




CLICK www.ttgasia.com NOW!

Everyone's Talking About It



Hotel Expansion
A bulge in the middle
PAGE 10





Singapore
Recipe for success
PAGE 12



Hong Kong
Eventful forecasts
PAGE 16

www.ttgasia.com

TUI's intrepid adventure

Asia poised to see experiential boom

By Raini Hamdi

SINGAPORE Heavy investment will be poured into Peak Adventure Travel Group (PEAK), the new strategic venture between TUI Travel plc and Intrepid Travel Australia, which brings all their adventure brands under one independent business unit.

Asia, the group's biggest destination, is poised to see increased volumes as PEAK harnesses the backing of a shareholder like TUI and the expertise of a specialist like Intrepid in anticipation of further growth among consumers worldwide for experiential travel.

Asked how PEAK was a strategic venture, PEAK's CEO, Darrell Wade, formerly Intrepid's CEO, told *TTG Asia*: "TUI is a huge mainstream player and while it has done a good job with its adventure brands, I think it is fair to say that it does not really understand them."

"The Intrepid management

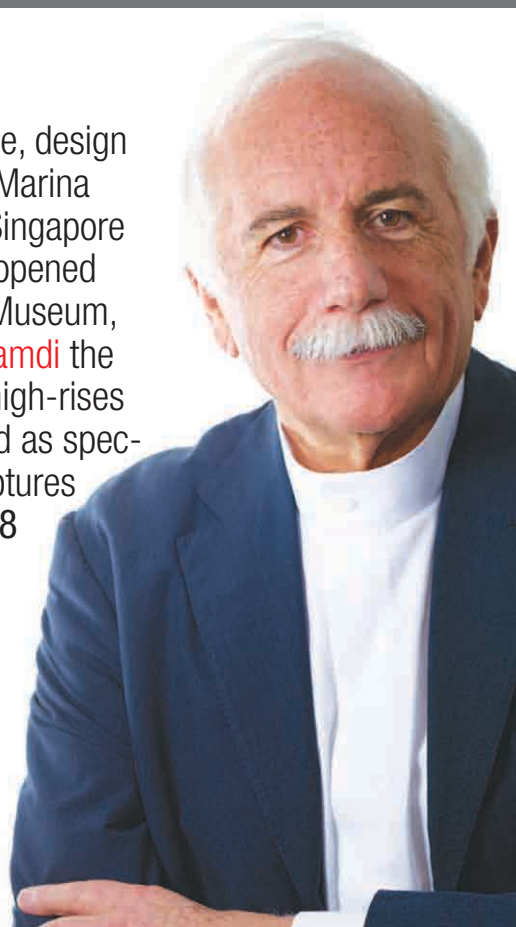
team has done nothing but adventure travel for 22 years and we've outpaced the growth achieved by the TUI adventure brands."

Intrepid's revenue alone has grown to US\$130 million from US\$27 million in the last decade, Wade said. This also proves the potential upside in the market in the years to come.

"Travellers in the western market are becoming more sophisticated in their needs as they become more experienced travellers," he said. "Many now take two holidays a year, so they are experimenting more with the options. Some are determined to tick off global icons like the Taj Mahal or Angkor Wat and experience them fully. A safari in Africa is now an alternative for an August break! PEAK will capitalise on this change in consumer sentiment."

Continued on page 3

Moshe Safdie, design architect of Marina Bay Sands Singapore and its just-opened ArtScience Museum, tells **Raini Hamdi** the dangers of high-rises being treated as spectacular sculptures – see page 8



Architecture & tourism

TTG Asia e-Daily

Most popular news last week

- 1 Thailand to spend US\$228 million on tourism development
- 2 NATAS to offer professional accreditation scheme
- 3 Longhaul makes a splash at NATAS fair
- 4 New Malaysian GSA for Kuwait Airways
- 5 IATA moves AGM from Cairo to Singapore
- 6 Lao Tourism Marketing Board hits the ground running
- 7 Cheap airfares driving Malaysian travel boom
- 8 Hot demand for customised tours
- 9 Uniworld sets up Asian base
- 10 Egypt targets quick recovery

To read these news, go to www.ttgasia.com

1 CONTINENT, 3 COUNTRIES, 8 PROPERTIES, 50 YEARS OF LOVING HOSPITALITY.



GRAND PARK ORCHARD



GRAND PARK CITY HALL



PARK HOTEL CLARKE QUAY



GRAND PARK KUNMING



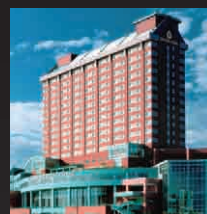
GRAND PARK WUXI



GRAND PARK XIAN



PARK HOTEL HONG KONG



GRAND PARK OTARU

www.parkhotelgroup.com

 PARK HOTEL GROUP

50 YEARS OF LOVING HOSPITALITY

PATA contest finalists named

BANGKOK Three PATA member schools have been shortlisted as finalists of the association's 2011 Tomorrow's Tourism competition, launched in September.

Besting over more than 30 entries are Yunliang Zhao, Yichen Yan and Rui Qian from the Shanghai Institute of Tourism; Fiona Huang Hao from the Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau; and Mridu Sahgal and Vinay Kumar from the Heritage Institute of Hotel and Tourism, Agra.

The finalists will present their ideas to a panel of four external judges at the 60th Anniversary and Conference in Beijing from April 9 to 12, with travel costs and accommodation subsidised by PATA. The four judges will be Political and Economic Risk Consultancy founder and managing director Robert Broadfoot, Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor managing director Amitabh Kant, futurologist Ray Hammond and CNN anchor and presenter Richard Quest.

The competition challenged undergraduate students to come up with new ways of measuring tourism, taking into account its wider impact on the environment and community at large.

Egypt spends on recovery

Marketing funds have been boosted, but takers are few in Asia

By Gracia Chiang

SINGAPORE Egypt intends to dole out more marketing funds to agents in Asia to fast track its recovery, but demand is not likely to return so soon.

The month following the protests that started late-January saw arrivals to Egypt plunging by 80 per cent, resulting in the loss of some US\$1.5 million in revenue.

With the transition to a new government now underway, Adel El Masry, Egyptian Tourism Office, India office, director, said he was seeking to double the NTO's annual budget for joint campaigns in South and South-east Asian markets, including India, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.

His office currently receives US\$300,000 a year for such campaigns, which shoulders half the costs for trade promotions specific to Egypt. This amount, however, can fund only 25 to 30 agents, said El Masry.

Cairo-based Fancy Tours vice president George William believed the move would help staunch the bleed, as business had fallen from 15,000 to 20,000



El Masry: more funds

hundreds of paid bookings from Italy, India and Sri Lanka, among others, for March and April.

Both El Masry and William, however, stressed that Egypt would not dump rates just to get the numbers. William admitted that rates of hotels and cruises had fallen by 20 to 25 per cent, but anticipated their return to 90 per cent of normal levels by May. "We are pushing to maintain prices no matter what," he said.

Agents in Egypt's top markets in the region believed that the security issue was of topmost concern to their clients, not prices.

Lalit Sheth, chairman and managing director of India's Raj Travel World, explained: "Travelers would only be comfortable going to a place if it is stable and

clients a month pre-crisis to between 2,000 and 4,000.

But he was optimistic of a quick recovery, having already received

safe. Egypt may have a question mark until its September elections, and only if this results in a stable government."

Malaysia's Sri Sutra Travel will not sell Egypt until it hears from its partners there or gets reports that the country is safe, said managing director Syed Razif Al Yahya. "The NTO has to make sure the country is safe before it starts international promotions. It should organise fairs for the media and outbound operators because seeing is believing."

Singapore agents said, despite the funding boost, promotions would depend on demand, which at present was soft.

Scenic Travel manager, outbound tours, Elaine Foo said: "We would still have to fork out 50 per cent of the cost. If there's no demand, it's not worth it."

Kelvin Goh, director of Seiki Travel, also noted that clients were expressing concerns even for cruises with stops in Egypt. He believed public perception would take a turn for the better by the end of the year. — **Additional reporting by Ollie Quiniquini and S Puvaneswary**

Bintan gets IRs

By Karen Yue

BINTAN Two new integrated resorts will rise in Bintan's northern coast over the next few years, allowing Indonesia's Riau islands to challenge Singapore as a stand-alone destination.

Treasure Bay, developed by Malaysia's Landmarks, will have four phases built over 20 years. Phase One, slated for completion in 2015, will span 222 acres and contain a multi-modal transportation terminal and marina for ferries, cruises and sea planes; an iconic resort with 150 to 180 keys; a cluster of around 200 serviced villas; a wedding hall; and an underwater 300-seat banquet hall.

Landmarks executive director and COO, Gabriel Teo, said the resort's first phase would be a high-end destination and space had been allocated for the development of a cruise terminal, should the need arise.

Meanwhile, Lagoi Bay will open its first facility Lagoi Beach Village by year-end. Alila Bintan will follow in mid-2012.

Lagoi Bay developer, Gallant Ventures, which also owns Bintan Resorts International, has obtained government approval to build Bintan's second airport within the complex.



Beijing International Tourism Expo 2011

8th International Exhibition for Business & Leisure Tourism

China National Convention Centre, Beijing China
17 - 19 June 2011 (Friday - Sunday)
www.bitechina.com.cn

One Platform; Many Possibilities!

MEGABITE 2011!

The eighth presentation of the Beijing International Tourism Expo (BITE) 2011 will unveil at the China National Convention Centre (CNCC) on 17 - 19 June, 2011.

This year's focus is on establishing new business platforms across the region. Themed 'One Platform; Many Possibilities!' BITE 2011 is ideal for closing business deals as it provides a networking channel for both exhibitors and buyers.

Leading practitioners and experts from the travel and tourism industry will make a beeline for BITE, which will showcase a wide variety of attractions, ethnic cultures and heritage from the US, the United Arab Emirates, India, Japan, Spain, Switzerland and Yemen. BITE will also dish out piping hot travel deals!

BITE 2010 attracted more than 800 exhibitors from 82 countries and 25 provinces!

Grab your bite of BITE 2011!

Venue: China National Convention - Centre No.7 Tianchen East Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100105 China

Date: 17 - 19 June 2011

For sales inquiries, contact Ms Vivi at vivi@cems.com.sg
For advertising / media inquiries, contact Ms Trina at trina@cems.com.sg
For more event information, please visit www.bitechina.com.cn



Song Saa, Cambodia

Luxurious rebound in 2012

SINGAPORE The luxury travel market expects recovery to sweep in next year.

The International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) Think Tank has identified 2012 as the first year of significant growth in the post-recession period.

Panelists agreed that their goal this year was to increase profit margins. They were unanimous in thinking that discounting was a disservice to luxury, and reducing rates to increase occupancy levels in the short term created larger problems in the long run.

They likewise noted the growth of family/multi-generational travel this year, which incidentally happens to be when the oldest baby boomers turn 65.

The luxury traveller is also changing focus, seeking unique and authentic experiences that "get under the skin of a destination", a trend that the market must cater to in order to grow successfully and sustainably, according to the "think tank".

Black Tomato founder Tom Marchant said: "Today's luxury traveller is ultimately seeking a 'meaningful' travel experience – and in this context, that means the pursuit of something that is authentic, reflects the local landscape and is genuinely real."

ILTM group exhibition director Deb-

bie Joslin added: "The luxury traveller is constantly evolving; the industry needs to adapt – and remain adaptive in the future. Consumers are more cautious with their travel decisions and the industry must adhere to the promises it makes."

Also of note in the luxury travel scene is the continued growth of China and India, both of which experienced significant growth during the recession.

Paul Kerr, CEO of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, said bookings out of India last year grew by 129 per cent, albeit on a small base.

"The Indian luxury market comprises regular guests rather than aspirational travellers saving for a one-off luxury holiday," Kerr explained. "And just like any other luxury traveller, the Indian millionaire wants freedom of choice."

The Indian luxury market is predicted to grow at a rate of 21 per cent, with luxury travel growing at approximately 15 per cent in the next five years.

The ILTM Leaders Forum will meet on June 13 at ILTM Asia in Shanghai to continue to address global trends in global luxury travellers' buyer behaviour, as well as explore the importance of the buyer and supplier relationship.

Finnair subsidiary steps up Langkawi charters

By S Puvaneswary

KUALA LUMPUR Finnair subsidiary Aurinkomatkat-Suntours will be making its biggest production into Malaysia this coming winter season (2011/2012) since starting charters from Helsinki to Langkawi in December 2009.

