



India tradeshow hot up

Messe Berlin set to partner Goa International Travel Mart, terminates agreement with SATTE

By Shekhar Niyogi and Raini Hamdi

MESSE Berlin is terminating its partnership with SATTE (South Asian Travel & Tourism Event), now that it has been bought by UBM Asia, and looks set to go to bed with the Goa International Travel Mart (GITM).

GITM is holding a conference this afternoon at the Hotel Royal Plaza, Delhi to speak about its "new partnership with ITB Berlin". Full details of the partnership were not forthcoming at press time, with the *Daily* only able to ascertain that there was no equity involved on the part of ITB in the show.

India's steady rise as an inbound, domestic and outbound travel giant is set to reshape its travel tradeshow. Encouraged by the success of its Great India Travel Bazaar (GITB) in Jaipur, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

will organise a Great Indian Domestic Travel Bazaar in Delhi in August 2012. TTG Asia Media is also finalising plans to organise a MICE show in India.

But for a destination that sends out over 12 million travellers, has 705 million domestic visitors and eyes eight million arrivals by 2015 (from 5.6 million last year), India does not yet have one main tradeshow that showcases most of the country.

The main four are GITB, SATTE in Delhi, Kerala Travel Mart and GITM, and the jostling to be the biggest has started, with SATTE claiming its 2012 edition will be spread over 16,500m² gross, thus making it India's biggest travel and tourism event.

PATA mart buyers and Indian sellers interviewed said a big show was needed. Jorge Elias, president, United Tour Operators, a consortium of six

outbound companies in Brazil, said: "I attended GITB in Jaipur last year, but India is so large that all the regions and attractions are not represented. One big show, showing a majority of products and sellers, will be good for longhaul buyers like us who have to travel about 24 hours to get here."

Debarun Chakraborty, assistant manager-sales, Pride Hotels, which is exhibiting at PATA mart for the first time, said

the company participated in GITB, but "one big Indian mart would be interesting as it would bring in international buyers so that we could get better visibility".

PP Khanna, vice president of the Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India, blamed the conspicuous absence of a big Indian travel tradeshow on politicking by its associations. "The existence of a large number of trade associations with their own

agendas and shortsighted attitudes has inhibited participation by all sellers at one travel show, Khanna said.

But the unifying aspect of one umbrella to showcase India was not insurmountable, he said. "We need to not only look at short-term gains but invest in infrastructure for a truly global showcase in future. The entry of international companies (such as Messe Berlin and UBM) will also help," he said.

Viewpoint

Does India need one big travel tradeshow?



"Yes. We have good, increasing interest in India, as Qatar Airways' and Emirates' flights connecting to India have made it easy to visit India."

Custodio Junior
Manager
Kangaroo Tours Brazil



"I was not aware of the travel tradeshow in India. I would love to visit one big show and meet sellers from all over the country."

Louise Oostenbrink
President
Louise's Travel Choice
The Netherlands

It's not goodbye, says PATA mart lady



Buyers and sellers gave Leong the thumbs up at the mart yesterday

By Raini Hamdi

EFFECTIVE October 1, Sheila Leong, who has been organising the PATA mart and all other PATA events for the past 10 years, will no longer be with PATA. But it is not goodbye, as she moves on to set up her own company, with PATA as her first client.

Interviewed by the *Daily* yesterday, Leong said her contract with PATA from October 1 was on a thrice-weekly basis, for a duration of one year, with extension each year. The events she will be handling for PATA have yet to be worked out. The next PATA event is the Adventure Travel Mart in Bhutan in February, and, in April, the PATA Annual Meeting – a scaled-down PATA Annual Conference – which Putra-

jaya in Malaysia is hosting. Leong would be reporting to the PATA CEO, currently interim chief Bill Calderwood, and later, the new CEO (see *What's hot*, right).

Leong refused to be drawn into the organisational changes at PATA, which led to this outsourcing move, a similar fate that met John Koldowski, whom PATA earlier announced would operate its Intelligence Centre on an outsourced basis. Both are PATA's longest-serving staff today and Leong's Events is a big money-spinner for the cash-strapped association, drawing about US\$500,000 a year, with the mart contributing the bulk.

While it has decided to outsource these two divisions, PATA has put in new hires, director of

Asia, Reid Ridgway, and director marketing/membership, Stu Lloyd, roles designed to stem declining membership (TTG Asia, April 22). The bulk of PATA's overall revenue is still from membership dues, where PATA also faces non-payment, depleting its reserves.

But Leong declined to discuss if she was forced to go on an outsourced model as a result of cost-cutting and said she was in fact looking forward to being on her own after having been with PATA since 1998. "I organised PATA's 50th anniversary in Kuala Lumpur and PATA's 60th anniversary in Beijing (this year). It is time to move on," she said.

Sellers, buyers and PATA officials interviewed identify Sheila as the 'PATA mart lady'.

Said Luzi Matzig, group CEO of Asian Trails: "While Gerry Piccola is no doubt the founder and initiator of the PATA mart, Sheila Leong is the workhorse who continually improved the mart over the many years of its successful rise as one of the 'must attend' travel trade shows in Asia."

"Most industry experts identify Sheila with the mart, which remains PATA's most valuable piece of association real estate."

What's hot

Search over for PATA CEO

THE *Daily* understands that a new PATA CEO has been found, a search that has taken a year – probably the longest search for a CEO replacement. An announcement is imminent at the PATA board meeting in Delhi this weekend.

Unlike previous information leaks, PATA had been able to keep the identity of the candidate under wraps this time. The search was strictly between recruitment firm Heidrick and Struggles, and interim PATA CEO Bill Calderwood, outgoing PATA chairman Hiran Cooray and incoming PATA chairman Joao Manuel Costa Antunes. Twelve candidates were believed to have been shortlisted for interviews conducted in Singapore. It was exactly a year ago during the PATA Travel Mart in Macau that Cooray announced to the board that Greg Duffell had resigned. The first search did secure a CEO, but he chickened out in the end. – **Raini Hamdi**

Sound bites



"They used to say, Rohit and Rajeev – that's Ram Kohli's sons. Now they say, Ram – that's Rohit and Rajeev Kohli's father."

Ram Kohli, who describes himself as "a proud father", now that his two sons are synonymous with the business while he is happily retired, although the two brothers denied this was true

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No room for complacency

For PATA mart to survive competition, it must keep up with changing times



Bill Calderwood



Sheila Leong



Joe Borg Olivier



Alice Matulesky

By Catherine Monthienvichienchai

Following the publication of April's Strategic Focus paper, PATA committed itself to reviewing every element of its operations by asking the crucial question: Does it build the business?

This includes considering whether an evolution of the events programme is in order. If this is the case, where does this leave PATA Travel Mart (PTM)?

Since its inception in 1978, PTM has remained a relatively popular and successful travel trade show, attracting a diverse group of buyers and sellers from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. In recent years, however, there has been stiff competition from the likes of ITB Asia, which has been held annually in Singapore since 2008.

PATA interim CEO, Bill Calderwood, said PTM would have a place in the association's events calendar as long as interest and demand remained high.

But Calderwood admitted that PATA cannot remain complacent, explaining that the mart must change and evolve if it was to stay valuable.

"We've got to look for new source markets that are emerging. At the same time, we've got to be looking at how we can bring to the buyers new potential products, product segments and experiences that appeal to the changing consumer segments," he said.

