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No. 1694/October 4 – 17, 2013

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# More Thai-Myanmar tours

Opening of four borders triggers new overland products connecting both countries

**By Greg Lowe**  
**BANGKOK** Inbound operators are developing new products in response to Myanmar's recent opening of four land borders with Thailand, a move that will catalyse the rise of multi-destination tours within the region. Targeting travellers seeking soft adventure and cultural experiences, most traffic is expected to flow from Thailand into Myanmar, where visitors will likely leave by air from Yangon and Mandalay. However, it may be too early to identify trends along the new routes as the border crossings at Mae Sot-Myawaddy, Mae Sai-Tachileik, Ranong-Kawthaung and Sunaron-Htee Khee only opened late August. Nonetheless, Khiri Travel has already launched a coach tour between Sukhothai and Yangon, which includes sightseeing and kayaking around Hpa-An and in Mon and Kayin states. Exotismo Travel has also started pre-

senting overland tour options to "more adventurous clients" but is waiting to roll out any broader packages. Edwin Briels, general manager of Khiri Travel Myanmar, said: "The opening of this border will certainly lead to more people travelling overland between the countries, as we see more clients who want to experience a country and not just hop from one place to another by airplane, but get to know the country and its people in an experiential, immersive way." Meanwhile Phoenix Voyages has adopted a more cautious approach. "We have only developed a few ideas," said managing director Jean Michel Romon. "We are always careful about border



Briels: experiential itineraries

openings (in Myanmar). They have been opened and closed then opened again (in the past). We need to gain the trust of customers first." Romon added that developing infrastructure on the Myanmar side of the border, especially the road between Mae Sot and Hpa-An, would be essential to making the overland route a success. "Chiang Mai-Mae Sot-Hpa-An-Mawlamyine-Yangon tours will emerge as a trend over the next two to three years (once the road is completed)," he said. According to operators, the Mae Sot-Myawaddy crossing will be the most popular entry point into Myanmar. Adventure tourists in their mid-20s to mid-30s and the over-50s looking for cultural and immersive experiences are most likely to pioneer the routes, while initial source markets will be from South-east Asia, Europe, the US, Australia and New Zealand. The trade hopes that such

developments will strengthen tourism in both countries, with multi-destination tours within the region proliferating in the run-up to the inauguration of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. Over in Myanmar, the developments are also being hailed as a step in the right direction. Phyu Phyu Mar, managing director of Seven Star Tours, said: "(This) will increase the number of tourist arrivals through Thailand. We can even design different border packages between Myanmar and Thailand. I hope we can see more visitors coming through these border checkpoints in the peak season beginning October." Ko Aung Naing, managing director of EPG Travel, added: "I am waiting to see when the Three Pagodas Pass (also on the Thai-Myanmar border) will be opened, which is a nice border area for tourism activities." – **Additional reporting by Rahul Khanna in Yangon**

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# Spaniards lose buying power

**By Xinyi Liang-Pholsena**  
**PTM 2013, CHENGDU** The ailing Spanish economy has taken a toll on outbound business to Asia. Teresa Sans, manager of Sol D'or Spain, said: "Outbound leisure and incentive segments have been quiet this year, although the corporate segment is still good. Our incentive business has dropped 15 per cent since two years ago, while leisure business went down by 20 per cent during the same period." According to Emily Bong, Asia-Pacific contract manager for TransHotel Spain, the global B2B travel provider has also seen business volume from Spain dip by 20 per cent since 2012. Meanwhile, repercussions of

the Spanish economic slump are being felt by Asian sellers. "Since last year, the Spanish market has gone down by a third during July to September (the peak outbound travel season for Spanish nationals). While the Spanish market used to make up five to 10 per cent of our business, it is now less than five per cent," said Sabine Widmann, chief sales officer, ICS Travel Group Thailand. Ray Clark, general manager of The Samaya Bali, commented: "Five years ago, the Spanish market was visibly vibrant but it has since lost its impetus in the last two to three years." "The Spanish market used to represent about 18 per cent of our European business, but it

is now down to one to two per cent," he added. "We have since turned to Germany, the UK, France and Switzerland to pick up the slack from Spain." "Although FITUR this year was very well visited, I also saw a lot of Spanish tour operators looking for jobs instead." Spain has also evolved to become a very price-sensitive market, trade players observed. Said Clark: "Spanish travellers used to stay at our property for 21 days; now they stay an aver-

age of seven days and opt to spend their money on cheaper options outside the resort instead." Sol D'or's Sans added: "The Spanish used to book six months in advance (for their trips), but it is now down to one to two months as many are waiting for last-minute, discounted offers from travel agencies." Widmann noted that Spain's travel landscape is changing. "Upscale tour operators are now being bought over by big tour

operators, while the remaining big players rely on cut-throat rates in order to sell." Spain's largest vertically integrated travel group, Globalia, recently revealed plans to axe up to 175 of its travel agencies, which have been a major source of clients for its longhaul tour operator, Latitudes. The country's economic woes had already vanquished another leading travel group, Orizonia, early this year. Joey del Rosario, director of operations, Anset Holidays Philippines, said: "Spanish arrivals to the Philippines will definitely be affected if this planned closure of several travel agencies eventually takes place. Considering that the Philippines has very limited media exposure in Spain, much less information about the country will be available." – **Additional reporting by Rosa Ocampo in Manila**



# Indonesia guns for low budget, high impact

With its budget slashed, the NTO focuses on key markets and ropes in private sector

By Mimi Hudoyo

**JAKARTA** Key source markets such as China, Russia, Singapore, Malaysia and India will receive the bulk of Indonesia's destination marketing efforts come 2014, when the country trims the coffers of all its government agencies to fund next year's general and presidential elections.