It plans to use a bigger aircraft, the Airbus A330 with a seating capacity of 330, over the 227-seat Boeing B757 now, while flights will be once weekly from mid-December for a total of 12 weeks, from once fortnightly currently. This will yield 3,400 pax from 2,200 pax in the current winter season.



Katajakari: "a lot of potential"

The company would also increase its brochure space on Malaysia from six pages now to at least 10, said manager, planning and quality assurance, Antero Kaleva. A wider selection of hotels in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi and more day tours around Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi would be featured. A new 14-night programme combining Langkawi, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore will also be introduced. Kaleva said: "We're giving clients a new destination, Singapore, and the possibility of seeing two big cities and a beach holiday."

This replaces a tour combining Kota Kinabalu and Kuching with Langkawi and Kuala Lumpur which did not sell much this winter season. It also comes as Finnair gets ready to start daily flights

from Helsinki to Singapore on May 30.

Aurinkomatkat-Suntours destination manager Malaysia, Piia Katajakari, said: "Malaysia is a destination with a lot of potential for further growth as this is a family destination and is also perceived as exotic to many." In terms of South-east Asia production for winter 2010/2011, Malaysia and Vietnam rank after Thailand, its top

producer with some 35,000 clients.

The company's groundhandler in Malaysia, Reliance Sightseeing, said Aurinkomatkat-Suntours clients stayed 14 nights usually and were good spenders. Director of sales Jennifer Pong said: "They buy tours and support the local restaurants. They are very adventurous, wanting to try the local dishes. Many

shop like crazy in Kuala Lumpur and buy branded clothing and handbags. In Langkawi, they shop for traditional products like batik."

Last year, Malaysia received 21,355 tourists from Finland, a 2.1 per cent increase over 2009. Finland showed the biggest growth in arrivals among the Scandinavian countries last year.

CREATING
AWARD-WINNING STAYS
AT HONG KONG'S
HOTTEST HOTEL

EXCEEDING YOUR
EXPECTATIONS



Continued from page 1

TUI's intrepid adventure

Describing adventure travel as "the new mainstream", Wade said: "We'll be investing heavily on growing existing businesses, starting new ones and, in some cases, acquiring business in niches where we don't operate or where we see good growth potential."



Wade: adventure new mainstream

Currently, the 20 brands in the portfolio move some 340,000 passengers and rope in more than US\$400 million in revenue annually. This makes PEAK the biggest global adventure travel group by far. The next closest rivals are believed to have just a third of PEAK's total revenues.

PEAK operates a vertically-integrated model, a tour operator with multi-brands and multi-distribution channels. North America and Europe are its key sources and, in terms of destinations, Wade expects "great" growth in Indochina, India and China. Asia will be a source in the future as its travellers get more experienced. "We hope to partner some strong distributors to gain better access to Asian markets," Wade said.

Asked if the brands would lose their independence under a behemoth like TUI, Wade said his strategy was to ensure the brands remained focused on their values, products and strategic directions while getting a level of investment from PEAK.

TUI had been keen to acquire Intrepid for a number of years, but Wade said he and co-founder Geoff Manchester, now CEO of Intrepid, were not interested to exit the business.

118 Nathan Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong
T + 852 2368 1111 F + 852 2369 1788
info@themirahotel.com www.themirahotel.com

the mira
HONG KONG



Here's what you've missed

Ask the Expert



Bob Guy (left), managing director, Destination Asia, Singapore and Malaysia, and **his wife Gillian • James McBride**, president, YTL Hotels and Properties • **David Chambers**, regional vice president, Asia Pacific, Sabre Airline Solutions

- Q What makes a travel agent successful?
- Q How can I make money from ancillaries?

Log on to view answers and to post your own question

Adam Tan

Our mystery man is back – with tidbits to share on BOTOX vacations, cheeky Kulula Air and quirky business personalities.

Tourism Data



January's air traffic performance, Singapore's arrival figures, the buying behaviour of Chinese tourists...get smarter than clients!

Hot Jobs

Travelport and HERTZ have four openings and FCm Travel Solutions has one. Find out how to apply.

Hot Deals

Love a bargain? Marina Bay Sands Singapore dangles a trade offer for stays and Kerry Hotel Pudong, Shanghai has an opening special.

Clues from US agents

ASTA's latest survey findings on US leisure travel agents' performance show a trade that is successfully transiting from the old commission model to new value-added services with more diversified revenue streams.

The results should boost the confidence of Asian agents, the US industry being the mirror into the future, the way it had forewarned agents in Europe and Asia about imminent business model changes.

A large percentage of US leisure agents saw increased revenue, transactions and clients last year over 2009. Granted 2009 was dire, with the global financial crisis decimating leisure travel, but the findings also show that a large reason was the strategic structural change in business.

Air has consistently had the highest percentage of agents reporting a decrease in sales. In its place, the most robust increases in sales were on rail (52 per cent), hotel (51 per cent), tour/package/group (48 per cent), insurance (44 per cent) and car rental (36 per cent).

More than half of US leisure agents (59 per cent) made operational changes in the past year: 24



Changing model

What changes are your agency planning for your business model next year?	2009	2010
Add service fees (or increase)	23%	50%
Add consulting fees (or expand)	21%	50%
Use more online booking tools to cut costs	13%	24%

Source: ASTA (American Society of Travel Agents)

per cent added more fees, 17 per cent cut the number of employees and 15 per cent started selling additional travel products.

The majority of US leisure agents (94 per cent) are predicting a profit this year. And the shift continues, with 35 per cent saying they plan to make operational changes this year. Half of these respondents said they would add or

increase service fees, 50 per cent would add or expand consulting fees, 31 per cent would sell additional travel products and 24 per cent planned to use more online booking tools to cut costs,

If agents in the US – land of commission cuts and online travel innovation – were able to reinvent themselves, why not Asian agents?

Most commented on www.ttgasia.com

MAS' new website triggers concerns among the trade

OUR story on Malaysia Airlines on February 22, "New MAS website not competing with agents", drew the most responses from online readers. The new website allows bookings for airport transfers, hotels and car rentals, aside from flights. "Do not put sand in our ricebowls...agents have to survive," posted Madras-

based C N Shanmugham. Another comment by Cepi Bharata from Indonesia said smaller travel agencies would lose out, as many would not be able to compete with the airline's rock-bottom online promotional prices. Malaysia's Rohanee Ismail added: "MAS should consider the appointed agents' benefits

as well. Otherwise don't appoint the agents." Singapore-based Robin Tessensohn, however, faced reality: "Loyalty" is a word no longer in our dictionary. Fight or perish!" He suggested that agents work at adding value to the principal's product and offering clients a service that demands a fee.

Asian synergy is naive talk

WE reported on February 16 in "Asian MICE players want regional synergy" that MICE players were calling for increased cooperation between regional competitors to keep international events within Asia, even if it meant refraining from bidding. William Yeo from Singapore dismissed this notion. "Asking fellow Asian countries to refrain from bidding for MICE events is a joke...Every country will try anything to win a bid. There are even competing bids from different cities within the same country."

Australia's marketing flop

IN Blogs, Raini Hamdi gave her take on Australian federal tourism minister Martin Ferguson's infamous quote "If you want to help Queensland... don't go to Bali" in her February 14 post "Stop being a bad neighbour". Bali-based Michael Luible said: "I would have thought a much better approach would be not to stereotype the typical Australian tourist as the 'sea, sand and sun' mass tourist, but to appeal to all Australians to support their nation by launching a 'Visit Australia, Truly Home' campaign."

Sound bites

"Adventure travel is the new mainstream."

Darrell Wade, CEO, Peak Adventure Travel Group, on why TUI Travel and Intrepid formed the strategic venture – see page 1

"I will decline from commenting."

Keith Beecham, director-Overseas Network, VisitBritain, when asked by TTG Asia why he ditched the PATA CEO offer earlier this year. Interim CEO Bill Calderwood is now in charge of a fresh search – TTG Asia e-Daily, March 3



"Today oil is the biggest risk."

Giovanni Bisignani, IATA's director-general and CEO. Political unrest in the Middle East has sent oil price to over US\$100 per barrel, significantly higher than the US\$84 per barrel in December. Aviation outlook for 2011 has been downgraded to US\$8.6 billion, a 46 per cent dive in real earnings in 2010

Letters

Thank you for reading my mind

You have hit the nail right on the head in my books! For my "efficient" method of cross-reading the relevant news, the upgraded version of your synoptic newsletter is now going a step further to make my life so comfortable (sorry for being so selfish).

I can click through for more, if the news is very relevant to me, and I can wait for the print, if the matter is of more general interest to us. I love the combination of synopsis and full reporting, empowering the reader to decide how much he wants to know

Thank you for delivering the exact dose of news I have "prescribed" myself!

– **Andreas Koch**, general manager, Riverview Hotel, Singapore



- EDITORIAL**
- Raini Hamdi**
Group Editor (raini.hamdi@ttgasia.com)
- Ollie Quinquini**
Deputy Editor (ollie.quinquini@ttgasia.com)
- Ameé Enriquez**
Senior Sub Editor (amee.enriquez@ttgasia.com)
- Gracia Chiang**
Sub Editor (gracia.chiang@ttgasia.com)
- Brian Higgs**
Sub Editor (brian.higgs@ttgasia.com)
- Sirima Eamtako**
Bureau Chief Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos (sirima.eamtako@ttgasia.com)
- Karen Yue**
Senior Reporter, Singapore (karen.yue@ttgasia.com)
- S Puvaneswary**
Reporter, Malaysia (s.puvanes@ttgasia.com)
- Mimi Hudoyo**
Senior Correspondent, Indonesia (idmfasia@cbn.net.id)

- Sim Kok Chwee**
Correspondent-at-large (avianas.images@gmail.com)
- Prudence Lui**
Correspondent, Hong Kong (prului@yahoo.com)
- Amy Fabris-Shi**
Correspondent, China (amy@scribesoftheorient.com)
- Anand and Madhura Katti**
Correspondent, India (anmkatti@mtnl.net.in)
- Vivian Lee**
Correspondent, South Korea (wei_wei_cheng@hotmail.com)
- Faith Chang**
Correspondent, Australia (faithchang26@yahoo.com)
- Redmond Sia, Haze Loh**
Creative Designers
- Lina Tan**
Editorial Assistant

- SALES & MARKETING**
- Michael Chow**
Publisher (michael.chow@ttgasia.com)

- Katherine Ng, Marisa Chen**
Senior Business Managers (katherine.ng@ttgasia.com, marisa.chen@hk.china.com)
- Fiona Heng**
Marketing Services Executive (fiona.heng@ttgasia.com)
- Carol Cheng**
Assistant Manager Administration and Marketing (carol.cheng@hk.china.com)
- Betty Loo**
Advertisement Administration Executive (betty.loo@ttgasia.com)
- PUBLISHING SERVICES**
- Tony Yeo**
Division Manager (tony.yeo@ttgasia.com)
- Agnes Loy**
Senior Production Executive (agnes.loy@ttgasia.com)
- Nancy Lee**
Production Co-ordinator (nancy.lee@ttgasia.com)
- Carol Wong**
Circulation Executive (carol.wong@ttgasia.com)

- TTG ASIA MEDIA**
- Darren Ng**
Managing Director (darren.ng@ttgasia.com)
- OFFICES**
- SINGAPORE** 1 Science Park Road #04-07 The Capricorn, Singapore Science Park II Singapore 117528
Tel: (65) 6395-7575 Fax: (65) 6536-2972 contact@ttgasia.com; www.ttgasia.com
- HONG KONG** 11/F ING Tower 308-320 Des Voeux Road, Central, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2571-9333 Fax: (852) 2806-0646
- BPA** TTG Asia is published by TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd. It is mailed free on written request to readers who meet predetermined criteria. Paid subscriptions are available to those who do not meet the criteria. Annual airmail subscriptions are US\$180 to Asia and US\$199 elsewhere. Cover price US\$5. MICA (P) 039/09/2010 PPS 619/02/2012(022706)
- Printed by Times Printers Pte Ltd 16 Tuas Avenue 5, Singapore 639340



Travel Hall of Fame

The Travel Hall of Fame, displayed in the Raffles Hotel Museum on the third level of Raffles Hotel Singapore, showcases accolades, artefacts and memorabilia of the region's most exceptional travel organisations.