This year, for example, Calderwood said the mart chose to focus on attracting new buyers from markets like South America

PATA Travel Mart buyers and sellers

	New Delhi 2011	Macau 2010	Hyderabad 2008
Buyers	310	303	374
Sellers	3,291m ²	3,420m ²	3,766m ²

Source: PATA

and Russia, and created a dedicated luxury and boutique hotel pavilion.

"Boutique hotels that don't have corporate groups to represent them can come in under a special package. We're offering them a more affordable way to showcase their properties at PTM via one dedicated pavilion," said PATA deputy CEO & head-office of marketing services, Sheila Leong.

She explained that PTM 2011 would also see three streamlined meet-the-buyer sessions, including those for late buyers and American buyers, Asia and Pacific buyers, and European and African buyers.

"It will be a tighter and more focused format to better help sellers do business with target buyers on site," she said.

According to Calderwood, it was also important that the mart offered seminars and workshops that could help participants gain a better understanding of key trends in the industry.

"We've done this before and we'll do it in New Delhi – we'll have board meetings, committee meetings, but we'll also have insight forums to look at specific issues," he said.

Returning buyers and sellers see the mart as positive overall.

Joe Borg Olivier, managing director, Olivair Travel & Tourism, believes that the mart still delivers value because it attracts the best sellers and buyers from the region.

"In the end, one finds that the mart itself turns out to be a place for professionals meeting on a friendly basis that enhances the family of travel and tourism," he said.

Meanwhile, Luzi A. Matzig, CEO of Asian Trails, drew attention to the fact PTM's venue changed each year, unlike ITB Asia, which is stationary. "PTM continually manages to introduce new tour operators from emerging producing markets, which are very worthwhile for us in expanding our market reach," he said.

Alice Matulesky, director of sales & marketing, Discovery Kartika Plaza Hotel & Villas in Bali, agreed with Matzig: "I like PTM because it is held in a different coun-

try every year. For us, it is good to visit and get to know places that could be a good market for us to develop."

Huwiler Matthias, managing director, TUI/Flex Travel Switzerland, also cited the rotating venues as a plus for the mart. However, he prefers locations that are easy to go to, like Macau. He is also less keen on the fact that PTM and ITB are scheduled closely together.

Calderwood said that while not everyone liked the PTM rotation, he believed that it had more pluses than minuses.

"The upsides are that you can offer a new range of sellers and you can take the event to destinations that are emerging and are of interest to the buyers. Also, you've got a more concentrated range of seller products that the buyers can view," he said.

These are the reasons why he doubts that outsourcing PTM or partnering with ITB Asia is possible, despite some industry members questioning the proximity of the two Asian travel marts (ITB Asia is held in October).

"I'd like to think that there are ways we can work with other bodies, whether it be ITB Asia or others. But ITB Asia is in a fixed location, and while it works in a lot of different senses, it may not necessarily meet the needs of our members at the present time, in that they do want to use PTM to showcase a destination," he said.

PTM is confirmed for Manila in 2012. But what of 2013 and beyond? Calderwood said: "It's not appropriate to make a call that far out. We've got to work through this process of reviewing our events and reviewing whether they deliver value and to try and keep evolving it."

"There is an awful lot of people out there who say you should do this, this and this, but the primary focus that we have is to ask is: 'Is this what our members want?' As long as they're voting by supporting, and as long as we're listening and evolving, that's good."

"There is an awful lot of people out there who say you should do this, this and this, but the primary focus that we have to ask is: 'Is this what our members want?'"

Bill Calderwood, interim CEO, PATA

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Lina Tan Editorial Assistant

CONTRIBUTORS

N. Nithiyananthan, Marianne Carandang, Prudence Lui, Shekhar Niyogi, Faith Chang, Maggie Rauch, Byron Perry, Rahul Khanna, Bernie Rosenbloom

SALES & MARKETING

Michael Chow Publisher
Katherine Ng, Marisa Chen Senior Business Managers
Cheryl Tan Corporate Marketing Manager
Tan Ee Hiang Marketing Services Executive

PUBLISHING SERVICES

Tony Yeo Division Manager
Agnes Loy Senior Production Executive
Nancy Lee Production Co-ordinator
Cheryl Lim Advertisement Administration Manager
Carol Wong Circulation Executive

TTG ASIA MEDIA

Darren Ng Managing Director

New European campaign

Lifestyle Philippines to target Russia and France outbound

By Marianne Carandang

THE Philippines' Department of Tourism (DoT) will introduce its new *Lifestyle Philippines* campaign at the Otdykh Leisure 2011 in Russia and the International French Travel Market (IFTM) Top Resa fairs later this month, hoping to keep the momentum going for a fast-growing market, as well as reverse a slowdown in arrivals respectively.

"In the past, we've actively promoted our beaches and Boracay, but we want to expand our product offering," said DOT Team Europe director Verna Buensuceso.

"This is the first time we will be using *Lifestyle Philippines* as our campaign theme for the Europe market, which we will reuse if the theme takes off," she added.

DoT is resuming its promotions in the French market this year, having last visited Top Resa in 2008. After Otdykh, which DoT has been attending since 2005, there will also be a post-selling mission in St. Petersburg.

Russia has become an important market for the Philippines, as its travellers are not included



Denoga: high hopes for Russia

under the existing European Union (EU) ban on Philippine carriers. European travel agents have stopped insuring domestic flight components of Philippine tour packages as a result of the ban.

In the meantime, DoT has been promoting destinations accessible by land or sea from Manila and Cebu.

Director of sales and marketing of El Nido Resorts, Joy Anne Denoga, said: "Our Russian market grew 20 per cent year-to-date over the same period last year. France, however, has dipped 65 per cent due to the EU ban. Since we operate island properties, we rely totally on air access so we look forward to getting this EU ban lifted as soon as possible."

Trips Travel assistant marketing manager Felise Cruz said: "This year, Russians are still arriving even during the lean season. We already have a couple of

bookings for January 2012, mostly arriving during the Christmas-New Year peak period."

Sonia Lazo, managing director, Intas Destination Management, said: "Due to the EU ban, the French market has slowed down...but enquiries are still coming in, with some bookings."

"For Europeans, a seven- to 14-day programme that combines the Banaue rice terraces and island hops to Cebu, Bohol, Boracay, Palawan or Davao sells best. For Russians, it's either beach holidays or diving."

Russia is among the Philippines' emerging source markets, posting a 37.2 per cent gain on 2009, with 14,642 visitors last year. Some 9,820 visitors from Russia arrived in the first six months of this year, a 34.3 per cent jump compared to the same period in 2010.

France had 27,302 tourists in 2010, an 11.1 per cent increase from 2010. Growth this year is at 7.3 per cent, with 15,061 visitors in the first six months.

Average lengths of stay for the two markets are 18 and 13 nights respectively.

In brief

New Cambodia eco-tour
 B2B Travel Cambodia will showcase a new 12-day ecotourism tour at the mart, encompassing elements of social responsibility. Targeting students from the UK, Germany, France and Australia, budget hotels and homestays will be used. The tour will feature hidden gems, such as the UNESCO site at Preah Vihear, said managing director Thourn Sinan. — **Linda Haden**

Car giveaway for delegates
 HERTZ and co-sponsor TTG Asia are offering delegates a chance to walk away with a Tata Nano. Log on to www.hertzwinacarpdm.com to answer a set of simple questions and submit the contest form from today until September 9 noon. A lucky draw will be conducted during the closing ceremony hosted by the Philippines Tourism Promotions Board, and the winner must be present.