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy's budget for 2014 will be almost halved, from Rp160 billion (US\$14.2 million) this year to some Rp88 billion.

The weakening rupiah will also inflict another blow, as "the (in-market) marketing budget, which is in foreign currency, will decrease", according to tourism minister, Mari Elka Pangestu.

However, there might be a chance to apply for additional funds for "new initiatives", revealed Pangestu.

The ministry will need to propose to the Indonesian parliament new initiatives it

will embark on for international promotions and how these funds will be utilised in order to request for an additional budget, said Esthy Reko Astuty, director general of tourism marketing.

Meanwhile, in response to the budget cut and poor world economic health, the NTO has revised its arrivals target from 10 million to 9.5 million.

In China, the ministry will invest in television advertisements and online marketing, as "more and more people there do their (travel) research online," Pangestu explained.



Borobudur

The ministry is also planning major programmes to attract Chinese travellers, with details to be unveiled by end-2013.

Pangestu added that the ministry would focus on a "low budget, high impact" strategy by working closely with the travel industry to keep Indonesia top of mind among travellers.

Director of international promotions, Nia Niscaya, told *TTG Asia*: "We will focus on major travel marts such as ITB Berlin, but will cut down on overseas festivals." This includes requests to send cultural troupes overseas to perform at functions organised by Indonesian embassies.

Costs of overseas sales missions could also be reduced by inviting sponsorship from the private sector companies that make up the delegation, she shared.

"We will forge partnerships with organisations such as financial institutions, mobile

communication operators, transportation companies and hotels to create joint marketing programmes," Niscaya said, adding that she is now in talks with a Chinese bank in Indonesia to jointly organise a sales mission to six cities in China in November.

"(The bank) can probably pay for the venues and we handle the (booth) construction. In return, (the bank) can participate in some of our events in Indonesia to gain more brand awareness," she said.

Last month, the ministry also joined hands with Accor and Pegasus Touristik to promote Bali and other Indonesian destinations in Moscow. The arrangement saw Pegasus Touristik handling buyer attendance, Accor providing the event venue and dinner, and the ministry bringing in cultural performances.

Pegasus Touristik was hosting a wholesalers' meeting there, while the ministry wanted to take the opportunity to promote Solo and Jogjakarta as heritage destinations, said Niscaya.

Marintur executive director, Ismail Ali, also recommends partnerships between the tourism ministry and other government agencies to market Indonesia together.

"Travellers today do not only travel for leisure, but are also looking for business and investment opportunities overseas. It will be good to have the tourism authority joining forces with the Ministry of Industry and the investment board to promote Indonesia," he suggested.

Some trade players were not worried by the budget cut. Lombok and Sumbawa Tourism Promotion Board chairman, Awan Aswinabawa, explained that "industry players would still have their own promotion budget", which will help to raise awareness of Indonesia as a destination.

The ministry's promotions will continue to focus on destinations beyond Bali, such as those in North Sumatra as well as West and East Nusa Tenggara. – **Additional reporting by S Puvaneswary in Kuala Lumpur**



Pangestu: maxmise budget

## Relaxed visa rules in the offing for Taiwan

By Xinyi Liang-Pholsena

**PTM 2013, CHENGDU** Bolstered by positive performance in attracting FIT travellers from Greater China and Japan, Taiwan now wants to widen its pie to include more Asia-Pacific markets.

"Japan, Hong Kong and Macau have always been driving the FIT market into Taiwan. Hong Kong is especially big in this segment – of the one million Hong Kong arrivals, some 70 per cent are FIT travellers," said Wayne Liu, deputy director general of Taiwan Tourism Bureau.

Due to the ease of communication, China has become the fastest-growing market for FIT travel to Taiwan, with the segment surging 200 per cent year-

on-year so far this year, according to Liu.

At the same time, Taiwan is casting its sights farther to South-east Asia, with a particular interest in capturing travellers from Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Liu noted: "Vietnam has been showing significant potential in the FIT segment, chalking up 20 per cent growth so far this year."

"Taiwan is more suited as an FIT destination for travellers to fully explore its charms and attractions at their own pace," he added. "Furthermore, we have one of the world's highest concentration of convenience stores like 7-Eleven which, with their restrooms, Internet connection and younger-generation staff

equipped with better English skills, can easily double as service centres for travellers."

In addition, the NTO website is already offered in various

South-east Asian languages, while its Digital Tour Buddy – a complimentary handphone rental with a 24-hour dedicated tourism service hotline – will enable non-Mandarin speaking travellers to explore the country on their own.

Liu views Japan's recent visa waiver as "healthy competition" for Taiwan in the quest for more South-east Asian arrivals, although he acknowledged that looser visa rules and more flight connections remain critical to wooing more FIT arrivals from the region.

The bureau is hence working with the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to look into relaxing visa rules for South-east Asian groups before extending it to FITs.

Meanwhile, the NTO has adopted a four-pronged approach, including easing visa regulations, participating in travel exhibitions, working with tour operators and partnering airlines to roll out more competitively priced packages in South-east Asian markets.



Liu: big money in FIT segment

## South America shines for South-east Asian sellers

**BANGKOK** DMCs in South-east Asia are testifying to a surge in longhaul business from South America, driven by the latter's fast-developing economies and growing connections to Asia via the Middle East.