Since 2002, luminaries who have won the prestigious TTG Travel Award at least 10 times have been conferred the title of Travel Hall of Fame Honorary.

Singapore Airlines and Singapore Changi Airport are the Travel Hall of Fame's pioneering honorees, having been voted by Asia-Pacific's travel trade as Best Airline of the Year and Best Airport of the Year respectively, for more than a decade. Hertz Asia-Pacific joined this elite family in 2005. Recently inducted were Star Cruises, Royal Cliff Beach Resort Pattaya, Abacus International and SilkAir.

Introducing ...

BEST WESTERN Laguna Beach Mauritius Hotel & Spa.

BEST WESTERN Laguna Beach Mauritius enjoys a picturesque setting on the south-eastern coast of Mauritius, right on the beach and nestled amid gardens of tropical greenery. The resort's 64 well appointed and inviting rooms are in Standard, Deluxe and Family categories with quality of facilities.



Let your mind soar, unleashed, set it free and enjoy the bliss...



For worldwide reservations, visit www.bestwesternasia.com
Call toll free +800 0013 1779. GDS Code: BW.



THE WORLD'S LARGEST
HOTEL CHAIN®



THE WORLD'S LARGEST
HOTEL CHAIN®

THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE RIGHT JOB

As The World's Largest Hotel Chain® and the fastest growing in Asia, Best Western International is constantly welcoming new hotels and resorts to its ever-expanding portfolio in Asia and the Middle East. And with each new property comes a new General Manager.

Best Western has recently appointed General Managers at its four newest properties in Bangkok and Koh Phangan in Thailand, Siem Reap in Cambodia and Mauritius.

Risto Honkanen has been appointed as a General Manager of BEST WESTERN Phanganburi Resort, a 96 room property on Phangan Island's Haad Rin Nai beach. A Finnish national, Risto joined Best Western in late 2010 after similar positions with hotels in Belgium, Thailand and Vietnam. He brings with him expertise in sales and marketing as well as a strong financial background, particularly in managing budgets.

Penpak Moonsarn has been appointed as a General Manager of BEST WESTERN Bangkok Hiptique Hotel on Sukhumvit Soi 13, a new 50 room hotel set to open in March 2011. A Thai national, Penpak's particular expertise is in sales and marketing and overall hotel operations, gained through previous management positions with hotels in Bangkok, Samui, Pattaya and Phuket.

Rodolfo 'Rudy' C. Dela Pena has been appointed as a General Manager of BEST WESTERN Suites And Sweet Angkor Resort in Siem Reap, scheduled to be opened in March 2011 as the chain's first property in Cambodia. A Filipino national, Rudy has held managerial positions at various hotels in the Philippines including Best Western properties. His expertise is focused on sales and marketing and hotel operations.

Robert Patrick Mueller has been appointed as a General Manager of the 64 room BEST WESTERN Laguna Beach Mauritius Hotel & Spa in Mauritius, which joined the chain in February 2011 as its first property in Mauritius. A German national, Robert joins Best Western after managerial roles at properties in Germany, the United Kingdom, Seychelles and Croatia. Robert's particular areas of expertise are sales and marketing, room operations and food and beverage.

TIP SHEET

MARCH 11 - 17, 2011 • TTG ASIA 6

Finding all the good men, women

New Malaysian manpower measures fall short of addressing actual need, says trade

KUALA LUMPUR The Malaysian government has set up a new outfit to address the acute shortage of skilled talent in the service industry, but industry stakeholders want more.

Launched on January 1, Talent Corporation Malaysia, under the Prime Minister's Department, aims to encourage Malaysians working overseas to return to the country. It likewise seeks to attract foreign talent to work in Malaysia and retain local talent in the country.

The outfit is headed by CEO Johan Mahmood Merican, with Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak serving as chairman of the corporation's board of trustees.

As a one-stop centre, Talent Corporation Malaysia will coordinate with relevant government agencies on the entry and retention of talent.

Incentives to bring in more foreign workers include issuing open-ended visas to those earning more than RM8,000 (US\$2,585) a month, allowing them to purchase homes in Malaysia, and giving them the flexibility to change jobs while in the country. Spouses of these for-



G Hotel Penang

eigners are also allowed to work.

The government also ruled last December that foreign students could work in Malaysia upon completion of their post-graduate studies.

But Reginald Pereira, CEO of the Malaysian Association of Hotels, said these government initiatives would help fill middle-management slots in hotels but not the lower-level positions where the shortage of qualified manpower was more critical.

Pereira estimated at 20,000

the number of vacancies in rank-and-file to middle-management positions across the country. Competition for qualified staff would intensify over the next few years, as more hotels open in the country and locals leave for better opportunities and pay packages overseas.

According to a study by the government's Performance Management and Delivery Unit, 12 high-impact tourism-related projects will create 497,200 job openings in the tourism and hos-

pitality sectors over the next nine years. Of these openings, 65 per cent would require vocational or certificate qualifications.

Suggesting that more be done on a macro level to fill up non-management positions, Pereira wants the government to allow foreigners who have completed tourism and hospitality courses in Malaysia to work in the country, regardless of their certification level. This would allow them to fill up frontline positions in city hotels. Pereira said this could be an interim solution to Malaysia's crippling manpower shortage until there were enough locals to meet demand.

Anthony Wong, adjunct professor in the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia, said the country could use more vocational training schools. Wong, who is also group managing director of Asian Overland Services Tourism & Hospitality Group, added that university curriculums in tourism and hospitality courses should be designed in consultation with industry players to avoid skills mismatch upon graduation. — **S Puvaneswary**

Is this your agency?

TTG Asia called on Go West Tours (GWT) Melbourne for a Phillip Island day tour over the last Christmas season



TTG Hi, I would like to enquire about your Phillip Island Tour.

GWT Yes, sure. How can I help?

TTG Are you running tours around Christmas, say on the 23rd of December?

GWT We don't run tours on the

25th, being Christmas Day. But we do on other days.

TTG What about the 23rd?

GWT Let me check if we have availability on the 23rd for you. (Pause) Yes, we do and we have four other spots for the 24th too.

TTG Does the fee of A\$125 (US\$127.28) include meals? If yes, how many?

GWT It does not include meals, only afternoon tea.

TTG What does afternoon tea comprise?

GWT Biscuits, tea and coffee. All other meals are on your own.

TTG Do you provide translation

in the form of recorded guided tours?

GWT We do. What language do you speak?

TTG Mandarin.

GWT We have iPod tours in Mandarin. You'll have to request for it on Comments on the booking site or request for it on the phone when booking.

TTG What other languages do you have?

GWT Many, but let me check this... (pause)... we have the tours in 13 different languages.

TTG What time and where is the pick up if visitors don't live

in a city accommodation?

GWT We do pick up people who live locally or visitors who live with their relatives. The pick up is at Rendezvous Hotel in the city opposite Flinders Station. Pick up is at 11.50am and drop off is at 12 midnight at the same spot.

TTG How do I book?

GWT Either over the phone or online.

VERDICT The travel consultant was professional and provided information quickly and efficiently. She was definitely not pushy. — **Faith Chang**

Bagan, Myanmar on the iPad

YANGON Destination marketing is increasingly going high-tech, with the iPad now coming into the picture.

A new iPad application is expected to help attract even more visitors to Bagan, one of Myanmar's top tourist attractions.

UK-based Park Lane Edition has released an iPad travel application that explores Bagan and its wealth of temples. Director David Valma said: "Myanmar is the first country in our Asia Treasures series."

The application includes hundreds of high-definition pictures in seven chapters, a thumbnail gallery of each chapter, Wikipedia links for additional information, maps of Myanmar and Bagan, a Favourites library, hotel



tips and travel information.

Valma said: "We expect the pictures to change the mental image people have about Myanmar. I hope this will help tourism to the country."

Park Lane Edition is preparing a similar application on Shwedagon Pagoda and Mandalay. It has also released Asia Treasures applications for the iPhone.

— **Rahul Khanna**

Abloom in Phnom Penh

Mayflower Acme Tours Malaysia will open its first foreign retail outlet – a full-fledged travel agency offering inbound, outbound and ticketing services – in Phnom Penh in the second half of the year.

Its director/general manager Chin Ten Hoy said: "It will carry a neutral brand, instead of the Mayflower name, as we don't want local tour operators to view us as competition. We want Malaysian agents to use us as their groundhandlers in Cambodia."

Mayflower also intends to set up offices in Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam by 2014, either through joint ventures or by establishing a new company with a local partner. — **S Puvaneswary**

Taiwan

THE HEART OF ASIA

ITF

TAIPEI 2011

台北 2011 國際旅展

Taipei International Travel Fair

Nov.11~14

Early Registration
is available until
May 31, 2011.

www.taipeiitf.org.tw



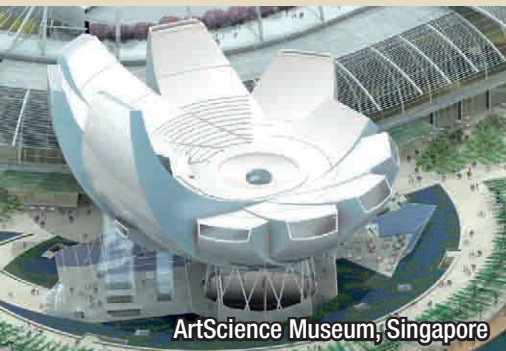
Organizer : Taiwan Visitors Association

Venue : TWTC Exhibition Hall

TEL : +886 2 2597-9691 FAX : +886 2 2597-5836

E-mail : contact@www.taipeiitf.org.tw





ArtScience Museum, Singapore



Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao



Water Cube, Beijing



Capital Gate, Abu Dhabi

What do you think of the Bilbao Effect (see text above, right)?

Well, there is no doubt that Bilbao is a kind of spectacular building. Coming after that, the culture has discovered that architecture can get a lot of attention.

Until the 70s, 80s, architecture was not a celebrated art. It used to be in the 19th century, and it had a decline in terms of extending itself in the culture, with other art forms – paintings, great music, big bands like The Beatles, great best-selling novels, etc – taking over. But at this point, architecture has gained a position. Bilbao contributed to this process.

Now like all good things, it's got its dangers. Because spectacular architecture can be spectacular for the moment, or it can have deeper meaning. Historically, you think of great buildings as lasting buildings, lasting in terms of their meaning. If you think memorials, Lincoln or Jefferson come to mind. Or the Parliament Building in London. These are buildings that last in their symbolism and their meaning.

That's what I'm after in my own work:

an architectural experience that has a sense of timelessness about it, that is not capricious, at the same time exciting and responsible about energy, sustainability, how it works in the urban context and how it deals with the practical issues of mobility and density.

Was Singapore, or the Singapore Tourism Board, looking for a Bilbao effect in the design of Marina Bay Sands (MBS)?

The tourism board maybe had a different agenda to the URA (Urban Redevelopment Authority), because each entity had its own concern. The tourism board wanted anything that would attract tourists and, to that extent, if the architecture is exciting and attracts tourists, that's the tourism board's mission.

The URA wrote a very detailed brief and was concerned with urbanism, the concept of the promenade coming around the bay as a continuous public space, about scale, about where the tall buildings should go. And it wanted this (development) to contribute to the whole picture of Singapore downtown.

The two agendas came together in the brief. What the government was brilliant in doing is fixing the price of land, which put it in a position to choose a design that contributed the most to these objectives.

What does MBS mean to you personally?

Certainly it's the largest, most complex undertaking we have done.

It's the first time I had an opportunity to deal with an urban sector of that high a density, and very mixed use. There are in this complex hotels, theatres, museum, casino, convention centre, hundreds of shops, so it is really a piece of city, and conceiving therefore of a city rather than an individual building.

From the outset, I saw it as such and that helped me in resolving the design. Because the 10 million square feet gross on this site could have been very overpowering. We've managed to humanise the mega scale of this project and make it feel inviting, open, transparent – every space full of daylight and no barrier of the view of sea from downtown.

overbearing? To me, that was the assignment. So I feel terrific we managed to do that. Seeing the public use the place, seeing there is scale, density, intensity, but at the same time seeing it is very human, very comfortable.

Were you looking for a Bilbao effect?

This project is going to attract lots of people to Singapore in no lesser extent than the Guggenheim and the museum attracted people to Bilbao. I'm not saying I am not looking to have a piece of architecture that is spectacular that people want to see. Absolutely, it's part of the agenda, and I think we have achieved it. But I just want them to come in five, 10 years, and for it to continue to have meaning. I trust my judgment at this point it will.