Happy hour at TTG booth
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How to work PATA mart

Travel trade veterans offer advice on how best to maximise the experience

	Buyer	Buyer	Seller	Seller	Seller
	 Amit Kalsi Vice president-Private Travel Abercrombie & Kent India, India	 Dr Ashraf Samir Managing director SNOB Travel, Egypt	 Brenda Poon Manager-trade services Hong Kong Tourism Board	 Angela Sue Manager-sales & distribution (overseas & MICE), Ngong Ping 360, Hong Kong	 Prabhat Verma Head SITA, India
As a veteran of PATA Travel Mart (PTM), what advice can you give about how best to work the mart?	<p>Pre-scheduled appointments are the key to success at PTM, and you should very carefully select the sellers/exhibitors you want to meet, depending on your particular business and product development focus.</p> <p>Secondly, it is important to explore the destination...it's essential for buyers to participate in the pre- and post-mart tours offered.</p>	<p>Appointments between buyers and exhibitors should be pre-arranged, allowing about five free choices to be arranged on site.</p> <p>In addition, I would recommend that buyers include a destination presentation in their programme.</p>	<p>Within the mart, there are hundreds of sellers introducing different travel products. To create a good impression on your potential clients, it is important to be well-prepared and understand the needs and interests of your target markets and clients.</p>	<p>Both sellers and buyers should give undivided attention to each other during appointments.</p> <p>It's really annoying when you meet somebody that is physically there but their mind is somewhere else, and they really don't want to see you or they are just there to socialise.</p>	<p>For a seller, it depends a lot on the pre-scheduled appointments. The key is to be quick in setting up the meetings.</p> <p>But after all is said and done, the quality of buyers makes or breaks the image of a mart. PATA has been around for a long time, but somehow, the quality of the international buyers has been deteriorating.</p>
Any specific words of advice for working PTM in New Delhi?	<p>Overseas buyers should take advantage of the high number of Indian exhibitors participating, including DMCs, hotels and other end-user products and services.</p> <p>As a destination, India offers immense potential.</p>	<p>Take advantage of the networking events – it is something to remember about each event, as well as a good marketing medium for participants.</p>	<p>We anticipate a good number of Indian trade partners to show up at the mart. Participants should understand the market's needs and travel patterns so as to recommend products and itineraries suitable to Indian visitors.</p>	<p>(No answer given)</p>	<p>For buyers, it is a good opportunity to come to New Delhi and explore other parts of the country on a pre- or post-tour. If someone is keen on an India product, then this is the right opportunity and platform.</p>

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Singapore remains strong

Trade projects unprecedented tourism numbers to continue in 2012, reports **Linda Haden**



Singapore Tourism Board

In 2010, 11,638,663 tourists visited Singapore, exploring attractions like Clark Quay, above. The number was bolstered in part by a rapid increase in regional traffic following the opening of the integrated resorts Resorts World Sentosa and Marina Bay Sands. With no signs of visitor arrivals letting up, and more new attractions in the pipeline, the city-state is seen to continue its exponential growth this year.

Tourism numbers in Singapore continued to climb in the first quarter of 2011, with visitor arrivals rising by 15.7 per cent to just over three million. Tourism revenue, on the other hand, jumped by an impressive 35.7 per cent, to just under S\$5 billion (US\$4.1 billion).

Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Australia and India were the country's top tourism source markets in the first quarter.

The government's resolve to transform Singapore into a world-class city, like New York and London, has played a definitive role in revving up the country's tourism performance.

Robert Khoo, CEO, National Association of Travel Agents Sin-

gapore (NATAS), said: "Singapore has been greatly enhanced as a destination, with the opening of new attractions in recent years. 'Apart from the integrated resorts, we have become a more vibrant city, with our nightlife, dining and cultural scene evolving to become big tourist draws in their own right.'"

To maintain momentum, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is utilising technology more. Spokesperson Jane Lee said that the increasing dependence on social media, Internet-based search and e-commerce tools has fundamentally changed the way people travel.

She said: "Digital is at the heart of our destination marketing

campaign (for Singapore), and we are leveraging new opportunities in digital communications and social media."

STB introduced a mobile app in May, which enables users to share their holiday experiences using social media.

Alex Yip, general manager, Vacation Singapore DMC, remains confident that the Lion City will continue to roar in 2012. He said: "The anticipated escalation in Asia-Pacific air traffic will accelerate the rate of growth in inbound arrivals to Singapore."

STB is projecting that Singapore is right on track to generate S\$30 billion in tourism receipts and 20 million in international visitor arrivals by 2015.



"Visitors to Singapore today have divergent and diverse expectations, and they tend to have very specific requests. Essentially, they desire fresh and novel experiences."

Yvonne Low, executive director, The Traveller DMC

Destination by the numbers

6.4 Singapore is poised to become one of the world's gambling capitals. According to the American Gaming Association, the country's two casinos are predicted to make US\$6.4 billion this year, even eclipsing the US\$5.8 billion forecast for Las Vegas.

13 According to STR Global, a total of 13 hotels are in the pipeline for the Lion City as of June 2011. These are scheduled for completion between 2011 and 2013.

15 Retail, tourism and the food and beverage businesses are to receive an injection of S\$15 million (US\$12.4 million) to develop mobile apps to improve service delivery and enhance staff productivity.

39 Although Indonesia is still Singapore's largest source of arrivals from South-east Asia, the Philippines registered the highest rate of volume growth between January and April 2011, an increase by 39 per cent over the same period in 2010.

1,500 Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre is set to host 1,500 events by the end of this year.

100 As of June 1, Changi Airport serves 100 airlines operating over 5,700 weekly flights to more than 200 cities in 60 countries and territories.

400,000 An estimated 400,000 people attended the Singapore Food Festival in July, up from the 370,000 participants last year.

500,000 Approximately 500,000 unique visitors visit YourSingapore.com every month, double that of VisitSingapore.com, the former website of the Singapore Tourism Board.

Source: Singapore Tourism Board

Marina Bay Sands Singapore



Hotel Update | Rates are sizzling hot

Hoteliers have been one of the primary beneficiaries of the boom in international arrivals to Singapore.

Based on provisional data released by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), in the first five months of 2011, average room rates (ARR) in Singapore rose by 12 per cent to S\$228.80 (US\$188.6) year-on-year, while the average occupancy rate (AOR) remained stable at 85 per cent.

The economy segment, where a shortage of room persists, is anticipated to see the biggest jump



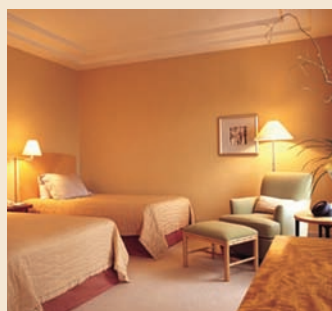
ibis Singapore on Bencoolen

in room rates. Puneet Dhawan, general manager, ibis Bencoolen, expects rates at his mid-scale hotel to climb by 15 per cent in 2012.

He said: "Notwithstanding extenuating factors, there is no reason why hotel rates should plummet."

Hoteliers in Singapore are banking that the ARR will move beyond the peak of the S\$245 attained in 2008.

A shift to new highs is "highly probable", according to Robert McIntosh, executive director, CBRE Hotels, who projects a 10-15 per



Conrad Centennial Singapore

cent increase in ARR for 2011.