"We have experienced average growth of 25-50 per cent in interest and actual business from South America over the last two years," said Sabine Widmann, chief sales officer of ICS Travel Group, which has representatives in Mexico, Columbia, Brazil and Chile.

She attributed the significant spike to strong South American economies, which have spawned an increase in rich travellers seeking new destinations beyond the US and Caribbean.

Other Thailand-based DMCs are equally positive about the South American markets.

To tap this market, Exotissimo Travel launched a sales office earlier this year in Rio de Janeiro to oversee Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Peru and Columbia.

Exotissimo COO, Hamish Keith, expects growth from this region to reach 70-80 per cent this year. He said: "South American travellers tend to be high-end and stay at top-end hotels. They fly into Thailand and typically do three destinations, sometimes even four or five."

Claudio Kellenberger, deputy managing director of Asian Trails, added: "We don't have any longhaul market with numbers lower than last year. South America is doing extremely well with (passenger volume) at 25 per cent higher."

Despite being small in absolute numbers compared with traditional markets, Brazil is also steadily rising for Khiri Travel, growing from one group in 2012 to five groups booked for next year, said general manager, Andre van der Mark.

He noted: "They are (big) spenders...who will include all sightseeing and meals, engage Spanish-speaking tour leaders and go for special experiences such as photography. They are very much interested in culture, combining both Thailand with the Greater Mekong subregion countries." – **Xinyi Liang-Pholsena**

**"South American travellers tend to be high-end and stay at top-end hotels."**

**Hamish Keith**  
COO  
Exotissimo Travel



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Here's what you've missed

## Tourism Data



Thailand remains a top holiday destination in Asia, with three cities featured on TripAdvisor's list of Top 20 Most Popular

Outbound Destinations for Chinese Travellers. Phuket, Bangkok and Chiang Mai were ranked second, fourth and 12<sup>th</sup> respectively based on unique visitor numbers to TripAdvisor's daodao.com, during July and August. Other cities in the top 10 were Hong Kong, Paris, Dubai, Macau, Seoul and Singapore.

## Adam Tan

Making a roadtrip to look at pigs might not sound an obvious attraction, but the animals in question are not any old porkers. Banking on the growth in 'foodie' tourism, Spain's Ministry of Agriculture has started promoting Iberico ham routes through lesser-known areas of the country.

## Hot Deals

Crystal Cruises has partnered Imagine VIP for its new Crystal Celebrations event service, which allows passengers to plan and hold events on board or at any port where Crystal Cruises' ships call. Pre-planned Crystal Celebrations such as a Crystal Vow Renewal Celebration, priced from US\$2,095, can be viewed on the cruise operator's site.



# Theme park challenge



In 2012, attendance at Asia-Pacific's top 20 theme parks rose just 5.8 per cent... regional cruising did much better!

Raini Hamdi  
Senior Editor

**T**heme park experts believe that having a storyline is what makes the difference between a run-of-the-mill attraction and a compelling one, saying this is "the most overlooked aspect", particularly in Asia (see our theme parks report, pages 12-13).

It seems to be the most basic thing a *theme* park should have, isn't it?

But a theme is not a story, which is probably where many theme parks trip over: they find a theme, say, pirates, and anything associated with pirates, goes. Having both theme *and* story also does not automatically mean you have a storyline. I remember my first theme park experience as a child – Singapore's Haw Par Villa – which has a theme and a story, the hellish exhibits striking dread than bringing thrills. Till today, I still believe Haw Par Villa, with its more 1,000 gaudy statues and 150 dioramas that dramatise Chinese legends and folklore, could be one of the world's unique theme parks – if only it had a storyline.

So just what is a storyline? An India-born author once told me how he became a best-seller. First, he finds a good story to tell. He does helluva lot of research. He plots the story. It is crystal clear in his mind what will happen to whom, why, how, etc, even before the first word is written.

Then comes the hardest part: telling the story. And I never forget his advice:

"Try *not* to tell the story," he said.

"Huh?" said I.

"Try not to tell the story to the reader," he repeated. "Make him *see* the story, *feel* the story, *smell* it – just like he's watching a scene in a movie."

Like authors, theme park developers are in the business of providing content. Unlike authors, who have only words to make a scene come alive, theme

park developers, especially in this day and age, are able to use high technology to make a story come alive and create an experience for visitors.

This has become even more critical in the face of a generation of kids who grow up on interactive gadgets which – every parent would know – are so compelling that there is no need to go to a theme park for fun and entertainment.

To be sure, Asia's theme parks have progressed a lot since my Haw Par Villa days, and more theme parks are being built in the region – look at the massive Chimelong Ocean Kingdom on Hengqin Island in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, Cartoon-Network-themed waterpark in Bang Saray, 10km south of Pattaya, and Shanghai Disney Resort, to name a few.

Much of this supply, however, is riding on the rising middle class in the region, which has a higher propensity to spend, not necessarily because theme parks are a compelling proposition in themselves. In 2012, attendance at Asia-Pacific's top 20 theme parks rose just 5.8 per cent – a single-digit increase despite continued economic growth in the region last year. Regional cruising did much better!

The question existing and future theme parks need to ask is: What happens after the first or second visit? Is the theme park compelling enough to keep local visitors coming back and to attract international visitors?

After all, theme parks compete with other kinds of attractions for Asia's 4.1 billion population – indeed, with travel itself, which has become so reachable to the masses as a form of entertainment.