How can destinations secure meaning in their buildings well into the future?

By having good architects.

That alone guarantees it?

There are many gifted architects and many different philosophies. One of the

Moshe Safdie
SafdieArchitects
Boston

The design architect of Marina Bay Sands Singapore and its just-opened ArtScience Museum cautions Asian destinations about using architecture to draw attention. He tells **Raini Hamdi** why

Architecture & tourism

Yes, but you've done many projects. How is this one special to you?

I've had the good fortune of having extraordinary commissions, just this past year opening five major projects around the world, all of which were exciting in their own right. The United States Institute of Peace Headquarters in Washington (opening September 2011), symbolising peace, seems more significant. The Khalsa Heritage Centre (a national museum in the state of Punjab, India, celebrating 500 years of Sikh history and faith, opening in Fall 2011), being a national museum, seems more significant.

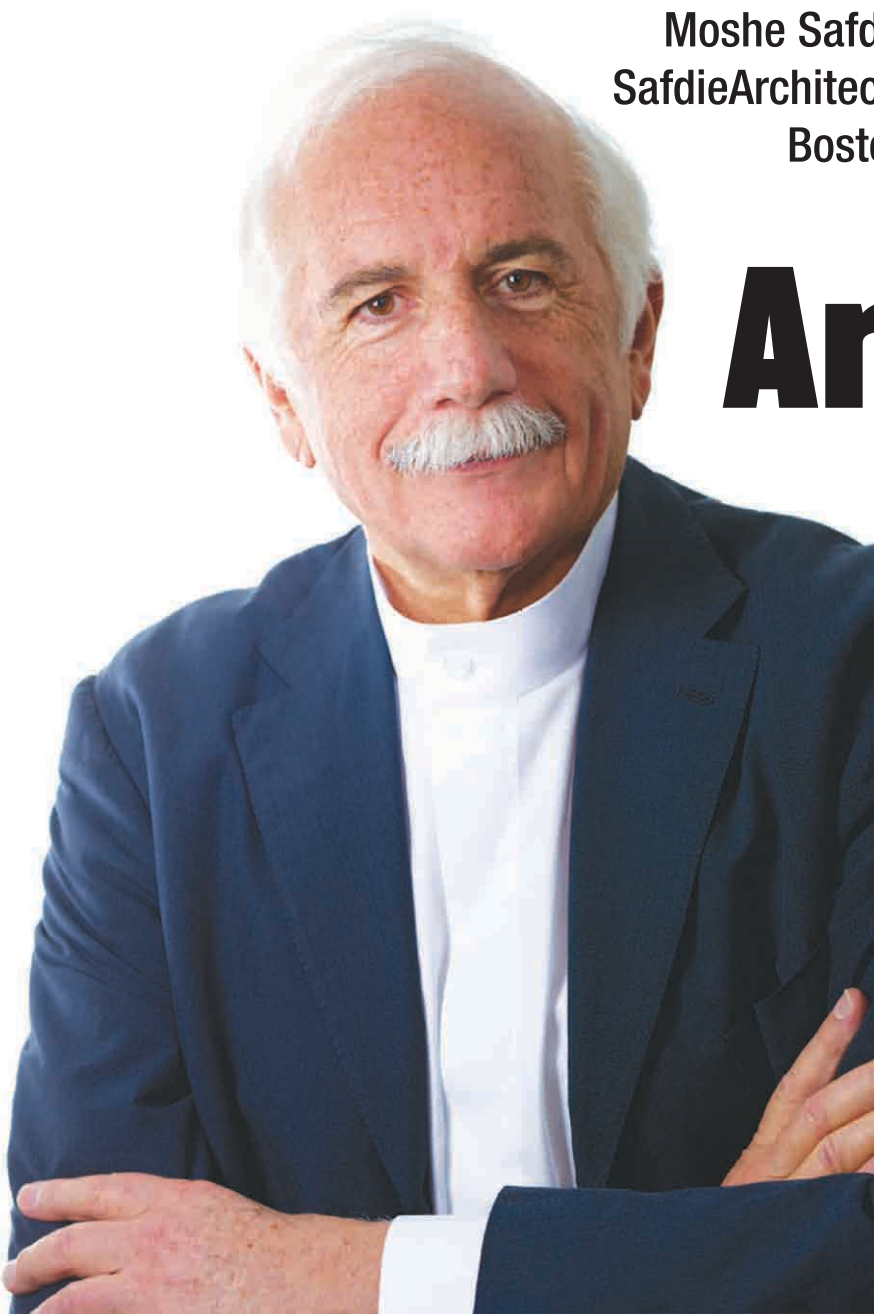
But this project presents a particular agenda – the opportunity, I think, to deal with the most difficult issue of the 21st century: large-scale, high-density urban centres, most of which being built today are overbearing, overpowering, dehumanising. Could I take this complex and make it humane, full of nature, parks, greenery and openness, and not in any way have it

things we need to emphasise today is that architecture can and should be spatially exciting, at the same time uplifting to the spirit. It is not enough for architecture to be sensational. It has to be uplifting, it's got to be optimistic.

How is sensational different from uplifting?

That's for people to judge for themselves when they experience architecture. Do they feel impressed, but do they also feel better about themselves? It's a kind of an uplift of the spirit and it is subjective.

Buildings always evoke a particular emotion – a sense of permanency, wonder, power. The Eiffel Tower gives you something whimsical, but it is also an expression of 19th century technology, a famous symbol for a breakthrough in steel technology at that moment, showing what the future might bring. These are the kinds of architectural symbols that tend to last. It all goes back to meaning.



“If you treat high-rise towers as pure sculptures, what has that got to do with quality of life?”

The Bilbao Effect refers to the idea that “wow” architecture and “starchitects” can transform a city or region’s fortunes, as popularised by the effect the fish-scaled Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao had in catapulting the Basque county in Spain to fame.

The museum, designed by Frank Gehry, opened in the late 90s and, in 2001, Bilbao estimated that its economic impact on the local economy was worth 168 million euros (US\$231 million), up from 149 million euros in 2000. A visitor survey revealed that 82 per cent came to the city of Bilbao exclusively to see the museum or had extended their stay in the city to visit it.

Since Bilbao, cities including London (with its Tate Museum designed by Swiss starchitects

Herzog & De Meuron) have followed suit, and it was not long before those in Asia and the Middle East started seeing “iconic” buildings changing their skylines.

But Gehry himself, in a UK *Times Online* article dated July 9, 2008, dismissed the Bilbao Effect as “bullshit”.

He said there was sort of an intent to change the community, with a “comprehensive plan for the community” in place; it was not as if they had started out to make a marquee development.

He added that a really successful building like the Guggenheim could not simply be churned out to order. “It is a kind of a miracle, you don’t quite know how it happens.”

Look east and it seems everyone who’s anyone – China, South Korea, the Middle East – is into starchitecture. What’s happening?

What is definitely true about Asia – true of the emirate, China etc – is architecture is seen as an opportunity. For a mayor, it is an opportunity to put the city on the map, so he wants a 100-storey tower, 200-storey tower. He wants buildings that are going to draw attention. If you talk to a commercial entity, it wants architecture that is good for business. The question becomes what are the ingredients that make a meaningful, exciting architecture? And the more architecture is being treated as a tool towards certain ends, the more the question becomes urgent.

If you treat high-rise towers as pure sculptures, what has that got to do with urbanism, with quality of life in the city? In designing a high-rise tower – residential, commercial, mixed-use, does not matter – the question of daylight, of orientation, of the quality of life in the building are crucial and out of resolving those emerge an exciting architecture.

One of the most exciting projects we did was Habitat (in Montreal) because it redefined what apartment living can be like, what is usually a solid mass broke down into village-like scale with gardens and air. If architecture is treated purely as a spectacular sculpture, we’re in for trouble, no question about it.

Is Asia being capricious?

Absolutely. I don’t want to get into the details, people will know what I’m talking about. I think it’s not enough to just make a wild-looking building, particularly when the scale is big. You can do a little museum, whatever you want to do, so long as it doesn’t affect anybody. But you do a 100-storey building in middle of the city, it affects not only people in the building but everybody around that building. It’s a big responsibility and what is happening in Asia is sometimes a lack of this critical discrimination. Which is inevitable in a place of such extraordinary rapid growth.

When I was in China in 1973, there wasn’t a single high-rise tower in Beijing and the tallest buildings in Shanghai were the Bund buildings. Now, three decades later, which is not a lot of time, there are hundreds and hundreds of towers and expressways and this all happened in one generation. So when you get that kind of expansion and growth, you are going to get lots of errors and mistakes. I thought in 1973 China won’t make mistakes the West made in the urbanisation process. But, as it proves, it is making every mistake and has to learn from these mistakes.

But what we are seeing as exciting in China is an awakening to ecological issues. I’m doing a project in Qinhuangdao, which has a regulation that every apartment has to have three hours of sunlight everyday which, even in winter solstice, is not easy to achieve. So there is a waking up that allows urban and environmental issues to be addressed.

More Q&A with Safdie on ttgasia.com



PATA
Pacific Asia Travel Association
CELEBRATING
60 YEARS



Building Tourism

Past. Present. Progressive.

PATA 60th Anniversary and Conference
April 9-12, 2011, China World Hotel, Beijing, China

Plenary Three: New Realities of Travel – April 12, 2011

A decade into the 21st century and we have witnessed phenomenal change to the travel and tourism industry – change that is likely to continue. In this quick-fire session, experts from the fields of distribution, demographics, responsible tourism, technology and aviation will articulate their views on how these key trends are re-shaping our industry.




PATA’s premier media partner CNN has generously sponsored anchor and correspondent Richard Quest, host of Quest Means Business and CNN Business Traveller, to moderate. Bringing his famously inimitable style to the conference stage, this promises to be an exciting and dynamic session.

The plenary session will commence with an overview of today’s travel and tourism industry from lead presenter Amitabh Kant, Managing Director, Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (former Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India).

Plenary Panelists include:

							
Min Fan Executive Director and CEO Ctrip.com	Justin Francis Co-Founder www.responsibletravel.com	Deep Kalra Founder and CEO MakeMyTrip.com	Dr Clint Laurent Founder and CEO Global Demographics	Michael Maple Director, Business Strategy and Marketing The Boeing Company	Dr Mathew McDougall Group CEO and Executive Chairman Sino Tech Group	Tawaina Turner-Dones Regional Cards Director Asia Pacific Strategic Partnerships and Alliances Citibank	Xu Jiwei Director Mount Huangshan Scenic Area Administrative Committee

Registration fee for PATA Members starts from US\$660
Register online at www.regonline.com/pata60

Organised by:

Hosted by:

Patron:



PATA
Pacific Asia Travel Association



China National Tourism
Administration
en.cnta.gov.cn



People's Government of
Beijing Municipality



北京市旅游局
BEIJING TOURISM ADMINISTRATION
Visit Beijing
www.visitbeijing.com.cn

PATA Premier Partner

PATA Premier Media Partners

PATA Gold Awards Sponsor

PATA Preferred Partners



www.visa-asia.com



GO BEYOND BORDERS
www.cnn.com/international



www.fortune.com



www.time.com



www.macautourism.gov.mo/



www.discoverkeen.com



www.sinotechgroup.com.cn

A bulge in the middle

Last month, Accor unveiled a new Novotel room design in seven years (*TTG Asia e-Daily*, February 22), with Asia-Pacific chairman and COO Michael Issenberg saying he would be disappointed if there were not more Novotels in Asia than in Europe in 10 years.

There are already more Novotel rooms in Asia-Pacific than there are in France, where it originated. The idea that a highly-standardised 26m² workhorse of a room can capture the imagination of Asian owners is still viewed as something of a miracle, even though the pipeline of international mid-market brands in the region (see guide below) shows the bulge in the middle is only enlarging by the day.

“The five-star era is behind us,” said Michael Thomas, COO of Fena Asset, the division of FICO Group Thailand which owns the two newly-opened Novotel Bangkok Fenix Ploenchit and Novotel Bangkok Fenix Silom, and is building a Holiday Inn on Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok, which will open end-2012.

“The new owners are the

younger generation. Most have had overseas education and in one way or another have learnt hotel management themselves and employed hoteliers (such as himself) as executives. The understanding of the market is much wider than in the past.”