Heinrich Grafe, general manager, Conrad Centennial

Singapore, said that the Lion City still had a long way to go before its hotel rates match those of other cosmopolitan cities.

He added: "Singapore certainly has the ability to achieve higher room rates, given its strong economic credentials and the robust forecast growth in tourism arrivals."

The boutique segment, which has been seeing an upswing in activity in recent years, is likely to further expand its presence, as smaller parcels of land continue to be released for development.

Modest gains for Australia

Inbound arrivals influenced by economic conditions in source markets, reports Faith Chang



Tourism Australia

The high Australian dollar is not impacting travellers' decisions on whether or not to travel to the country, but how much they spend during their trip, according to Tourism Australia (TA).

Research findings by Tourism Research Australia state: "Exchange rate volatility has an impact on the country's tourism competitiveness as the rise of the Australian dollar requires visitors having to consider increas-

ing their travel wallet or reducing their length of stay.

"In the short-term, this issue will be worn by the consumer, with some sectors more sensitive to changes than others. However, in the long run, the industry is likely to bear this cost as consumers choose other destinations."

Economic conditions in Australia's tourism source markets continue to be the main factor influencing travel to the destination.

Markets that have been slower to recover from the global financial crisis are also showing little or no growth in visitor numbers to Australia.

In 2010, Australia received 5.9 million international visitors, an increase of 5.4 per cent over 2009.

This year, international visitor numbers continue to grow, with 2.4 million visitors for the first five months of 2011, an increase of two per cent. The forecast for inbound visitor arrivals for 2011 is to reach 6.2 million.

For 2012, forecasts suggest 6.38 million visitors for the year, a 5.2 per cent growth on 2011.

TA said it would continue to market Australia internationally with a balanced portfolio of markets to ensure the best outcomes in terms of visitation and expenditure.

The current global campaign, There's Nothing Like Australia, will highlight what is unique and compelling about the destination to ensure competitiveness.

Destination by the numbers

2 Arrivals from the US to Australia dropped two per cent to 472,200 in 2010 compared to the previous year.

17.6 Japan registered the largest drop of visitor arrivals in the five months to May this year, recording 130,200 visitors, a fall of 17.6 per cent compared to May 2010.

19.8 China registered the largest increase of visitor arrivals in the five months to May this year, recording 244,800 visitors, a growth of 19.8 per cent, over the same period in 2010.

Source: Tourism Australia



"The 2020 Tourism Industry Potential, a new strategic approach, will be aimed at doubling overnight expenditure for the tourism industry to A\$140 billion (US\$151.7 billion) by 2020."

Andrew McEvoy,
managing director, Tourism Australia

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Laos eyes longhaul market

Developing quality products NTO's priority, reports **Sirima Eamtako** and **John Rogerson**



The tourism sector in Laos continues to boom, recording a 25.1 per cent growth in visitor numbers and a 42.6 per cent increase in revenue last year. Despite this, the Lao National Tourism Administration remains modest, targeting only a five per cent increase on visitor arrivals and revenue for 2011.

The Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA) is seeking to grow more longhaul

visitors to the destination. LNTA marketing advisor Kirsten Focken said: "The focus for tourism

development and promotion in Laos is to develop quality products and destinations to attract

more longhaul visitors and increase their length of stay."

While visitor numbers are increasing, it is still shorthaul visitors that make up a chunk of tourists to Laos. Of the total arrivals last year, more than 80 per cent were from Asia-Pacific.

LNTA is targeting 2.7 million foreign visitors and US\$399 million in revenue for this year.

The modest expectation is on the back of last year's 2.5 million foreign visitors generating revenue of US\$381 million, up from two million tourists and US\$267.7 million in earnings in 2009.

The LNTA is hoping to attract some 2.8 million foreign visitors during the 2012 Visit Laos Year promotion, and expects to increase revenue generated from foreign tourists to US\$458 million by 2020.

In a bid to boost the country's profile, The NTO is formulating plans to host the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in 2013.

This follows the success of the Mekong Tourism Forum 2011, which was held from May 27-28 and attracted some 250 international delegates.

Focken said strategies were being developed to reach the targets set for the next years in terms of visitor numbers and revenue.

Khiri Group CEO, Willem Niemeijer, said he hoped that the growth in arrivals to Laos would continue, with 2012 being a key tourism year. He said: "I think that Luang Prabang will remain a draw for high-end tourists, while the backpacker market will keep on seeking out new destinations across the country."

For his part, Exotissimo Travel Group product and marketing manager Louise Nathan said the company recognised a shift in traveller profile towards the luxury end. "Luang Prabang remains the most visited part of Laos, and the town has seen a good selection of deluxe properties open in recent years," she said.

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"With so few flights direct into Laos, the country is not yet a stand-alone destination. Laos is a beautiful country with great potential, but there needs to be ongoing investment in infrastructure."

Nataly Wanhoff, managing director, Diethelm Travel Laos

Hotel Update | More luxe rooms

Laos is experiencing an increase in room supply, mostly in the four- and five-star and boutique categories.

Last year saw an increase of 1,846 rooms in 26 new hotels and 60 new guesthouses. This brings the nation's total supply to 28,123 rooms.

Vientiane's supply increased by 715 rooms, including Ansara Hotel's 14 keys in the luxury category and Best Western Vientiane's 44 new rooms in the US\$60 range.

Luang Prabang's luxury hotel market saw the opening of the 23-key Alila and 36-room Shinta Mani last year.

The 59-key Le Palais Juliana and 24-room Kiridara Luang Prabang opened this year.

The hotel sector is set to grow further, with Lao National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality (LANITH) seeking a private-sector investor to open an 80-100 room upscale hotel to complement its Mekong riverfront academy in Vientiane.

Performance-wise, hotels in Vientiane ran at an average occupancy rate of 63 per cent last year, at the same level as 2009. Mercure Vientiane general manager Christopher Yeo said that his hotel has had an average of 35-40 per cent occupancy over the first seven months of 2011, levels

similar to 2010. "Rates will not change significantly during 2011 and 2012," he said.

Khiri Group CEO, Willem Niemeijer, said that the hotel market in Luang Prabang was saturated at the top-end, and that the destination lacks good, quality mid-range rooms for tourists who might not want to stay in budget guesthouses.

He added that the shortfall was unlikely to be addressed any time soon, as Laos remained more expensive than neighbouring Thailand.

"In Luang Prabang, nearly everything has to be brought in by road, and well-trained local staff are at a premium and command high wages, so there's more incentive financially for investors to build four- and five-star accommodation," said Niemeijer.

Elsewhere, the country is seeing more boutique hotels opening in eco-tourism areas.

Piya Harasarn, manager of the 14-room Tadfane Resort in Champasak, said a more intimate hotel experience was sought by foreign visitors, especially those who had stayed in large resorts in Thailand.

"People come seeking an eco-friendly experience in low-key resorts rather than massive developments," he said.

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Thailand sustains growth

Political stability key to nurturing arrivals despite global change, reports **Sirima Eamtako**



Thailand has proven its resilience. It recorded a 12.6 per cent increase to 15.9 million visitors last year, despite challenges in the domestic and international scene. Based on visitor rebound, and with possible crises factored in, the country is expecting 18-18.3 million visitors for this year and 19.5 million in 2012.

Thailand hopes to generate US\$24.9 billion in revenue from foreign visitors next year. This is an increase of nine per cent over this year's estimated US\$23.4 billion in receipts from international travellers.