The answer goes back to theme parks avoiding the worst fate they can possibly have: being a big bore.

For that, they need a storyline.

## Most commented on www.ttgasia.com

### RIP, hotel marketing?

In response to Raini Hamdi's blog post questioning the survival of hotel marketing today, Nelli Yong from Singapore wrote: "As someone who has spent her whole career in marketing – from convention marketing to destination marketing, to hotel property marketing, single-brand regional marketing and AP marketing for a global hotel company with nine brands – I read your article with much interest.

"I can certainly identify with the points you raised as sometimes shortcuts are taken or the proper career path is short-circuited (due to lack of talent). But it's certainly not RIP as thankfully there are the brand marketers in the world who truly understand the craft."

### SilkAir weaves Jogjakarta into flight network

SilkAir will commence thrice-weekly direct flights between Singapore and Jogjakarta on November 25. Nugroho Setiatmadji from Jakarta said: "With SilkAir's new direct flight linking Singapore to Jogjakarta, Singaporeans will benefit as they can fly directly to one more of many top Indonesian destinations. Jogjakarta citizens will also appreciate the convenience."



### India orders airline commission for agencies

On India's Ministry of Civil Aviation reinstating airline commissions for travel consultants, Peter J Lawrence from Kaohsiung wrote: "And they should, this has been a long time coming. Why should travel consultants support airlines that don't support them?"

### PAL resumes Europe flight line-up with London

On PAL's new flights to London, Roger Begre from Paranaque commented: "Congratulations to PAL, it took a long time but things are finally looking up for the flag carrier."

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TTG Asia Media is pleased to announce that it is setting up a virtual TTG Travel Hall of Fame, which will enable us to showcase the accolades, artefacts and memorabilia of the region's most exceptional travel organisations in a far more effective way and to a global audience.





# Asian tourism at the fore

## TravelRave leverages its unique position in the region

By Karen Yue

**SINGAPORE** The fourth edition of TravelRave, held from October 21 to 25 this year, will feature eight events under its umbrella, all coming together to address ways to sustain Asia's strong tourism growth.

These events are Asia Pacific Tourism Destination Investment Conference, Asia Travel Leaders Summit, Aviation Outlook Asia, Hotel Technology Conference, ITB Asia, Singapore Experience Awards, Web in Travel Conference and UIA Associations Round Table – Asia 2013.

Jeannie Lim, executive director, conventions & meetings and exhibitions & conferences of Singapore Tourism Board (STB), which champions TravelRave, told *TTG Asia* that the annual tourism trade festival has played an important role in helping Asia's travel trade players move in tandem with the region's rapid development.

"This year the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has projected international arrivals to grow three to

four per cent, while the projection for Asia-Pacific is at five per cent, far outstripping the growth of other regions," said Lim.

"But when we looked around, we found there were no regional events that were focused on developing travel and tourism in Asia. Many of the trade marts we have today are buyers-meet-sellers sort of set-ups. That was why we came up with TravelRave, structuring it on a quality content basis to link people in the entire tourism industry value chain, allowing them to share business opportunities, learn from each other and find ways to collaborate."

Lim pointed out that the one key challenge facing Asia's travel professionals was the "rapid pace of growth that has led some people to question the sustainability of (the region's) tourism performance".

The issue of human capital development will be addressed at events such as the Future Leaders Forum, where students and industry members will discuss tourism careers and internships.

Consumer trends of the Millennial Generation will also be highlighted through STB's partnership with McKinsey & Company, the knowledge partner of the Asia Travel Leaders Summit.

One of the "most exciting" new features this year, according to Lim, is the UIA Associations Round Table – the first edition to be held in Asia. "The event will not only feature strong speakers from Europe but also Asia, to give a regional perspective of the associations market. This allows associations in Asia to learn from their Western counterparts and meet other MICE players."

This year's TravelRave will also continue to field strong speakers, panellists and participants such as David Scowsill, president/CEO of WTTC and Henning Boysen, chairman of Kuoni Group.



Lim: cultivating tourism in Asia

# Panorama gets adventurous

By S Puvaneswary

**KUALA LUMPUR** Adventure tourism in Malaysia has received a new proponent in tour operator Panorama Tours Malaysia, which has produced a series of interactive holiday packages to complement its existing inbound tours.

Developed in June, these packages span three to five days and includes activities such as mountain biking, white-water rafting and rock climbing in the forests of Pahang and Perak.

Panorama managing director, Richard Vuilleumier, observed that while all inbound tour operators were doing roundtrip tours, adventure travel remained a niche market.

"We wish to be a market leader in adventure tourism," he said.

The programmes were derived from Vuilleumier's own passion for extreme sports and four-wheel drive adventures.

Since their launch, Panorama's

adventure packages have seen take-up mainly from the Middle Eastern and Asian markets.

Said Vuilleumier: "We are encouraged by the response and plan to market (the packages) to travel consultants overseas at tradeshows such as IT&CMA, Leisure in Moscow, ITB Asia, World Travel Mart and ITB Berlin."

For leisure tourists who wish to discover more about Kuala Lumpur's attractions, the company has also recently developed a half-day Amazing Race programme. Clients are given a set of clues to solve a puzzle and will move around the Malaysian capital via public transport.

Vuilleumier said: "Travellers today wish to be more involved and to take home good memories. They are no longer content with sitting in a coach and being taken around on tours. This programme has been well received by the Philippines market."