This breed of owners embraces rooms that cost less than US\$50,000 to build and charge less than US\$100 per night, as the estimates are for the Novotel Ploenchit. “The new four stars like Novotel Ploenchit or, say, Holiday Inn Pattaya, are very fresh and modern, in good locations, and the people working in them are young, confident, well-educated. They are the perfect choice for both business and leisure travellers,” Thomas added.

Accor’s new-generation Novotel comes as rival InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) virtually completed its US\$1 billion Holiday Inn relaunch – the biggest ever project of its kind involving a refreshment of more than 3,000 Holiday Inn and economy Holiday Inn Express properties worldwide. Carlson Hotels, which remodelled its



Michael Thomas
“The five-star era is behind us.”
COO, Fena Asset, Thailand

mid-market brand, Country Inns & Suites, in 2009, is redesigning and localising the look and feel of the brand in India, according to Asia-Pacific president Simon Barlow. Its other mid-market brand, Park Inn by Radisson, which has already been remodelled as bright, bold and fresh, will be introduced to markets such as China and India – indeed, the two Asian markets cited by most international chains interviewed as to where the greatest growth for their mid-market brands will be.

Rising domestic and regional travel in Asia, fueled by high-flying economies, low-cost carriers, the rise of smarter consumers



Glenn de Souza
“Probably the hottest field.”
VP Asia, Best Western International

who can discern real value and online channels that lower cost to market, all contribute to making the mid-market, in the words of Best Western International vice president International Operations – Asia, Glenn de Souza, “probably the field with the greatest challenges and the best opportunities for today’s investors and business operators”.

With the percentage of branded hotels in the midscale segment in Asia still small – Horwath HTL Asia chief Robert Hecker suspects it is still less than half of the total market – the potential is huge. While international brands such as Holiday Inn and Novotel have been in Asia since 1973



Robert Hecker
“Product innovation?”
Head, Horwath HTL Asia

and 1982 respectively, in general, only now is there a wave among them to do so. For instance, the first Courtyard by Marriott and Hilton Garden Inn in Asia-Pacific opened only two years ago, in Wuxi and Delhi respectively.

Competition will be stiff and the globals jostle with Asian chains, which are also fielding mid-market brands. Some Asian chains are pushing the envelope, like Millennium & Copthorne with its Studio M prototype, or Far East Hospitality in Singapore with its Village range. All global chains are trying to be as flexible as they can with their midscale brand prototype in order to cater to Asian market needs.

Guide to midscale hotel expansion

Best Western

Best Western’s summary of brand Unparalleled value-for-money, international-standard accommodation and services, local charm. World’s largest hotel chain, providing marketing, reservations and operational support to over 4,000 independently-owned and -operated member hotels in 80 countries and territories worldwide for over 60 years now.



Best Western C-bank Hotel, Wuhan

No. of hotels/resorts worldwide (as of 31/12/10) 4,021
No. of rooms worldwide (as of 31/12/10) 304,698

Geographical spread by room count
North America 59.82%, **Europe** 30.76%, **Asia** 4.59%, **Australia** 2.18%, **Others** 2.66%

No. of hotels/rooms operating in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10) 273 / 16,891
No. of hotels in the pipeline in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10) 88
No. of hotels to open in Asia-Pacific by 2012 70

Highest growth areas in Asia-Pacific Japan, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Indonesia

Latest brand refresh Not on the midscale, rather on the upscale upwards, which it is penetrating. Introduced a Descriptor programme at the beginning of 2011, a three-tier segmentation: the already-established midscale Best Western, the new and refreshing upscale Best Western Plus and the recently-relaunched luxury Best Western Premier. In North America, some 1,300 hotels will have Best Western Plus rating; programme to be launched in Asia/Middle East in April with the first Best Western Plus @ 20 Sukhumvit Bangkok opening.

Courtyard By Marriott

Marriott International’s summary of brand Introduced in the US in 1983 as an alternative for business travellers in the upper moderate tier seeking functional space, comfort and value. Guest-driven and culturally attuned. International expansion in 1997. Technology-friendly space, welcoming lobby, constantly incorporating fresh ideas.

No. of hotels and resorts worldwide (as of 31/12/10) Almost 900 hotels in more than 30 countries.

Geographical spread In addition to the US, Courtyard by Marriott hotels are located in Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Republic of Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Mexico, The Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Puerto Rico, Russia, South Korea, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Turkey, the UAE and the UK. Future locations include Indonesia, Cambodia, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam.

No. of hotels/rooms in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10) 27 / 7,298
No. of hotels in the pipeline in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10) about 20

Highest growth areas in Asia-Pacific India and China

Latest rebranding/redesign exercise In the US, Courtyard redesigned its public space in an initiative called Courtyard Refreshing Business effort. Most properties in Asia have been new-builds, therefore not requiring rebranding or redesign.

Courtyard by Marriott global brand manager Janis Milham said: “In the next 10 years, we



Courtyard Wuxi

have the goal of opening close to 50 Courtyards in China alone. As the brand expands into secondary and tertiary cities, the look and feel of the hotels will reflect the needs of the specific clientele and guests, typically the intra-country Chinese travellers.”

Holiday Inn

IHG’s summary of brand With more than 1,200 hotels worldwide, Holiday Inn is the most widely recognised lodging brand in the world. Operating since 1952, it offers today’s business and leisure travellers dependability, friendly service and modern attractive facilities at excellent value.

No. of hotels/resorts worldwide (as of 31/12/10) 1,241
No. of rooms worldwide (as of 31/12/10) 227,225

Geographical spread by room count
Americas 144,683 rooms (812 hotels), **Europe, Middle East & Africa** 52,945 rooms (325 hotels), **Asia-Pacific** 29,597 rooms (104 hotels)

No. of Holiday Inns in the pipeline in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10) 85
No. of Holiday Inns in Asia-Pacific by 2012 At least 20

Highest growth areas in Asia-Pacific China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, New Zealand and the Philippines.

Latest brand refresh A US\$1 billion relaunch in 2008. By now, virtually all the 3,300 hotels (Editor’s Note: This figure includes the economy Holiday Inn Express) are sporting the new logo, amenities, etc, sealing the aim of the exercise: to gain more consistency globally and keep brand top-of-mind for owners/consumers.

IHG vice president development Asia/Australasia vice president development Paul Logan said: “Rebranded hotels are delivering a strong return on investment, with RevPAR up five per cent compared to non-relaunched hotels. We also see increased brand awareness, customer satisfaction and employee engagement.”

Rising domestic and regional travel in Asia is reinventing the region's mid-market hotel segment, with international hotel chains angling for dominance in a landscape previously tilted towards upscale and above. **Raini Hamdi** analyses



Michael Issenberg
"Adapt to Asia."
Chairman & COO, Accor Asia-Pacific

Said Issenberg: "The room size can go up to 28m². The colour schemes have been adapted to Asia – the first colour schemes were muted; in Asia, there are more bright colours."

Added Martin Rinck, Hilton Worldwide president Asia-Pacific: "The Asia prototype (of Hilton Garden Inn) delivers more F&B and meeting space than we typically see in North America, while delivering more efficient public spaces and room attributes to reduce the cost of development."

The problem with product innovation in the mid-market, however, is there is little room to reinvent the wheel. Observed

Hecker: "The thing about mid-scale, or anything below upscale, is that it becomes more and more about just delivering the basics – comfortable bed, nice shower, good Internet access, limited frills – and the price point is in line with this. So there is not much more that probably can or needs to be done. The main battle is to ensure product and service quality consistency, and being in the right locations with a good network spread. Certainly trying to keep a contemporary design is important to stay relevant, but I'm not sure there is anything specific in a design sense that is being done at the midscale product level that might be considered an innovation."

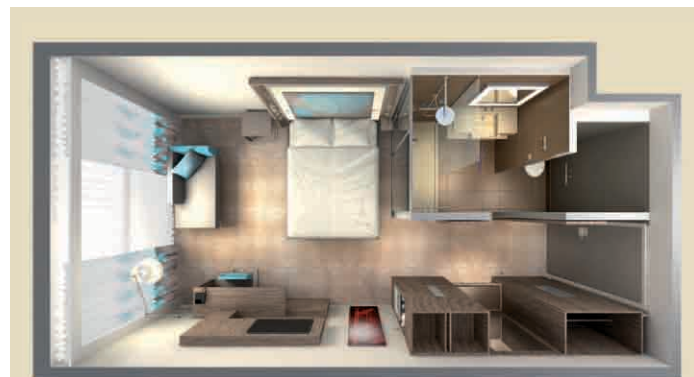
Asked to explain the difference between a Holiday Inn new room and a Novotel new room, Paul Logan, IHG's vice president development Asia/Australasia, said branding, service culture, average age of the hotels – apart from improved arrival/welcome features, amenities, bedding, etc. – all count in making the difference. Add to that factors such as extensive reservations support

systems, global websites and global operational efficiencies, said Hilton's Rinck.

Rinck admits operators are under pressure to come up with better design, functionality, and higher hospitality standards with greater value as travellers become more sophisticated and companies continue to keep a tight watch over costs. And they have to do this without cannibalising their upscale and luxury brands.

Agreeing, Logan said: "It's the ability to present a product that is not only value-for-cost, but is also well-designed and high in quality."

And that, in essence, is what drives innovation in the midscale – the challenge to make modular sexy, which itself is a tall order, and to make incremental changes that go a long way to improve guest well-being, without these changes necessarily being immediately noticeable to the guest and without him being charged an arm and a leg for them. So, in the battle of the bulging middle, the brand with the best abs – fit-test, trimmest, sexiest room, and muscled distribution – wins.



When a room is not just a room Highlights of Novotel's new room

- **Concept** Creating an adaptable space that guests can adjust to suit their needs. Thus spaciousness and transparency are main characteristics, with no physical separation of areas
- **Bathroom** A key design feature, separated from the rest of the room by a transparent glass partition that becomes opaque at a flick of a switch (Privalite by Saint Gobain)
- **Bed** Enthroned by an upholstered headboard that contours the back when leaned on
- **Sustainable development** Low-consumption lights, eco-certified shower, natural materials, etc
- **Practical and technological features** 32" flat-screen TV, Wi-Fi or wired access, range of connectors to TV, multipurpose shelf
- **Atmosphere** Timeless colours, with touches of brighter shades, Tolomeo designer lamps by Artemide to add extra homely touch

Hilton Garden Inn



Hilton Garden Inn Shaoxing

Hilton Worldwide's summary of brand A world-class brand in the mid-priced segment, with thoughtfully-researched and forward-thinking guest amenities like adjustable

beds, ergonomic desk chairs and in-room work space, free high-speed Internet access, and a refreshing restaurant. Backed by rich heritage of the Hilton name and the HHonors guest loyalty programme.

No. of hotels/resorts worldwide (as of 31/12/10) 515
No. of rooms worldwide (as of 31/12/10) 70,000

Geographical spread by hotel count
Americas (including Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, US) 500
Europe 15, **Asia Pacific** 1 (Hilton Garden Inn New Delhi/Saket, India, opened November 2009), **Middle East** 1

No. of hotels/rooms in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10)
1 / 114

No. of hotels in the pipeline in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10) 3 in India, set for 2012 and 2013 openings, 1 in China (Hilton Garden Inn Shaoxing, opening late 2011)

No. of hotels opening in Asia-Pacific by 2012 2

Highest growth areas in Asia-Pacific China and India

Latest rebranding/redesign exercise Hilton Worldwide president Asia-Pacific, Martin Rinck, said: "We understand that the success of the brand in Asia will be based on delivering the experience desired by the regional Asia traveller in a consistent manner that has yet to be delivered by our competitors in Asia for the midscale segment."

Novotel

Accor's summary of brand Simple, well-designed, efficient, modern, genuinely committed to every kind of traveller, backed by a chain that is a world leader in midscale and economy.

No. of hotels/resorts worldwide (as of 31/12/10) 400
No. of rooms worldwide (as of 31/12/10) 74,106

Geographical spread by room count
Europe 37%, **France** 21%, **Asia** 29%, **Others** 13%

No. of Novotels operating in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10) 88

No. of Novotels in the pipeline in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10) 36

Highest growth areas in Asia-Pacific China, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia

Latest brand refresh See article above

Park Inn By Radisson/Country Inns & Suites

Carlson's summary of the brands Park Inn by Radisson is Carlson's bright, bold and fresh midscale brand. A key growth focus for Asia-Pacific, its scalability and moderate costs make Park Inn an ideal brand for new-builds.