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) governor Suraphon Svetasreni said that the projection already factored in possible crises that may happen.

The figures are also based on last year's 15.9 million tourists, up 12.6 per cent over 2009, even as Thailand faced nearly three months of political turmoil then. Visitor numbers rebounded from July last year, according to the Thai travel trade.

In the first half of this year, the country recorded 9,685,847

foreign visitors, a year-on-year increase of 28.1 per cent.

Suraphon said that despite visitor rebound and signs of continued growth, the country's tourism industry would still be facing a period of unpredictable problems – be they natural disasters locally and globally, and political situations within the country and in source markets.

"Responding to constant and incessant change has become our biggest challenge," he added.

For next year, TAT will continue to market the country using the Amazing Thailand Always Amazes You branding.

Inbound tour operators believe that Thailand stands the chance of sustaining growth in arrivals, given the country's

wealth of culture and nature offerings, but there remains areas of concern.

What Thailand needs to sustain growth in arrivals is political stability, said Khiri Group CEO, Willem Neimeijer.

Asian Trails, CEO, Luzi Matzig agrees, saying that marketing-wise it would be important to have peace in the country.

He added that the country's infrastructure was also in dire need of improvement.

In addition, inbound tour operators point to human resources as a vital area for Thailand to achieve tourism growth. Diethelm Travel Group CEO, John Watson, said that although the bar was already set pretty high, it could still be taken up a notch.



"Human resources are the key. Air links, marketing and product development all count for nothing if the customer experience is not good and that, mostly, is down to the attitude of the people they meet – on arrival, transportation, hotels, restaurants, attractions and so on."

John Watson, CEO, Diethelm Travel Group

Destination by the numbers

19.5 At least 19.5 million international travellers are expected to visit Thailand in 2012, an increase of about nine per cent from the Tourism Authority of Thailand's (TAT) estimate of 18-18.3 million tourists for this year

24.9 Projected revenue to be generated from the targeted 19.5 million foreign visitors in 2012 is US\$24.9 billion, up from about US\$23.40 billion in estimated income from foreign tourists in 2011.

12.6 Thailand had a 12.6 percentage growth to 15.9 million visitor arrivals in 2010. East Asia contributed the most number at 51.25 per cent or 8.2 million visitors, followed by Europe at 27.9 per cent or 4.4 million tourists.

9.7 The number of foreign visitors who have visited Thailand in the first half of 2011 is 9.7 million, representing an increase of 28.1 per cent over the same period in 2010. East Asian visitors jumped the highest at 35 per cent to five million tourists.

50.8 Russian tourists to Thailand in the first six months of 2011 had a growth of 50.8 per cent to 460,555. Visitors from Russia have today become one of the fastest-growing international markets for Thailand.

60 Suvarnabhumi Airport will be able to accommodate 60 million passengers per year from the current 45 million after its expansion plan is completed in 2015. Its operator, Airports of Thailand, is also expanding Phuket Airport to increase its handling capacity from 6.5 million to 12.5 million passengers by 2013.

72 Brussels is the 72nd destination that Thai Airways International will operate to. The national carrier will launch a direct, thrice-weekly Bangkok-Brussels service from November 17, making it the only South-east Asian carrier to operate on the route.

75 Thai Airways International will invest 457.2 billion baht (US\$14.94 billion) to acquire 75 new aircraft between this year and 2022, as part of plans to reduce the average age of aircraft from 11.9 years in 2010 to eight years by 2024.

Sources: Tourism Authority of Thailand, Thai Airways International



Hotel Update | Rooms remain an issue

Hotels in Thailand are keeping a cautiously optimistic approach on rate movement in view of burgeoning supply, despite the rebound in visitor figures and signs of continued growth in arrivals.

Thai Hotels Association (THA) president Prakrit Chinamourphong said there was room to increase rates, provided that the current growth in arrivals continued and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) pressed on with its marketing strategies in drawing new and repeat visitors.

He added that if the domestic

political situation remained calm and if TAT continued to focus on attracting high-spend market segments, hotels should be able to increase room rates by five to 10 per cent.

Centara Hotels and Resorts is looking at increasing room rates by shifting its focus towards the MICE and corporate markets, said its sales and marketing senior vice-president Chris Bailey.

He said that strong forward bookings for the chain's properties in Bangkok, Phuket, Hua Hin and Pattaya from all markets would



Furama Silom, Bangkok

allow a five to 10 per cent rate increment.

Accor operations director for Thailand Paul Stevens said that the chain's rate strategy would vary by location, but increases for hotels in Bangkok were likely if supply became more stable.

Oversupply in key Thai cities remained an obstacle in bringing up rates, as the current growth in arrivals was mainly from short-stay regional markets, Stevens explained.

Against the odds of rising supply and sluggish room rates,

new openings are in the pipeline throughout Thailand, which according to the THA, has more than 500,000 rooms now.

In Bangkok, some 103,000 rooms based on THA's count have ballooned by 2,143 rooms in the first half of this year, and will further grow by 2,297 keys in the second half and 4,709 rooms in 2012.

Phuket, Koh Samui, Pattaya, Hua Hin and Krabi also saw new openings in the first six months, and look set to see more competition flooding its shores.

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Vietnam rapidly takes off

Easy air access from LCCs and new resorts help fuel tourism uptick, reports **Byron Perry**



Tourism in Vietnam has been soaring alongside the country's economy in recent years. Except for a hiccup in 2009, when visitor numbers dropped due to the global financial crisis, arrivals have steadily climbed to a record five million last year and 2.96 million through the first six months of this year.

Vietnam is on track to hit six million arrivals this year following last year's record five million, despite the need to improve human resources and services in the tourism industry.

China continued to be the main source of visitors to Vietnam, with 905,000 arrivals last year. The number was double that of the second biggest market, South Korea, with 496,000. This was followed by Japan, the US and Taiwan.

Air arrivals were up 24 per cent in the first half of this year, which many attribute to the increase in easy and cheap routes to the country from low-cost carriers (LCCs) like Air Asia. About 83 per cent of visitors in the first six months of the year came by air.

According to Asian Trails group managing director Laurent Kuenzle, Vietnam has been seeing rapid growth from shorthaul markets like Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand, thanks in part to LCCs increasing route networks.

But Kuenzle said that the country still lagged in terms of human resources and services in the tourism industry. Despite this, however, he added: "But Asian Trails is still very bullish on the country's potential (in drawing more visitors)."

Buffalo Tours CEO, Tran Trong Kien, said that domestic tourists were a major factor in the country's travel industry. According to him, there were about 28 million domestic tourists who

took at least one trip within the country, generating more than US\$5.2 billion in tourism revenue last year.

The number is expected to exceed 30 million this year, as rising disposable incomes allow for an increase in travel, added Tran.

Beach areas around central and southern Vietnam, with shiny big-name resorts like the Sheraton Nha Trang and Hyatt Regency Danang, are attracting these new domestic tourists and international travellers.

For his part, Pham Ha, CEO of Luxury Travel Vietnam, said he was anticipating an increase in upscale travellers to Vietnam because of an increase in high-end attractions like new golf courses, hotels and resorts.



"Vietnam is now one of our best-performing destinations. Human resources are going to be the biggest challenge. But overall, I see 2012 as extremely positive, buoyed by increased air links into the country."