**"Travellers are no longer content with sitting in a coach and being taken around on tours."**

Richard Vuilleumier, managing director, Panorama Tours Malaysia

# Cutting business deals in Chengdu

## The recent PATA Travel Mart saw 550 sellers meeting 473 buyers over three days



Dorsett Grand Chengdu's Cindy Zhang, Dorsett Wuhan's David Zhang, Dorsett Hospitality International Malaysia's David Teoh, Dorsett Wuhan's Leslie Wan, Dorsett Hospitality International Hong Kong's Philip Schaetz and Vivian Lo, Dorsett Hospitality International Malaysia's Decky Kwok, Dorsett Singapore's Frankie Lam and Dorsett Hospitality International Hong Kong's Melpo Wong



TTG Asia Media's managing director Darren Ng accepts the 2013 PATA Gold Awards' Travel Journalism – Business Article Award, bestowed to the company's dedicated MICE publication, *TTGmice*, for the third time since 2008. The winning article, *A brighter shade of green*, was written by group editor and *TTGmice* editor Karen Yue, examining the degree to which green credentials of Asia's convention and exhibition centres had influenced show organisers' choice of business event venues. It was published as the cover story of the July 2012 edition of *TTGmice*.

Mytravelresearch.com Australia's Carolyn Childs, SKÅL International Thailand's Dale Lawrence and Mytravelresearch.com Australia's Bronwyn White



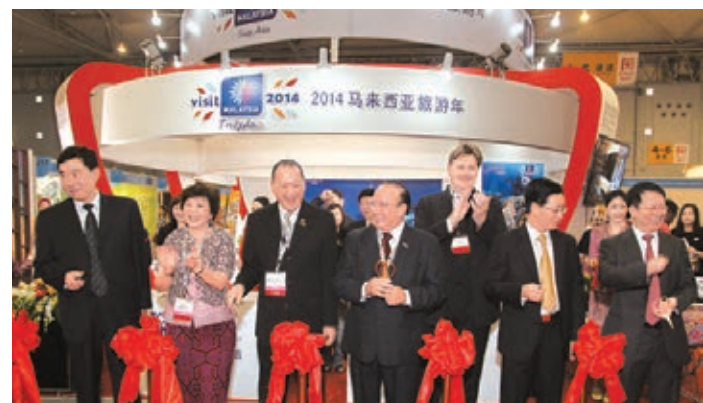
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Associated Tours Hong Kong's Ken Chang



M Hotel Chengdu's Eric Liu and Jac-Travel Hong Kong's Stephanie Li



Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia's Mohamed Nazri bin Abdul Aziz (third from left) signals the opening of the Malaysia pavilion at PATA Travel Mart 2013 with a snip of the auspicious red ribbon





# Understand how Millennials think



In the first of a two-part series, Laurenz Koehler, managing partner, Duxton Consulting, offers insights into the minds of Millennials

**Perception versus reality**  
The perception that Millennials have of the industry doesn't reflect its reality. The travel industry requires brains and talent, and hence offers well-paid and high-status jobs as most other service industries do.  
To my understanding, the travel industry is today more sophisticated and, marketing-wise, much better thought out than before. Given the amount of money spent on travel, expected growth of new and emerging markets as well as new budget airlines and much cheaper access to travel, the travel industry should hold better and wider opportunities for Millennials.  
Plus travel is still very aspi-

rational for most Asians since working in the travel industry is perceived to offer easier access to more and better travel options. In the eyes of Millennials, the travel industry is still attractive for the sheer fact that they are able to meet their aspiration to travel and see the world as well as meet and deal with diverse people from different international backgrounds.  
However, the issue is that their perception is stuck at the low-end of the market: Millennials don't see a clear path to progress or how they can move up the ladder. Even if entry-level jobs are indeed very hard and low-paying, Millennials would put up with this if they see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. But they don't – they perceive the en-

tire industry as low paying and are not interested in it.  
**Limitations of our study**  
Our fieldwork was done in Singapore only, so we cannot claim the findings to be true for regional or global Millennials. However, based on similar projects we have undertaken in Malaysia and other countries, we believe this mindset would be found across the region and maybe even globally.  
**Why they think that way**  
First of all, Millennials' perception of the industry requiring low educational skills is formed by interacting mainly with lower-end personnel of the travel and tourism market.  
Secondly, Millennials are very

**Here's what Millennials think of the travel industry, according to a Duxton Consulting Singapore study:**

- does not pay well
- requires no brains, smarts
- does not value education and skills
- low-status jobs
- does not project a professional image

self-confident and believe they can tackle almost any challenge and opportunity due to their upbringing in the Internet age. They believe they are able to develop solutions for almost any problem when they graduate from college or university. However, they face problems adjusting to the reality of entry-level jobs where they tackle very simple challenges and adapt to a job scope they feel is undervaluing their skills. Unless they have a very good manager and/or a clear path of career progression that allows them to advance within the company or industry, they get fed up very easily. Millennials quit much faster once they feel stuck in a role with no immediate perspective to gain momentum for their career again.  
**What's being done wrong**  
Employer brand/image: most travel-related companies don't have a very friendly and interesting employer brand or image. Many companies are seen to exploit talent and to be interested

in the cheapest labour possible. Compared with the PR-driven employer brands the likes of Google and eBay, travel-related companies are perceived to have nothing to offer because just offering a job or a salary is simply not enough.  
Career path: there is no clear outlook on how Millennials can develop, gain new knowledge and advance in their career. Also, there are minimal feedback mechanisms from their superiors and no real interest to invest in Millennials via training that goes beyond the basics.  
Rigid job scope: there are very strict and boxed-up job descriptions in the industry, and not much leeway for an individual to make his/her own decisions and contribute beyond just fulfilling a simple task.  
*Look out for the second part of this series, where Koehler offers tips on how the industry can overcome these challenges and rebrand itself as an employer of choice.*