Country Inns & Suites is another leading midscale brand known for providing a caring, consistent and comfortable hospitality experience with a touch of home. The brand is highly successful in India, where Carlson has 10 operating Country Inns & Suites hotels and is the largest international hotel operator.

No. of hotels and resorts/rooms worldwide (as of 31/12/10)

Park Inn by Radisson: 114 / 20,849
Country Inns & Suites: 488 / 39,086

Geographical spread by room count

Park Inn by Radisson: Americas 6.8%, Europe, Middle East and Africa 92%, Asia-Pacific 1.2%
Country Inns & Suites: Americas 97.72%, Europe, Middle East and Africa 0.34%, Asia-Pacific 1.94

No. of hotels/rooms in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10)

Park Inn by Radisson: 3 / 249
Country Inns & Suites: 10 / 762

No. of hotels in the pipeline in Asia-Pacific (as of 31/12/10)

Park Inn by Radisson: 3 / 263
Country Inns & Suites: 13 / 1,235

No. of hotels opening in Asia-Pacific by 2012:

Park Inn by Radisson: 4 / 389
Country Inns & Suites: 13 / 1,113

Highest growth areas in Asia-Pacific China, India and Thailand. Carlson plans to operate at least 50 new Park Inn by Radisson hotels in the next few years. Similar plans are underway in China and Thailand.

Latest rebranding/redesign exercise In 2009, Carlson launched a new generation prototype including a full interior design remodel to modernise the Country Inns & Suites brand. It is redesigning and localising the look and feel of Country Inns & Suites in India.

Park Inn by Radisson has evolved in Europe, the Middle East and Africa over the past eight years by incorporating bright colours into the design element of the hotels. Plans are now well underway to introduce this to markets such as China and India.

Asia-Pacific chief Simon Barlow said Country Inns & Suites in the Americas saw substantial RevPAR improvements after the introduction of updated interior designs and completed renovations.



Park Inn by Radisson



Recipe for success

The Lion City is relying on food and culture to keep visitors engaged, reports **Karen Yue**

NTO The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has joined IE Singapore and SPRING Singapore, government bodies promoting economic development, to lead an inaugural gastronomic campaign that aims to establish the city-state as a global culinary capital. The Singapore International Culinary Exchange (SPICE) campaign targets foodies, as well as professional and amateur chefs.

STB director of attractions, dining & retail, industry development I group, Ranita Sundramoorthy, said that SPICE was different from STB's other ongoing culinary initiatives. "SPICE (takes) a multi-pronged approach that showcases internationally, through the country's culinary icons, the breadth and depth of Singapore's cuisine."

Ranita added: "(SPICE) highlights the dynamism of our culinary scene and seeks to create an active platform for networking by showcasing Singapore restaurants, chefs and our F&B brands via the campaign's initiatives."

The latter include travelling restaurant Singapore Takeout, where local chefs promote Singaporean food overseas, and immersion programme Global

Chef Exchange that caters to chefs and restaurateurs.

STB does not have specific data on the appeal of individual culinary events, but Ranita said these were "generally well-received by visitors from all regions, and different gourmet events target and appeal to different markets".

Arrivals Footfall for 2010 in Singapore reached 11.6 million, representing a year-on-year growth of 20 per cent and falling within the 2010 forecast of 11.5 to 12.5 million.

Among the top 15 markets, 14 posted growth. Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Australia and India topped the list, while Malaysia registered the highest increase, at 36 per cent.

Stronger traveller traffic is reflected in the 11.9 per cent growth in passenger movements handled by Singapore Changi Airport in January, with some 3.79 million passengers passing through. Changi Airport Group also reported a 27 per cent increment in low-cost carrier (LCC) traffic compared to a year ago, and credited LCCs for driving growth to and from North-east Asia and South-east Asia.

Given Singapore's new attrac-



"Gourmet events help to contribute to F&B expenditure, which increased 23 per cent over 2009 and formed 10 per cent of tourism receipts in 2010."

Ranita Sundramoorthy
Director of attractions,
dining & retail industry
development I group
STB

tions, visitor days grew 17 per cent over 2009 to reach 45.6 million days.

Tourism receipts exceeded the year's target of S\$17.5 billion (US\$13.7 billion) to S\$18.5 billion. Visitors spent an estimated S\$18.8 billion, 49 per cent more than in 2009. The STB attributed the strong haul to positive economic sentiment and the opening of the integrated resorts.

Rates New tourism infrastructure in Singapore has continued to help hotels fill rooms, putting an upward pressure on room rates this year.

In 2010, overall average room rate reached S\$212, an increase of 12.2 per cent, while average occupancy rate stood at 86 per cent, 9.8 percentage points higher than that of 2009.

Luxury Tours & Travel assistant general manager Jennifer Chang said rates contracted for the new financial year starting April had gone up by five to eight per cent, although tactical promotions were still offered by some. Vacation Singapore director of marketing (inbound), Helen Goh, who saw rates rising by at least S\$10 across all categories, painted a starker picture –

special weekend rates have been removed and hotel reservation staff have been claiming full-house for lead-in category rooms, leaving only higher category or club rooms for bookings.

Access Singapore Airlines (SIA) will start a seventh daily flight between Singapore and Hong Kong from March 27. The airline has also inked a code-share agreement with Scandinavian Airlines on selected flights.

Last month, Air Macau and Hong Kong Airlines launched twice-weekly flights from Macau and daily services from Hong Kong, respectively, while China Eastern Airlines started twice-weekly services from Nanning.

Products Universal Studios Singapore has reopened star attraction rollercoaster Battlestar Galactica, after closing it last March due to safety issues.

Marina Bay Sands' ArtScience Museum is showcasing two exhibitions, one on the Silk Road and another on Genghis Khan. The resort has also raised the curtains on *The Lion King* musical, which plays eight times a week. Ticket prices start from S\$65.

AN ISLAND OF ENDLESS EXCITEMENT



Integrated into one amazing experience of the senses, Resorts World™ Sentosa Singapore extends you unparalleled splendour, excitement and adventure. Wake up in the luxury of six unique hotels before savouring the finest in dining. Shop at international luxury boutiques or be endlessly dazzled by spectacular shows and movie magic. Have it all in style in one world.



Experience

Go beyond the screen and Ride The Movies® at Universal Studios Singapore®! You can experience rides and attractions based on some of your favourite blockbuster films such as Shrek 4-D Adventure®, Revenge of the Mummy® and Jurassic Park Rapids Adventure®. Plus, you can now choose your side, Human or Cylon, as you engage in the ultimate intergalactic battle between good and evil on Battlestar Galactica®, a pair of duelling roller coasters.



Luxuriate

True to the resort's promise of world-class offerings are our luxurious hotels – each with a distinct personality, but all sharing a touch of Asian hospitality. A different experience awaits you each time at the glamorous Hard Rock Hotel® Singapore, the family-friendly Festive Hotel™, the world's first Hotel Michael™ by contemporary architect Michael Graves and the opulent Crockfords™ Tower.



Savour

Satisfy the epicurean in you with first-class cuisine at over 60 dining outlets offering more than 30 different cuisines. Enjoy modern dining by famous Australian celebrity chef, Scott Webster at OSIA, or traditional *kaiseki* cuisine at kunio tokuoka by the chef with four Michelin stars, Master Chef Tokuoka.



Indulge

Be charmed by a personalised, one-of-a-kind shopping experience featuring over 45 retail outlets. Shop duty-free for internationally coveted brands like Chanel, Rolex, Bulgari, Audemars Piguet and Vacheron Constantin and enjoy on-the-spot Goods & Services Tax rebates.



Revel

Embark on a journey beyond imagination with Voyage de la Vie™, a theatrical circus spectacular by world-renowned creative producer Mark Fisher. This original production created in Singapore brings together a cast of international stars from 19 countries for a one-of-a-kind event.

Contact your local Resorts World Sentosa representative office or visit www.rwsentosa.com for more information.

Right treatment for diagnosis

Enticed by sector's rosy returns, city-state aims to lead Asia's medical tourism charge, reports **Karen Yue**

1 How did Singapore do as a medical tourism hub last year? The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) reported preliminary tourism receipts generated from medical expenditure at S\$940 million (US\$740 million), a 10 per cent year-on-year increase, compared to 2009. Medical tourists and their companions numbered 570,000 in 2009. Indonesia, Malaysia and the Middle East were top source markets for this segment.

Asian countries, final bills are often comparable due to shorter hospital stays. On top of the affordability, patients in Singapore are assured of quality treatment and high clinical outcomes, similar to those in the US and Europe," she added.

Multi-agency SingaporeMedicine was formed in 2003 to strengthen the country's position as Asia's leader and promote it as a world-class destination for advanced patient care.

"What we are able to offer is a complete healthcare ecosystem," Tan said about growing medical conferences and exhibitions, which have boosted MICE earnings. "Doctors and other medical professionals come to Singapore for training and for conferences, (and) pharmaceuticals are manufactured in Singapore."

2 Can Singapore outshine the competition in Asia's medical tourism stakes? STB deputy director of enrichment Tan Yen Nee thinks so, saying that Singapore was ranked best in healthcare infrastructure in Asia and fourth best in the world by the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook in 2009.

Singapore's convenient access and transport, a clean and safe environment, and familiarity with different cultures appealed to medical tourists, Tan said.

"While list prices appear higher in Singapore than in other

3 What's the latest in Singapore's medical tourism scene? Far East Organisation opened Novena Specialist Centre in Novena's medical district, near other healthcare facilities and more than 30 hotels, and minutes



from Orchard Road. The group will open in April the 428-room Oasia Hotel next door, a business hotel that will also provide convenient accommodation for patients and visitors.

Tan said that hospitals Parkway Novena and Connexion, which will open in 2012 and 2013 respectively, will "further entrench Singapore's position as a leading medical hub in Asia".

4 Are travel agents in Singapore reaping the benefits? According to Tan, Singaporean healthcare providers are already

working with hotels and licensed travel agencies to offer accommodation or packages.

Fascinating Holidays ventured into medical tourism last year by roping in a partner specialising in medical services. It has since handled visitors from Indonesia, China and Indochina, who came to Singapore for health screenings and dental treatments.

David Teo, managing director of Fascinating Holidays, said: "We also have a good clientele of insurance companies that send small groups of their high-net-worth customers to Singapore

for health checks. While they are here, they are chauffeured around, have activities on luxury yachts, go for spa sessions and stay in the best hotels."

5 Any challenges? CTC Travel senior vice president (marketing & PR) Alicia Seah said medical groups and hospitals were tough competition for agents wanting a piece of the pie.

CTC's Healthcare division partnered with concierge network Fly Free For Health in 2009 to coordinate air travel, accommodation and land programmes in Singapore and Thailand.

"Hospitals and medical groups have their own concierge to assist medical tourists in their travel needs, which limits what travel agents stand to gain from medical tourism," Seah said, adding that medical legalities also posed a challenge.

While CTC Healthcare continues to see bookings, Seah said performance from this segment was not as strong as the agency had hoped for.

13-16 JUNE 2011_SHANGHAI

ENTER A WORLD OF UNIQUE POSSIBILITIES

IMMERSE YOUR SENSES IN A WORLD OF THE MOST EXCLUSIVE LUXURY TRAVEL EXPERTS

ILTM Asia is the leading 'by invitation only' showcase for the global luxury travel community in the Asia Pacific region.

Bringing together the world's most sought after collection of luxury experiences for discerning Asia Pacific luxury travel buyers, offering you a world of unique business opportunities.

If you are an Asia Pacific buyer or international luxury travel supplier register your interest in attending the region's most exclusive travel event at www.iltm.net/asia

ILTM INTERNATIONAL LUXURY TRAVEL MARKET ASIA
13 - 16 JUNE 2011 | SHANGHAI

WWW.ILTM.NET/ASIA

Checking in

Studio M



Millennium & Copthorne Hotels makes arty chic part of its portfolio in Singapore. **Karen Yue** explores the hotel

LOCATION Studio M, within Robertson Quay, is also just a 10-minute walk to Clarke Quay. It is 30 minutes by car from Singapore Changi Airport and five minutes from the financial district and the Suntec International Convention & Exhibition Centre.

ROOMS Studio M's unique selling point is its loft concept – the first of its kind in Singapore. There are five room types, all 22m² in size, except for the two disabled-friendly rooms measuring 15m². All rooms include a mezzanine level.