Laurent Kuenzle, group managing director, Asian Trails

Destination by the numbers

18 Tourism arrivals in Vietnam for the first half of 2011 were up about 18 per cent over the first half of 2010, with a total of 2,965,820.

75 Arrivals from China were up nearly 75 per cent in the first half of 2011 compared to the first half of 2010. China is by far the biggest tourist source market in Vietnam, with 905,360 visitors in 2010.

3,444 Vietnam's coastline is 3,444km long, excluding its islands, according to the CIA World Fact Book. This is a lot of beaches to explore.

5,049,855 The number of tourists who visited Vietnam in 2010 is 5,049,855, up 34.2 per cent compared to 3,772,359 in 2009.

9.5 The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of arrivals is 9.5 per cent since 2004, when about 2.9 million tourists arrived in the country.

28 Roughly 28 million Vietnamese took at least one trip within the country in 2010, according to Thien Minh Research.

5.2 Thienh Minh Research reports that the amount generated by domestic tourism in 2010 was US\$5.2 billion.

430,993 The number of American visitors to Vietnam in 2010 was 430,933, the fourth largest source country after China, South Korea and Japan.

Sources: Vietnam General Statistics Office, Thien Minh Research



Notre Dame Cathedral, Ho Chi Minh City

Hotel Update | A wave of luxury

Some real estate analysts have described the surge of new luxury hotel projects as a 'tsunami' of supply on the central and southern coastal shores.

Recently-opened properties include the 284-room Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel and Spa and 250 new villas at the existing 485-key Vinpearl Resort and Spa in Nha Trang; the 50-villa Six Senses Resort on the former prison island Con Dao; and the 87-key Fusion Maia and 31 new villas at the Furama Resort in Danang.

Also in the pipeline are new

projects in Nha Trang, like the 330-room Westin Cam Ranh Resort and Spa and 305-room Crowne Plaza.

At the adjacent Danang beach town, InterContinental Hotels Group is rebranding Silver Shores International Resort to Crowne Plaza in September. New branded hotels include Hyatt Regency, JW Marriott and Le Meridien.

Wayne Buckingham, regional vice president for Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam of Starwood Hotels and Resorts, thinks that this supply glut could lead to pressure on future room rates. The chain,



Novotel Danang Han River

however, is looking to maintain or increase their rates next year.

"Vietnam still has enormous potential to develop its nascent hospitality sector further," said Buckingham. "With Starwood's portfolio of brands, we are in an excellent position to capitalise on Vietnam's bullish economy."

Accor is also hot on Vietnam, and has recently announced a plan to more than double the number of its hotels in the country from 11 to 26 by 2013. Among its upcoming openings are the 279-room Mercure Danang, slated for

later this year, while the 197-room Pullman Danang Olalani Resort and the 346-room Novotel Danang Han River are for next year.

Patrick Basset, Accor's vice president for Accor Vietnam, Philippines, South Korea and Japan, said: "Accor identified growth in more discerning international leisure travellers with a tendency to stay for a longer period from seven to 10 days in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and more domestic travellers travelling to secondary cities near Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Danang."

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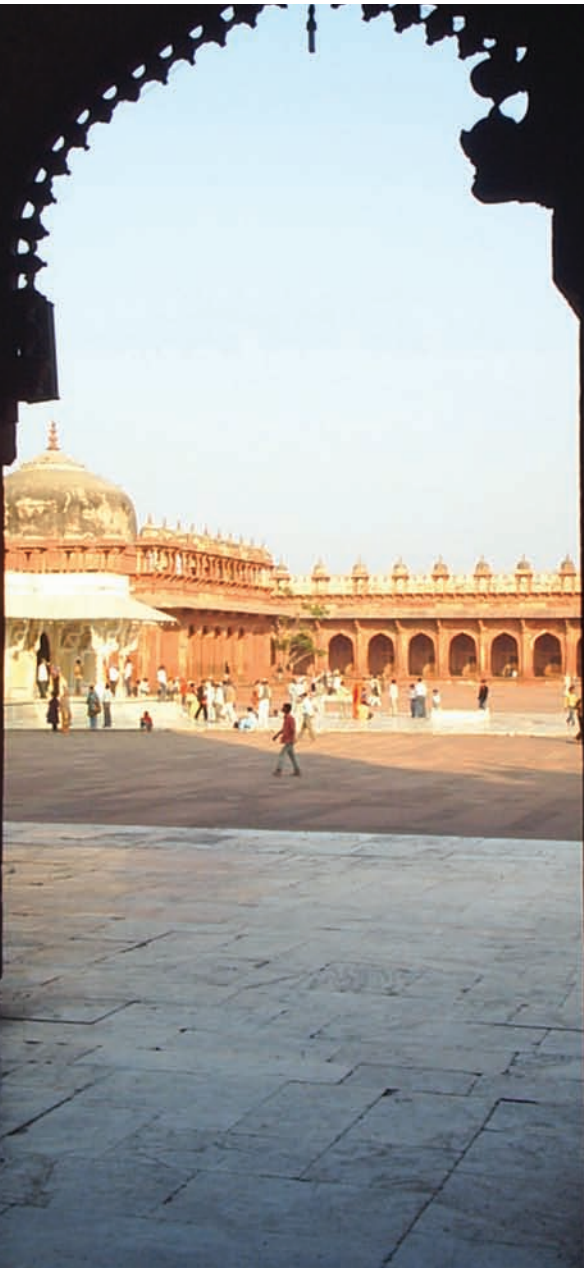
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Eat. Pay. Love.

Shekhar Niyogi trades insider information on what to see and where to go in New Delhi, a bustling city steeped in history

Since the construction of the Rajput citadel in 1060, Delhi has been built and rebuilt eight times, each at a different location in the city as it is known today. Many of the city's former forms have survived only in the form of a ruined fortress or a religious complex, like the Tughlaqabad Fort and the Qutb Minar tower. Other parts, however, have endured to become thriving neighbourhoods, such as Shahjahanabad, which is now known as Old Delhi. The current incarnation of the city was built in the early 20th century under British rule as the capital named New Delhi. This new city, with wide streets and British-influenced architecture, was spread out over the hills and fields between the seven older versions of the city, connecting all of them into one large metropolis that eventually became the capital of an independent India. Traversing from the more planned-out New Delhi into chaotic Old Delhi is like taking a trip back in time. These contrasts, as well as a few other surprises, make New Delhi a city to remember.



Red Fort



Lotus Temple



India Gate



Jama Masjid



Taj Mahal

Must see

Red Fort The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, after ruling from Agra for 11 years, decided to shift to Delhi. He laid the foundation of the Red Fort in 1618. This was completed in 1647 in Shahjahanabad, now old Delhi. With a circumference of almost one and a half miles, the fort near the river Yamuna has two entrances, the Lahore and Delhi gates.

Qutab Minar The Qutab Minar is a fluted red sandstone tower, which tapers up to a height of 72.5m, and is covered with intricate carvings and verses from the holy Koran. The tower minaret of the grand mosque of the city is its most famous feature. Initially, materials from pre-existing Hindu and Jain temples were used in its construction.

Lotus Temple The Baha'i House of Worship, popularly known as the Lotus Temple, is one of the most visited edifices in India. The unique petals of the lotus-

shaped structure are made of white concrete and clad in white Greek marble panels on the outside. It resembles the Sydney Opera House.

India Gate India Gate, a war memorial with a majestic arch 42m high surrounded by lush lawns, was built in honour of 90,000 Indian soldiers who lost their lives in World War I. Below it burns the *amar jawan jyoti*, the eternal flame, as a form of tribute to all martyred soldiers of India.