Case study

## Tailor-made for women

**WHAT** A spin-off brand from Hong Kong's Travel Expert, Tailor Made Holidays (TMH) boasts the first-ever women-oriented travel concept in town. It officially kicked off in late April with retail outlets in Kowloon Bay's Telford Plaza and Kowloon MTR station.  
TMH offers themed FIT packages meant to wow female clients, such as cosmetic tours in South Korea as well as cooking classes and spa visits in Thailand. Details such as hotel locations are also well thought out. Its shopping product, for example, is packed with choices of hotels situated next to malls. In addition to shorthaul destinations, upscale ones farther away like the Seychelles are also included.  
In terms of retailfront, shop design is more girlish and there are designated spaces for ladies' handbags.  
**WHO** Founded in 1986, Travel Expert (Asia) Enterprises started out arranging air tickets and offering hotel reservation services to independent travellers. This helped consolidate its expertise in the FIT segment, allowing it to go public in 2011. Currently, it has 65 outlets at easily accessible locations like MTR stations. Apart from TMH and Travel Expert (TE), the company



also has brands reaching out to the business travel and cruise segments.  
**WHY** Travel Expert (Asia) Enterprises CEO, Alfred Kam, said: "Having multiple brands enables us to serve different target segments as the TE brand is mass market, while TMH was created in view of the burgeoning number of female travellers due to their rising social status and key decision-making role when planning family travel."  
TMH also launched in China early this year but there it caters to the high-end wholesale FIT market looking for quality products and more privacy. Kam said that about 90 per cent of outbound traffic from China is still group tours so there is room for growth for the FIT business.  
He explained: "The birth of our B2B model in China can be attributed to the rising number of travel agencies and consumers who want to buy from a quality Hong Kong brand when making overseas travel."  
**TARGET** TMH targets mid- to high-end female clients aged 25-40 as the trend is for more of them to travel in small groups now, said Kam.  
There are also plans to add one or two shops in travel zones within key shopping arcades.  
In China, the sales team will initially focus on travel consultants operating in the Pearl River Delta region, such as Shenzhen and Foshan.  
– Prudence Lui

TTG Travel Pursuits

Compiled by The Fox

## Humour

LetterLite

A light-hearted section where we take a word, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing just one letter – and giving it a new definition:

- **Wiji.** Occult island destination in the Pacific.
- **Tebu.** Out-of-bounds destination in the Philippines.
- **TaiFan.** Popular island destination among Facebook users.
- **Pali.** Friendly island destination in Indonesia.



## QUIZ

1. Japan's second-biggest outbound travel agency, after JTB, is HIS. What does HIS stand for?
  2. Virgin Australia bought shares of which two airlines in the past year?
  3. The number of China outbound travellers has reached what milestone?
  4. Which big two hotel groups have new CEOs?
  5. History: Singapore Tourism Board was originally STPB. What did STPB stand for?
1. Hides' International Services, although this is now rarely used.  
2. Tigerair Australia (still partly owned by Singapore-based Tiger Airways Holdings) and Perth-based Skywest.  
3. 100 million! Travel Business Analyst forecasts it has already reached that on a running 12-month basis. COTRI (China Outbound Tourism Research Institute) says it will reach 100 million around July 2013-June 2014. (Both include travel to Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan.)  
4. Sebastian Babin at France-based Accor. Allen Smith at Canada-based Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.  
5. Singapore Tourist Promotion Board. It was renamed STB, Singapore Tourism Board, in 1997.

# NATAS

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Email [events@natas.travel](mailto:events@natas.travel) or 6577 3151 (Magdalene) or 6577 3152 (Jeffrey).

### 1.30 pm Registration

### 2.00 pm Introduction/ Welcome Remarks

Mr William Tan, President, NATAS

### 2.15 pm Keynote Address: Opportunities in Challenging Times

SPEAKER



**Mr Ho Kwon Ping | Executive Chairman, Banyan Tree Holdings**

Mr Ho is Executive Chairman of Banyan Tree Holdings, which owns listed and private companies engaged in the the development, ownership, and operation of properties around the world. Mr Ho launched Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts in 1994, and was recently awarded CNBC's Travel Business Leader Award Asia Pacific 2012.

### 3.00pm Mergers & Consolidation

Learn how mergers, consolidations and collaborations can benefit your business, and gather insights from the Delta Air Lines/Northwest Airlines merger and consolidation process.

SPEAKER



**Mr Yeoh Hock Thye | General Manager Singapore, Malaysia & Indonesia, Delta Air Lines Inc**

Mr Yeoh oversees Delta's commercial activities in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia and manages relationships with key regional partners such as BCD Travel. His 23 years in the airline industry include management positions in Singapore Airlines and Northwest Airlines.

### 3.20 pm How Travel Agents Can Operate An Efficient And Profitable Business

Discover ways to operate an efficient and profitable business while being financially prudent. Gain valuable consumer insights for travel and explore opportunities in ancillary revenues with MasterCard.

SPEAKER



**Ms Julianne Loh | General Manager, MasterCard Worldwide Asia Pacific**

Ms. Loh oversees all aspects of the business in Singapore, with the objective of promoting the MasterCard family of brands as a solution to drive business results for Singapore.