According to a hotel spokesperson, Studio M is popular among Europeans and Australians, as well as business travellers from the design industry. A travel manager for a Dutch chemical company I recently met there could not stop raving about the property.

I spent a night in the Studio Loft, which has the bed, a flat-screen standing TV and a small pantry on the lower level, and a study area on the upper level.

While the design was chic, I found that the flow of in-room facilities took some getting used to. The shower and toilet are in an enclosed space, opposite each other, and the wash basin is at the pantry, right under the stairs.

F&B There is a cozy cafe, Espressamente illy, on the lobby level. Outside, Malted



Name Studio M
No of rooms 360
Rate From S\$220 (US\$170) for Loft rooms, inclusive of Wi-Fi access
Contact details
Tel: (65) 6808-8899
Email: enquiry@studiomhotel.com

Milk welcomes guests with more than 50 types of beers – some exclusive to Asia – and live music from Wednesday to Friday.

On the second floor, TaKé, which does Japanese and French fusion cuisine, functions as a breakfast area for guests and serves dinner and drinks from 6.00pm to 1.00am. Popular among event planners, the restaurant can host 120 people seated and 300 people standing.

FACILITIES There is an open-air gym, a 25m lap pool and a jet pool. Guests can opt to take advantage of a free shuttle bus service to take them to other selected business and shopping locations.

SERVICE Thanks to a young, energetic team, service is brisk and very friendly.

VERDICT A rather fun place to stay.

MONDAY

28 FEB 11



Refresh your browsers now for our
exciting new features

www.ttgasia.com

TOP STORIES

TOURISM DATA

ASK THE EXPERT

HOT JOBS

PHOTO GALLERY

HOT DEALS & IDEAS

EDITOR'S BLOG

ADAM TAN

WE ARE LIVE!

Credible, relevant, award-winning travel trade journalism since 1974





Eventful forecasts

City keeps offerings fresh by reinvigorating all sectors this year, reports **Prudence Lui**

Arrivals Buoyed by 2010's record-breaking intake of more than 36 million arrivals, Hong Kong is seeking to grow its visitor tally this year by 10 per cent to 39.6 million.

The city is banking on the positive global economic situation, favourable policies introduced by the Central Government and the new attractions opening this year to bring in the numbers.

Both longhaul and shorthaul markets performed well for the city, rising 10.5 per cent and 17.2 per cent respectively. The Americas, in particular, picked up nicely with an 11.6 per cent increase in arrivals. China continued to dominate the tally, accounting for 63 per cent of the total or more than 22.6 million visitors.

Tourism revenue also set a new milestone, with the city's kitty getting 30.5 per cent fatter last year to hit HK\$212.6 billion (US\$27.3 billion).

NTO The Hong Kong Tourism Board's (HKTb) work plan for 2011 to 2012 gives the city a new brand, Hong Kong – Asia's World City, and an enhanced calendar of events.

HKTb executive director An-

thony Lau said: "Our commercial sponsorship rose significantly, and this drives us to create something special for our sponsors."

The Mid-Autumn Festival in mid-September will feature the biggest lantern in town, in tandem with the Lantern Wonderland, Lantern Carnivals and the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance.

The HKTb is also planning a *pun-choi* (a traditional "big bowl" dish with various ingredients) feast for Chinese New Year 2012.

In terms of markets, the HKTb has identified Vietnam and the Netherlands as emerging markets that will receive more promotional activities this year.

Hotels Twenty-five properties with a combined total of 4,159 rooms will make their entry this year. Opening this quarter are 260-room Best Western Hotel Causeway Bay, 262-room Hotel ICON in Tsim Sha Tsui East developed by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and 312-room Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong in Tsim Sha Tsui.

The flurry of new openings creates more supply in a market that averaged 87 per cent occupancy last year, a nine per cent hike over 2009.



"We anticipate a 10 to 15 per cent growth (in MICE business) this year, with both exhibition and convention segments (performing well)."

Anthony Lau
Executive director
Hong Kong Tourism Board

To encourage even more development in the hospitality sector, the government has allocated two more hotel sites for government-initiated sale by open auction or tender this year.

As the market gets more crowded, existing hotels are beefing up their product to remain competitive. Cosmopolitan Hotel has launched its ONE AND ONLY theme suite that has a Playstation 3 and a 46-inch 3D LCD television with a 5.1-channel home theatre system. Excelsior Hotel will be refreshing its signature outlets, Yee Tung Heen and Dickens Bar, this summer.

MICE At least 315 conventions and exhibitions have been confirmed for this year and next. The Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre has nabbed seven new exhibitions and 24 international conferences for this year, and many of its returning exhibitions are set for a 2011 expansion.

Lau said: "One of our successful bids is the FDI World Dental Federation Annual World Dental Congress 2012, which will have 12,000 delegates."

Last year, overnight MICE arrivals leapt by 22.8 per cent

year-on-year to 1,429,941. Of the total, 41.8 per cent, or 598,022 visitors, were from mainland China, while shorthaul markets sent 431,462 delegates.

HKTb's MICE promotion budget remains at HK\$47.7 million, 70 per cent of which will be poured into overseas marketing. In the meeting and incentive sectors, the HKTb will work with leading incentive houses in 10 target markets.

Products sky100 will open on April 17 on the 100th floor of the International Commerce Centre. At 393m above sea level, it will be Hong Kong's highest indoor observation deck.

Ocean Park unveiled its latest attraction, Aqua City, in January (see page 19). Dialogue in the Dark, which opened in February last year, has started offering Wine Tasting in the Dark, where guests sample different wine varieties in the dark while being waited on by visually-impaired staff and guided by an expert from Wines Connect.

Meanwhile, the DHL Hong Kong Balloon operates everyday with 15-minute flights. It can be rented for private parties, incentives and corporate events.



中国上海
Shanghai China
发现更多·体验更多
More Discovery More Experience

Launched By:

Shanghai Municipal
Tourism Administration
上海市旅游局

Shanghai
Business Events Week
11-15 April 2011

April

Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa Su

					1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30		

Where The MICE Industry Comes Together In Shanghai. In An Exciting Week Of Business, Education and Networking Events.

For the first time ever, China unveils its biggest MICE extravaganza!

Shanghai Business Events Week features 6 industry business, education and networking events brought to you by leading international MICE players. Be part of this week-long unique experience. All happening in cosmopolitan Shanghai!

Shanghai Business Events Week 2011 Highlights



China (Shanghai) International Meetings & Conferences Forum
www.cimcf.org
12 to 13 April | Kerry Hotel Pudong

A one-and-a-half day forum with key-note speeches, panel discussions, educational presentations and case studies. Learn how to organize and manage international and domestic association meetings, and corporate meetings successfully and professionally in China.



Corporate Travel ExpertSM Certification Course
12 to 13 April | ShanghaiMart Expo

Offered for the first time in China, this internationally recognised certification programme is ideal for all executives involved in Corporate Travel planning, decision-making, and purchasing. Tailored specially for Asian professionals, participants will learn the concepts, tools and skills required to optimise your company's travel spending, ROI and enhance Corporate Travel results. Grab this opportunity to earn your Corporate Travel ExpertSM (CTE) designation today!



IT&CM China 2011
www.itcmchina.com
13 to 15 April | ShanghaiMart Expo

This is China's leading professional Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) business and networking event, dedicated to "Promoting China to the World and the World to China". Featuring 3-days of exhibition, business appointments, seminars and networking events, IT&CM China brings together Chinese and International MICE exhibitors and buyers in one dynamic marketplace. IT&CM China 2011 is organised by TTG Asia Media and MP International.



ICCA Association Database Workshop
13 April

During this 3-hour workshop, ICCA members will learn a variety of database skills including the use of the ICCA Association Database, how to locate business leads and the use of other ICCA business tools. The training will be conducted in Mandarin and is suitable for all level of database users.



Future Leaders Forum
14 April | ShanghaiMart Expo

Aimed to nurture the future leaders of the MICE industry, this full-day programme is catered to students pursuing degrees in meetings and events management, tourism or related business or administration studies. It offers the best and brightest students a chance to experience real life industry challenges and an insightful glimpse into a dynamic MICE career. This event is jointly organised by IMEX, MPI and IT&CM China.



TTG China Travel Awards
www.ttgchina.com/ttg-awards/en
14 April | Shanghai World Financial Centre

Respected as one of the travel industry's most prestigious travel awards, this event celebrates and honours the best in China's travel and tourism industry. Back for the fourth year, TTG China Travel Awards applauds exemplary industry partners that strive to maintain quality standards to ensure a stellar experience for all.

Making the right connections

Access enhancements unveiled as Hong Kong connects with mainland on all fronts, reports **Prudence Lui**

1 Why is Hong Kong looking into its access infrastructure? The Hong Kong 2030 Study, released in 2007, kick-started the city government's drive to strengthen links with China.

Ten major infrastructure projects have been given priority for development in phases over the next five years. Of these, work has started on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Kai Tak Development Plan Stage 1.

Last November, the government announced the Shatin to Central Link railways project, work on which will kick off next year. Meanwhile, construction of the South Island Line (East) starts this year.

2 How does the city intend to improve its transport links with China? The Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) is designed to connect the city to China's high-speed train network.

Operating from its terminal in the West Kowloon Cultural District, XRL will provide frequent connections to four major cities in the eastern Pearl River Delta and direct services to 16 other Chinese cities.

XRL's Guangzhou-Shenzhen link will



Mainland Express train

be operational by summer, but the Hong Kong section was only approved last year. Construction of this 26km section started on January 28, for completion by 2015.

XRL trains will run at a maximum speed of 200km/hour, with a minimum headway of three minutes during peak periods. It can carry up to 10,000 passengers per hour per direction.

3 What impact will the XRL have on Hong Kong tourism? The XRL will drastically cut down travel time from Hong Kong to cities on the mainland. For

instance, it will take just 15 minutes and 48 minutes from West Kowloon to Shenzhen and Guangzhou respectively.

A government spokesperson said: "We expect more day-trippers from the Pearl River Delta region to (visit our) various tourist attractions."

According to Rosanna Leung, Towa Tours' head of project and business development, while the high-speed rail connection would definitely improve access between China and Hong Kong, and promote more shopping trips, the service might impact hotel stays. "Travellers may use the XRL and just come for daytrips, rather than stay overnight in the city. Official data shows that 40 per cent of visitors to Hong Kong are daytrippers, and the number of FITs continues to rise."

4 What about connectivity in the city itself? The Mass Transit Railway (MTR) has embarked on five new rail projects – West Island Line, Shatin-Central Link, Kowloon Southern Link, South Island Link (East) and the XRL – to make the city more commuter-friendly.

First to be ready is the extension of the Hong Kong Island Line (West and South),

which will start ferrying commuters in 2013 or 2014.

The South Island Line will run from the South Horizons to Admiralty, via Lei Tung, Wong Chuk Hang and Ocean Park. The line will serve not only the resident population in the south, but also tourists heading to the existing and upcoming attractions in the area. The line will get tourists from Admiralty to Ocean Park in just three minutes.

L'hotel Island South general manager Sylvia Chung said: "Apart from tour groups, our hotel also caters to FITs, business travellers and families. The rail network improvement, cruise terminal and airport expansion will make it a lot more convenient for visitors to enjoy the amazing Asian World City."

As for sea transport, the terminal building and first berth of the cruise terminal in Kai Tak are expected to be operational by mid-2013.

5 What is happening in terms of air access? Calls for Hong Kong's third runway have yet to be heeded, but the Airport Authority is pushing through with its HK\$4.5 billion (US\$577.5 million) midfield development project to enhance Hong Kong International Airport.

The midfield area, west of Terminal 1 and between the two existing runways, is the last piece of land available for large-scale development on the airport island.

The first phase, recently unveiled, will give the airport a new midfield concourse with 20 aircraft parking stands, a new cross-field taxiway and the extension of the existing automated people mover to the midfield concourse. Eleven of the 20 aircraft parking stands will be bridge-served, inclusive of some stands equipped with three air bridges for the Airbus A380. Work on phase one starts in the third quarter, with completion set for end-2015.

Playing the German card

By **Prudence Lui**

Hong Kong's German hopes rest largely on China, as the city – long a mono-destination for German leisure traffic – is increasingly becoming an extension from the mainland.