Rashtrapati Bhavan The president's palace, or the Rashtrapati Bhavan, is a fine example of Sir Edwin L. Lutyen's architectural skill. The official residence

of the president is situated on the Rajpath. The meticulously tended Mughal gardens within the grounds boast of an amazing assembly of roses in perfect bloom.

Humayun's Tomb The 16th century tomb of Humayun, the second of the great Mughal emperors, is a magnificent example of Indo-Islamic architecture. Humayun's wife, Haji Begum, built his tomb nine years after his death. Designed by Persian architect Mirak Mirza Ghiyas and completed in 1565, it set a trend at the time because it was the first garden-tomb.

Purana Qila The Purana Qila or the Old Fort is a good example of medieval military architecture. Built by Humayun, with later-day modifications by Sher Shah Suri, this now-dilapidated fort was known for its utility, with less emphasis on decoration. It oc-

cupies a mound thought to have been inhabited since 1,000 BC.

Raj Ghat The Raj Ghat is on the bank of the river Yamuna, which flows past New Delhi, the last resting place of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. A black marble platform marks the spot of Gandhi's cremation on January 31, 1948. An eternal flame burns in a glass case at one end, and Gandhi's supposed last words, "He Ram," ("Oh God") are inscribed on the memorial.

Jama Masjid The grand mosque of Delhi was completed in 1658 by Emperor Shah Jahan on a mound close to the Red Fort. Its elevated position above the surrounding streets and buildings gives it grandeur and prominence. It consists of an enormous walled courtyard that can contain well over 20,000 worshippers, making it the largest mosque in India.

Jantar Mantar The Jantar Mantar, an observatory with astronomical clock, was built by Maharaja Jai Singh II of Jaipur, from 1724 to 1734. It predicts the times and movements of the sun, moon and planets. Located about 250m south of Connaught Place, it is one of the world's oldest astronomical observatories.

Agra A five-hour drive away from New Delhi, the Taj Mahal is a monument to romantic love. Graceful white domes arch over the tomb of the heartbroken Shah Jahan and his third wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who bore him 14 children.

The structure is a sonnet in stone, inlaid with precious gems, surrounded by spectacular gardens and engraved with sweet verses from the Koran. The Taj Mahal is considered as one of the seven wonders of the world and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.





Papri chaat



Tandoori chicken



Golgappa



Gajar halwa

Must eat

Papri chaat is a North Indian fast food. The papris are served with boiled potatoes, boiled chickpeas, chillis, yoghurt and tamarind chutney and topped with *chaat masala*. This popular dish can often be bought from travelling food vendor stalls.

Tandoori chicken is a popular dish consisting of roasted chicken, yogurt, and spices. The chicken is marinated in curd and seasoned with tandoori masala. It is moderately hot.

Cayenne pepper, red chilli powder or Kashmiri red chilli powder is used to give it a fiery red hue. It is cooked at high temperatures in a tandoor (clay oven), but can also be prepared on a traditional barbecue grill.

Kakori kebabs are shaped long,

like sheek kebabs made of tender lamb mince marinated in raw papaya that melt in the mouth. They were invented near Lucknow for a toothless Nawab. Shami kebabs are thick and round, made of tender minced lamb, stuffed with fresh mint, chopped onions and green chillies.

Paratha is a popular unleavened flatbread made by pan frying whole-wheat dough on a large, flat pan.

The paratha dough usually contains ghee or cooking oil, which is also layered on the freshly prepared flatbread. These are usually stuffed with vegetables like boiled potatoes, leaf vegetables, radish or cauliflower.

Golgappa, also known as *panipuri*, is a popular street snack in India. It comprises a round, hollow puri, fried to a crisp and filled with a mixture of water, tamarind, chilli, chaat masala,

potato, onion and chickpeas. It is small enough to fit completely in one's mouth.

Samosas are stuffed pastries. It generally consists of a fried or baked triangular, semi-lunar pastry shell with a savoury filling. This may include spiced potatoes, onions, peas, coriander and lentils, or ground mutton or chicken. The size and shape of a samosa, as well as the consistency of the pastry used, may vary.

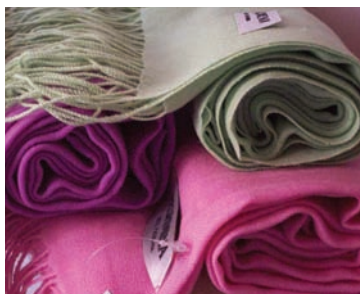
Gajar halwa or carrot pudding is a dessert made with grated carrots, sugar, unsalted butter, milk and cardamom powder. It is garnished with nuts and served warm.

Aloo tikki is mashed potato patties mixed with various herbs, like coriander, and spices. This is deep-fried in oil and served with tamarind and mint chutney.

Kulfi or unchurned Indian ice cream (without eggs), is a must-have summer treat. It is rich and creamy, made with pure milk that is boiled down to reduce to half its amount. It may contain nuts. The most common flavours are *malai* (plain), *badam* (almond), *elaichi* (cardamom), *jafrani* (saffron) and pistachio. It is often served with *falooda*, a rose infused vermicelli.

Lassi is a popular traditional yogurt-based drink topped with a thin layer of clotted cream. It is made by blending yogurt with water and Indian spices.

Traditional lassi is savoury, sometimes with ground roasted cumin, while sweet lassi is blended with sugar or fruits instead of spices. Lassis are best enjoyed chilled. With a little turmeric powder mixed in, it is also used as a folk remedy for gastroenteritis.



Pashmina shawls



Ayurveda



Kundan jewellery



Bangles

Must shop

New Delhi is an excellent place to shop, with unusual finds readily available. Make sure to pick up a few of these varied souvenirs during your trip.

Pashmina shawls/scarves The most sought-after and highly-priced shawls are made of pashm wool from the pashmina goat, a special kind of goat indigenous to the Himalayan mountains.

The shawls are handwoven and embroidered with the finest cashmere fibre. These are Kashmir's pride and are well-known for their col-

ours, sheen and softness. You can buy them at Dilli Haat or Connaught Place.

Tibetan handicrafts India has been home to a sizable number of Tibetans who had left their country. If you love arts and crafts, then there is no walking away from the colourful and skillfully-made Tibetan handicrafts.

There is a varied range of choices, from rugs, bowls, to handmade paper, as well as incense sticks, statues, silver and gold products and shawls. The quality can be found in Janpath and the Tibetan market that is just off Connaught Place.

Ayurveda medicines Ayurveda was born in India, and was extensively practised even before conventional medicine and doctors reached the country's shores. Its practice has now spread to other parts of the world as a form of alternative medicine.

Khan Market in Delhi is the best place to get ayurvedic medicine. Even skin care items from

more upmarket stores can be found here.

Jewellery Meenakari, Kundan and Navratan jewellery are popular in Delhi. They are an excellent example of mastery in jewellery design.

Antiques The most authentic and the cheapest antique shops are situated in the various alleys of the walled city. The best are in Dariba Kalan, where one can buy anything from old statues to bangles and silverware.

The Astadhatu statues, while pricey, are worth collecting. If you are short on cash, however, go for the silverware and the wood antiques.

Do not also miss out on the HMV gramophones from the 1920s. Embroidered shoes in Ballimaran are also a must-buy.