### 3.40 pm Growing Sales Opportunities Harnessing Technology

Find out how GDS booking fees have impacted airlines and travel agents, and learn best practices for partnerships with GDS.

SPEAKER



**Mr Brett Henry | Vice President, Commercial, Abacus International**

Mr Henry is responsible for sales, marketing, product deployment, customer services and business development for 31 markets across Asia-Pacific. He has over 20 years of travel industry experience.

### 4.00 pm Why Should Travel Agents Go Into Niche Marketing?

Learn why niche marketing is the way to go for travel agents, and find out what opportunities this sector can offer you. Learn how to build your clientele for special interest tours.

SPEAKER



**Mr Chang Theng Hwee | Managing Director, Country Holidays Travel**

In 1993, Mr Chang founded Country Holidays Travel, which has flourished to become a leading travel company in Asia Pacific. It specialises in high-quality trips to adventure and exotic destinations, and unique experiences in popular destinations.

### 4.20 pm How Can Travel Agents Partner With Google In Challenging Times?

Learn how a partnership with Google can benefit travel agents and other industry players in these challenging times, and how you can use technology to better serve business and clients.

SPEAKER



**Mr Alan Gertner | Industry Manager, Online Travel Agencies, Google**

Alan leads the online travel business for Google Southeast Asia, working with online travel agency partners across the region to create innovative and impactful solutions that drive travel business forward.

### 4.40 pm Panel Discussion with all speakers

Moderator: Ms Jacqueline Chow, Host, Fly Entertainment

### 5.15 pm Networking Coffee Break

\*One free registration per NATAS Member on a first-come-first served basis. A refundable S\$80 commitment fee applies for all free registrations.

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# Soaring on the back of Asia

**Sim Kok Chwee** looks at three success stories of carriers that have carved their own niche

**S**nugly wedged between the highly acclaimed longhaul full-service carriers and the very aggressive low-cost carriers are three successful regional airlines – Dragonair, SilkAir and Bangkok Airways – who are by no means miniscule. Each of these three is bigger than some of the flag carriers in the region and are equally at home competing against or cooperating with much larger airlines. At a time when full-service longhaul carriers struggle to maintain market share and yield, these airlines ride on the vibrant regional economies and are performing robustly with better yields.

Although the circumstances leading to the birth of these three regional airlines are vastly different, their success is founded on a very similar formula – being based in a key aviation hub, being affiliated to a highly successful parent airline (with the exception of Bangkok Airways) and having a whole menu of interesting destinations to operate to within five hours' flying time.

Over time, each airline's network of destinations began to gain strength in specific markets – China for Dragonair, Indonesia for SilkAir and the Indochina region for Bangkok Airways.

The presence of small capacity aircraft in their fleets has allowed these carriers to be more adventurous and nimble in opening up services to destinations that larger carriers cannot profitably serve. And it is here that well-run

regional airlines are desirable partners for hub-to-hub full-service carriers.

## DRAGONAIR

Dragonair in its current form is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cathay Pacific Airways and provides onward carriage for many of its passengers arriving in Hong Kong. Back in 1985, the gulf between the two could not have been greater as Dragonair was privately owned and aimed to challenge Cathay Pacific's monster grip on Hong Kong. At a time when the Chinese market was a mere flicker of a very distant candle, Dragonair saw the potential of a market that Cathay Pacific missed. Fast forward to 2006, the incumbent and the challenger became one as Dragonair was fully acquired by Cathay Pacific in a strategic move that has proven to be valuable to both carriers and to Hong Kong.

Today, Dragonair operates its own aircraft to 22 Chinese cities, operating alongside Cathay Pacific on two Chinese routes – Beijing and Shanghai. Both airlines collectively operate about 400 weekly services to 22 cities in China.

Dragonair's CEO, Patrick Yeung, said: "With the hub synergy, Dragonair is able to pro-

vide extensive connections for regional and international passengers via the extensive international network of sister airline Cathay Pacific."

Recognising the value of Hong Kong as a gateway from and into the Pearl River Delta region, Dragonair provides a cross-border upstream check-in facility from six ports in five cities, namely Shenzhen Shekou, Shenzhen Fuyong, Dongguan Human, Zhongshan, Zhuhai Jiuzhou and Guangzhou Nansha. It also offers the same convenience at three locations in Shenzhen for those travelling overland to Hong Kong and travelling with Dragonair and Cathay Pacific.

Dragonair is no stranger to competition and faces 17 low-cost carriers at its home base, mostly from South-east Asia, China, Japan and South Korea. Together with Cathay Pacific, it is vehemently opposing the establishment of Jetstar Hong Kong, which only has a 33.3 per cent local shareholding and is seen by both as a franchise operation controlled from Australia. Indeed with slots at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) becoming increasingly scarce, the slots that are needed for organic growth will quickly fizzle out.

Cautioned Yeung: "HKIA is already very close to maximum capacity. Given that the lead time to construct the third run-



way is about 10 years, this means our home airport – so crucial to Hong Kong's economic success – will reach saturation point even before the third runway is completed."

Meanwhile, Dragonair continues to improve its value proposition, and in January 2013 it rolled out a major product enhancement, which includes its New Business Class and New Economy Class cabins together with a new inflight entertainment system named StudioKA.

