan



It's more fun in the  
Philippines