Carpets Delhi is famous for herati carpets of Afghan origin. These are bright and colourful,

and often come with floral motifs and designs.

Bangles Delhi is famous for fancy jewellery. Bangles made out of various oxidized and other metals, as well as crystals, are readily available.

Silk fabric Embroidery work by the Zari and the Zardosi is famous throughout India. Gota involves the intertwining of gold threads with other fabric to make the cloth. Kinari is a design style made on the borders of the cloth.

Sandalwood curios Sandalwood mementos and skin care products can be purchased at the Karnatka State Arts and Crafts Emporium in New Delhi.

Leather products India is one of the largest exporters of leather worldwide. Leather goods that are made in India are exported to countries like Italy and the US.

Shops

The shopping district of **Chandni Chowk**, which has been around for hundreds of years, is not to be missed. The lanes of Chandni Chowk are divided into bazaars with different areas of specialisation. For fabrics, head to Katra Neel. Dariba Kalan in Old Delhi is full of silver jewellery. Food vendors here also serve up a delicious assortment of Delhi street food.

Khan Market, a small, U-shaped, well-established market, is one of Delhi's most high-end shopping areas. Bargain hunters will most likely be disappointed here. In addition to branded goods, the market has interesting bookshops and excellent tailors who can make you a suit in less than a week.



The hectic **Lajpat Nagar (central) market** provides an interesting glimpse into Indian culture. It is one of the oldest markets in India and is abuzz with middle-class Indian shoppers, who swarm its roadside stalls and showrooms.

A main attraction at this market is the *mehandiwalas*, who can deftly apply henna designs to one's hands with astonishing speed. Reasonably-priced Indian *kurti* tops, *shalwar kameez* sets, shoes, bags, accessories and home furnishings are also available.

Janpath is where one can buy Tibetan handicrafts, shoes, paintings, brassware and Indian artefacts and leather.



Sunder Nagar This quaint market attracts quite a number of rich Indian socialites because of its art and antique shops. It is a well-designed market in an upscale neighborhood. Tea lovers should try the Regalia Tea House and Mittal Tea House.

Paharganj Some of the best bargain shopping in Delhi can be found in the crumbling and chaotic main bazaar of the Paharganj traveller ghetto. Many of the shops in Paharganj also deal wholesale and ship purchases to other countries.





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Email: promosiluarnegeri@gmail.com
Website: www.budpar.go.id

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TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd
1 Science Park Road #04-07
The Capricorn, Singapore Science Park II
Singapore 117528
Tel: +65 6395 7575 • Fax: +65 6536 0896
Email: atf@ttgasia.com
Website: www.atfindonesia.com



What was the most memorable PATA mart you attended and why?

"Hangzhou 2009 – for the destination experience, quality of exhibitor participation, local culinary delights, cultural shows and the sightseeing included during the duration of PTM (PATA Travel Mart). It was a complete mix of quality business exchange and destination sights and sounds."

Amit Kalsi

Vice president-Private Travel,
Abercrombie & Kent India, India

"It is not easy to say which one is the most memorable because every country tells its story in its own way, bringing out the charm of its people. However, marts worth mentioning include Hangzhou 2009 and Bali 2007, followed by Hyderabad 2008 and Macau 2010. Most of the marts that I have attended were well-organised, and I always look forward to the social events after a long day of meetings."

Joe Borg Olivier

Managing director
Olivair Travel & Tourism, Malta

"The most memorable PATA for me was Hangzhou 2009 and Macau in 2010. Everything was just a step away, from the hotel to the function room, saving a lot of time. The whole programme was very well-arranged, from arrival to departure, including an interesting pre-tour and entertainment."

Alice Matulessey

Director, sales & marketing
Discovery Kartika Plaza Hotel & Villas,
Bali



"Bali 2007 – the destination made the difference. The majority of sellers and buyers were there, while it was also well-organised, including lunch and dinner for sellers and buyers, giving additional opportunity for networking."

John Varkey Kailath,

Manager-VIP Holidays
Omeir Travel Agency
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates



"Bali in 2007 – good location, excellent night functions and well-organised! The venue for every evening function was just amazing."

Noor Mohammad Ismail

Assistant director
sales & business development
Asian Overland Services Tours & Travel
Malaysia

"Kuala Lumpur in 2005 – all activities were well-organised. Tourism promotion authorities did their best to expose most of the Malaysian facilities and attractions through pre- and post-mart tours and events, hotels, facilities and attractions. Inspection visits were well-arranged and hosted by tourism promotion authorities, which brought good feedback and good fruitful results to Malaysian tourism."

Dr Ashraf Samir

Managing director
SNOB Travel, Egypt

"I've attended three PTMs and they were all special because each year, they were located in different cities and never in the same place. Each city that was hosting the event wanted to showcase the best of what it had, which gave visitors like me an insight into its arts, culture, language, cuisine and all the beautiful – and not so beautiful – sights and sounds."

Angela Sue

Manager, sales & distribution
(overseas & MICE)
Ngong Ping 360, Hong Kong



"Bali in 2007. It's my favourite destination. I love the Balinese, and I never will forget that the space for PATA was too small and PATA had to put up tents in front of the exhibition hall! Very funny, very Balinese."

Huwiler Matthias

Managing director
TUI Flex Travel Switzerland



"I remember attending PATA mart in Singapore in 2001-2002. That was special since it was well-organised, had a lot of networking opportunities and the quality of buyers was excellent."

Prabhat Verma

Head, SITA
India

"The 2006 PATA Travel Mart in Hong Kong was particularly memorable, as it coincided with the launch of a new marketing campaign, Discover Hong Kong Year by HKTb (Hong Kong Tourism Board). The event brought over 1,000 travel trade partners from 50 countries and regions to Hong Kong. Though it was a lot of hard work, we enjoyed the experience of working with the professional PATA team."

Brenda Poon

Manager-trade services
Hong Kong Tourism Board



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Gearing up for main event

Travel trade members are all set for PATA Travel Mart 2011. Pictures by Patrick Tan

From left: Ananda Tours' Neneng from Indonesia, 5oceans Travel & Tours' Chenda Kheng and Sophiya Travel & Tours' Leng Pagna from Cambodia, and Kurnia Djaja Wisata Tours & Travel's Simon Budi from Indonesia



Singapore Airlines' Rajiv Varma from India



Amir-Husin Holidays' Mat Tarzan from Malaysia



Hertz Asia Pacific's Doris Goh from Singapore and PATA Thailand's Puangthip Chotipantawanon



Organizzazione AC's Anna Maria and Carlo Di Martino from Italy



Company Odyssey's Shevunov Evgeniy from Russia



Jambo Tours' Mats Lundmark from Sweden and Libert Voyages' Alain Libert from France



ESA Tour's Adi Haryanto from Indonesia



JHC Hotel Coupon's Duangritai Choomkasien from Thailand and Yuko Kawano from Japan



The African Group World Travellers' Dr Beryl Dorsett and Transworld Adventures NY's Tom Boyd



Universal Travel & Tourism Agencies' Naimish Gadoya from the UAE



Karaweik M&J Tours' Daw Khin May Myint, SM Tours & Transport's Maung Maung Swe and Royal Colourful Land Travels & Tours' Daw Nyunt Nyunt Than, all from Myanmar



Free Style Events' Ben Gosman and Van der Vegte Travel Consultancy's Tony van der Vegte from the Netherlands

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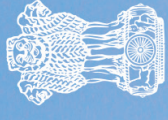


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