ATI Travel, for whom German leisure traffic accounts for 80 per cent of business, attests to this. Managing director Richard Woss said: "The shift has become more obvious, owing to China's improved accessibility and tourism promotions. But Hong Kong has not been sidelined, as it is still a hip destination and people come to enjoy the East-meets-West ambience."

The upside, according to Woss, is the slight increase in the length of stay of Germans, from two to three nights.

Woss said: "Hong Kong needs to create special-interest products and package these with its other attractions. It'd be great to highlight the fact that Hong Kong is a city that never sleeps."

C&A Tours director Jo Chan said while there remained considerable mono-destination traffic, the German market had evolved into a multi-destination one, due to the direct flights to China.

Chan said: "Many Germans are repeat travellers, and attractions like Disneyland are not their cup of tea. So it's typical for them to pick Hong Kong as their last stop in China before heading home, thanks to our excellent flight connections."

Chan is taking the ecotourism route to woo more Germans to the city. "Germans love nature. We could push our Geopark eco-tour as a niche product. Still, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) should strengthen cooperation with different operators for product development."

InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong general manager Peter Pollmeier said that rates in Hong Kong went up by an average of 10 per cent last year, and further increases were expected this year. He does not foresee price becoming an issue for Germans though.

"The German economy is very export-focused, so there will be demand to travel to this part of the world," he explained.

The HKTb is capitalising on the draw of multi-destination travel by nurturing strategic alliances with other tourism bodies in Greater China on combined itineraries, with Hong Kong as anchor.

Royal Plaza Hotel Family Vacation Package

Experience both luxurious accommodation and delectable delicacies with your family members. Take advantage of the daily food & beverage credit of HK\$350.

Package Privileges:

- One night accommodation
- Daily accumulative Food & Beverage credit of HKD350 nett per room
- Complimentary daily in-room broadband internet access for one registered computer
- Complimentary one-hour Mongkok Walking Tour
- Complimentary use of Definition Health Club – gymnasium, 40-M outdoor heated swimming pool, outdoor Jacuzzi, sauna and steam bath

Daily Room Rate: **Deluxe Room HKD 1,080 up**

Reservations: (852) 2622 6110 / resvn@royalplaza.com.hk

Remarks:
 • Valid until September 30, 2011 • 10% service charge and high season surcharge apply • Confirmation is subject to availability and rates are subject to change without prior notice • Royal Plaza Hotel reserves the right of final decision in case of any disputes

新鴻基地產 Sun Hung Kai Properties **帝京酒店** ROYAL PLAZA HOTEL

193 Prince Edward Road West, Kowloon, Hong Kong
 Tel: (852) 2928 8822 Fax: (852) 2606 0088
 Toll Free Reservation Hotlines:
 Taiwan: 00801857338 Singapore: 8008523668
 Web Site: <http://www.royalplaza.com.hk>

A Recognized Hotel by the MICHELIN guide Hong Kong Macau 2011

Test drive

Understanding the deep blue



Ocean Park has been dishing out the attractions in rapid succession – latest being Aqua City. **Prudence Lui** reconnects with an old friend

WHY Not being a big fan of theme parks, I cannot even recall when I last visited Ocean Park. The 34-year-old attraction is no stranger to me though, as we grew up together. What eventually brought me back to my long-lost childhood companion were my eight-year-old daughter and Ocean Park's latest redevelopment since 2006. The theme park's HK\$5.5 billion (US\$706 million) redevelopment plan will give it a whole new lease on life by 2012. Attractions will more than double, from the original 35 to over 70. Last year, Ocean Park already unveiled its Amazing Asian Animals, SkyFair and Ocean Express. In January, Aqua City made its debut. Yes, it was time to go back and see how the years have treated Ocean Park.

WHAT Straddling the main entrance at Wong Chuk Hang, the colourful Aqua City encom-

passes the three-storey Grand Aquarium, a lagoon, retail shops and two F&B outlets – Neptune's Restaurant and Aqua Bakery.

The egg-shaped aquarium, the world's ninth largest, houses some 5,000 marine creatures of over 400 species. Inhabitants include hammerhead sharks, manta rays and Blue Fin tuna.

The journey starts on the ground floor with a vast pool that exhibits how waves are created and how they impact the coastline. On the other side of the floor is a zone where younger visitors can touch sea cucumbers and sea stars.

What excited us most were the 244 trapezoid-shaped glass panes that recreate diverse aquatic ecosystems, from the coral reef environment in the Reef Tunnel to the deep sea terrain in the Panoramic Ocean Gallery, which

Name Aqua City, Ocean Park

Rate HK\$250/adult, HK\$125/children aged three to 11

Hours of operation Monday to Saturday (10am to 7pm), Sunday (9.30am to 7pm)

Contact details

Tel: (852) 3923-2323

www.oceanpark.com.hk

features a 13m panoramic acrylic viewing tunnel.

Visitors delight in the sight of fishes swimming overhead in the Bubble Tunnel, which boasts the world's largest aquarium viewing dome, with a 5.5m diameter. Worth a visit too is the Swirl Tank, with the swirling movements of a school of fish swimming in tight formation.

A strong message on ocean conservation rings loud and clear throughout the aquarium – either through wall-mounted signages or touch-screen interpretative panels. Lights are dim to produce the best underwater views, so do mind your step.

Throughout the complex, acrobats roam to wow children with their antics and an offer to create lasting mementos on film to remember the visit. In the evenings, the Lagoon holds a spectacular extravaganza, where pyrotechnics, water jets and scintillating lights combine with the world's first 360-degree water screen to put on an dazzling and entertaining show.

HOW Aqua City is right next door to the Giant Panda Habitat, and the also new Ocean Express train is but a stone's throw away. The attraction's many interesting exhibits and interactive features took us a full two hours to explore, so those short on time would be better off scheduling a visit in the afternoon, culminating with the show at The Lagoon.

VERDICT A fascinating addition to Ocean Park's treasure trove of attractions for families.



Right themes for the teams

HK Disneyland targets Indian MICE



Flights of Fantasy Parade

Indian visitor numbers to Hong Kong Disneyland grew by more than 80 per cent last year, and the theme park expects the uptrend to continue this year, as it expands its sales and marketing activities in the market on the back of celebrations for its fifth anniversary.

Vice president sales and distribution marketing Aliana Ho sees the meeting and incentive sectors as holding the most potential in the Indian MICE market.

"We will focus on our anniversary's marketing platform to expand our brand presence in India by participating in trade events, hosting familiarisation trips and developing co-op initiatives with our key trade partners and selected media."

Hong Kong Disneyland's year-long Celebration in the Air campaign features new park decorations, culinary delights and immersive experiences, including a new Disney character Tinker Bell and her shimmering Tinker Bell Castle, and a new Flights of Fantasy parade.

The latter, according to Ho, is

the theme park's most innovative yet as it features colourful parade floats rising up to 12m, allowing for a series of acrobatics.

The theme park is also banking on its special events to lure MICE groups. Ho explained: "Corporations can make use of the Star Guest programme (from March to May) to show their appreciation to their staff, or reward their star performers by nominating them as a VIP Star Guest. Our Cast Members will then create unique and unexpected surprises throughout the visit of all VIP Star Guests, making them feel like royalty."

Hong Kong Disneyland is relying on the Indian travel trade to help increase visitorship from the market. This year, it will introduce value-add offers for Indian groups holding their meetings and banquets at the theme park. This, it expects, will help its Indian partners convince their corporate clients to partake in the park's anniversary celebrations.

And as improved flight access and visa-free travel enhance Hong Kong's allure among Indian leisure and MICE travellers, the theme park will expand its marketing activities beyond the main metropolitan cities of New Delhi and Mumbai.

Hong Kong Disneyland is eyeing, in particular, cities where regional MNCs are headquartered. Also among its targets are Bangalore and Hyderabad, which have emerged as hubs for major technology and heavy industry companies. – **Prudence Lui**



HARBOUR PLAZA 8 DEGREES

KOWLOON • HONG KONG



Award
Winning Hotel

Special Rooms HK\$800up
Monthly Stays HK\$16,000up
www.harbour-plaza.com/hp8d

- Visual Stimulation
- 702 Tastefully Designed Guestrooms and Suites

- Alfresco Bar & Dining
- Large Indoor and Outdoor Multi-function space
- Perfect for Business and Leisure Travellers

199 Kowloon City Road, Tokwawan, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 3900 3000 Fax: (852) 3900 3008
Email: rsvn.hp8d@harbour-plaza.com
www.harbour-plaza.com

A member of Harbour Plaza Hotels and Resorts
A Hutchison Whampoa and Cheung Kong (Holdings) Company



19 January 2011 | Wednesday
Raffles Hotel Le Royal



▲ Toasting to a job well done! From left: Swissotel Merchant Court Singapore's Jack Chua, Pandaw Cruises' John Boyd, Fairmont Singapore & Swissotel The Stamford's Cheryl Yuen, Fairmont Raffles Hotels International's Terence Tan and Royston Lim together with TTG Asia's Darren Ng

ATF delegates delved into a smokin' hot arena to mingle with fellow professionals at Raffles Hotel Le Royal after the first day of business appointments. Lounging amidst the lights and sounds of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, delegates danced and toasted to fantastic jazz tunes and drinks. An enjoyable evening of vintage chic and absolute indulgence.



▲ From left: Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor's Sok Ratanak, Trails of Indochina's Robert Rankin with Travel Indochina's Lesley Wright and John Black



▲ From left: Pacto's Ade Rachmadi and The Kingdom of Cambodia Ministry of Tourism's Yin Nat



▲ Taking a break from the day's hard work. From left: Wave Media Group's Pen Sokrethvithyea together with The Kingdom of Cambodia Ministry of Tourism's Sok Sophana, LY Vannak and Thang Bunthan



▲ From left: Db a & Sons Travel & Tours' T. Prahlad, TTG Asia's Darren Ng, Classic Travels & Tours' Rajendra Dhumma and Safari Plus' Shailendra Kesari



▲ From left: Montien Hotels Thailand's Poowanai Jiravichada, Charm Churee Villa's Trin Rujiravanich, Diamond Cliff Resort & Spa's Nuchanan Kijviriya, Intra Cambodia's Han Rutten, Sun Trips' Euam Akapatangkul, First Travel Cambodia's Tui Rutten and Diamond Cliff Resort & Spa's Jirawat Worawong



▲ From left: Dove Travels' Ashwani K. Gupta, Active Zone's Marcin Lukaszewicz, Enggee Holidays' Vineet Gopal and Koh Puos Investment Group's No Bonita



▲ From left: La Tradition d' Angkor's Yoeung Saray, Sugam Travels' Anil Gupta, Regency Tours' Neeraj Rustagi, High Flyer India's Raghav Bhalla with Pearl Travels' Jayesh Ashar and Vensimal World Travel Agents' Bhagwan Ramnani



▲ From left: TTG Polska's Marek Traczyk, Holiday Tours' Pawel Niewiadomski, New Poland's Jolanta Maciejewska, Varsavolo's Ewa Bujek, Wiadomosci Turystyczne's Jaroslaw Sleszynski, United Partners' Cezary Wilemajty and Active Zone's Joanna Jablonska



◀ From left: Raffles Singapore's Marisa Ng, Changi Village Hotel's Charles Goh, Far East Hospitality's Winston Koh, Fairmont Singapore's Cheryl Yuen, Orchard Parade Hotel & The Elizabeth Hotel's Alvin Yeoh, Star Holiday Mart's Dominic Ong together with Tour East's Karin Lee and Thao



◀ From left: Swiss-Garden International's Kem Siew, Eastin Hotel's Mary Ann Harris, Holiday Villa Hotel & Suites' Christine Colon, Wina Holiday Villa's Devi Junita and Kenneth de Silva with Lily Chiok



▲ Proof of having an absolutely wild and fun evening – showing off those pearly whites!



◀ From left: Serenity Holding's Timothy Lai, Hotel Collection Indochina's Nguyen Nhut Quynh Anh and Doan Ngoc Tuyet Anh, Sandy Beach Danang's Christy Truong Thi Kim Chi, The Imperial Hotel's Anna Vu Thi Thanh Nhan, Fortuna Hotel's Vera Ngo Thanh Huong and Charlie Dam Xuan Minh with Ho Chi Minh City's Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism's Nguyen Van Cuong



▲ From left: Triway Vacations' Lokesh Bettaiah, Wellfare Holiday World's K. Vijay Mohan, Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor's Leah Holzworth and Jagsons Travels' Harmandeep Singh Anand