## SILKAIR

SilkAir's birth was unconventional and it took the form of Tradewinds, a tours and travel arm for Singapore Airlines (SIA). In February 1989, it finally emerged as an airline – unsurprisingly named Tradewinds the Airline. At the time, there was another British airline by the same name and in April 1992, the SilkAir branding was born and the travel and tour operating arm became a wholly owned subsidiary.

SilkAir's CEO, Leslie Thng, said: "We play a role to extend the Singapore Airlines Group network by seeding and developing new and exciting destinations in the Asia-Pacific region."

The strength of regional markets has allowed SilkAir to outperform even SIA in terms of yield. Today, China, Indonesia and India are the key markets

that SilkAir continues to bet on. It currently operates to 11 cities in Indonesia, and by November 2013 it will reach a dozen with the addition of Jogjakarta to its network. It also serves eight cities in India and another seven in China.

In recent months, the load factor on SilkAir may have dropped but this is the result of a strategic move by the airline to grow its frequencies and capacities in these key markets at a pace that is slightly ahead of demand. It considers this to be medium- and long-term growth with the prospect of short-term bumps.

And often, the seeding function leads to both SilkAir and SIA operating parallel to one another to the same destinations – such as Surabaya and Yangon – to cater to different segments but more importantly, to hand over the already-developed higher-yield corporate market to SIA.

SIA and SilkAir provide strong cross-feeding into each other's network and according to Thng, "the proportion of passengers from Singapore Airlines connecting on to SilkAir has been seeing a healthy year-on-year increase". Currently, about half of its passengers are connecting from SIA flights. This allows SIA's longhaul passengers to travel from London to Lombok





on one fare and ticket with a single stop in Singapore.

SilkAir has also been extremely adept at sniffing out city pairs where it does not face any competitor, and it currently enjoys this exclusivity on services to Changsha, Chiang Mai, Chongqing, Coimbatore, Danang, Davao, Kathmandu, Lombok, Manado, Palembang, Solo and Visakhapatnam.

In an order that underscores SilkAir's confidence in the future, it ordered 23 Boeing 737-800s and the first of these will be delivered in February 2014. A parallel order for 31 Boeing 737-8Max will be delivered starting end-2017 or 2018.

Thng remarked: "Our new Boeing aircraft presents us with many exciting opportunities, one of which is the longer range on the B737Max compared to our existing aircraft. The new planes will allow us to fly farther, giving us the opportunity to look at expanding to destinations within a six-hour radius, compared to five hours now."

**BANGKOK AIRWAYS**

Bangkok Airways' existence dates back to 1968 when it was established under the Sahakol Air branding. At that time, it was purely aimed at supporting

the booming oil exploration and mining industries in the region. In 1986, it was designated as Thailand's first privately owned airline and in 1989, it took on its current name, Bangkok Airways.

To overcome its disadvantage of not having a parent airline with an extensive international network, Bangkok Airways has inked codeshares (with Etihad Airways, Malaysia Airlines, SilkAir and Japan Airlines) and prorated interlining agreements with many international airlines serving Thailand.

Bangkok Airways has yet another trump card – it built, owns and operates three airports at Koh Samui, Sukhothai and Trat. This offers comprehensive long-term spin-offs in the form of reduced user charges, aeronautical revenue (gained from other airlines wishing to serve Koh Samui) and non-aeronautical revenue from commercial space rentals at these airports. For some time, it successfully kept other airlines from serving Koh Samui but eventually relented.

The airline markets itself as Asia's Boutique Airline, a branding that allows it to maintain healthy yields. The opening up of Myanmar has also brought a windfall. The carrier has been quick to ramp up capacity and frequencies to Yangon, and in

Main Base	Fleet	Destinations
Dragonair		
Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong	19 x Airbus A330-300 15 x Airbus A320 6 x Airbus A321 On order: 20 x Airbus A330-300 15 x Airbus A320 6 x Airbus A321	44 destinations from Hong Kong, of which 22 are in China and 10 in South-east Asia
SilkAir		
Changi Airport, Singapore	6 x Airbus A319 17 x Airbus A320 On order: 23 x Boeing 737-800 31 x Boeing 737 MAX 8	42 destinations from Singapore, of which 11 are in Indonesia, 7 in China, 8 in India
Bangkok Airways		
Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok	9 x Airbus A319 5 x Airbus A320 8 x ATR72-500	8 domestic destinations in Thailand and 12 international destinations

September 2013 it added services to Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw. It consequently holds the distinction of being the only international airline to serve Nay Pyi Taw.

Today, Bangkok Airways' network comprises eight domestic cities (including its home base Bangkok) and 12 international destinations. Its coverage of China and India – markets that are of great importance to Dragonair and SilkAir – is extremely thin with only one destination in India (Mumbai) and none in China.

Although Bangkok Airways does not hold any orders for aircraft, it has in the last year acquired several previously owned Airbus A320s and A319s.

Back at its home base Suvarnabhumi Airport, congestion has resulted in the relocation of most domestic services by low-cost carriers to the re-opened Don Mueang Airport. This is a move that Bangkok Airways cannot consider in view of its valuable codeshare and interline arrangements with various airlines. In addition, the relief from moving LCCs away from Suvarnabhumi

Airport was temporary and congestion is once again beginning to set in.

**The future**

The three regional carriers have very successfully maintained and stamped their position on the greater aviation landscape, embracing the nimbleness and ability to quickly pounce on potential new destinations yet consistently deliver a brand of service that more closely matches those expected of large full-service carriers – perhaps even with a dash of informality and casualness.

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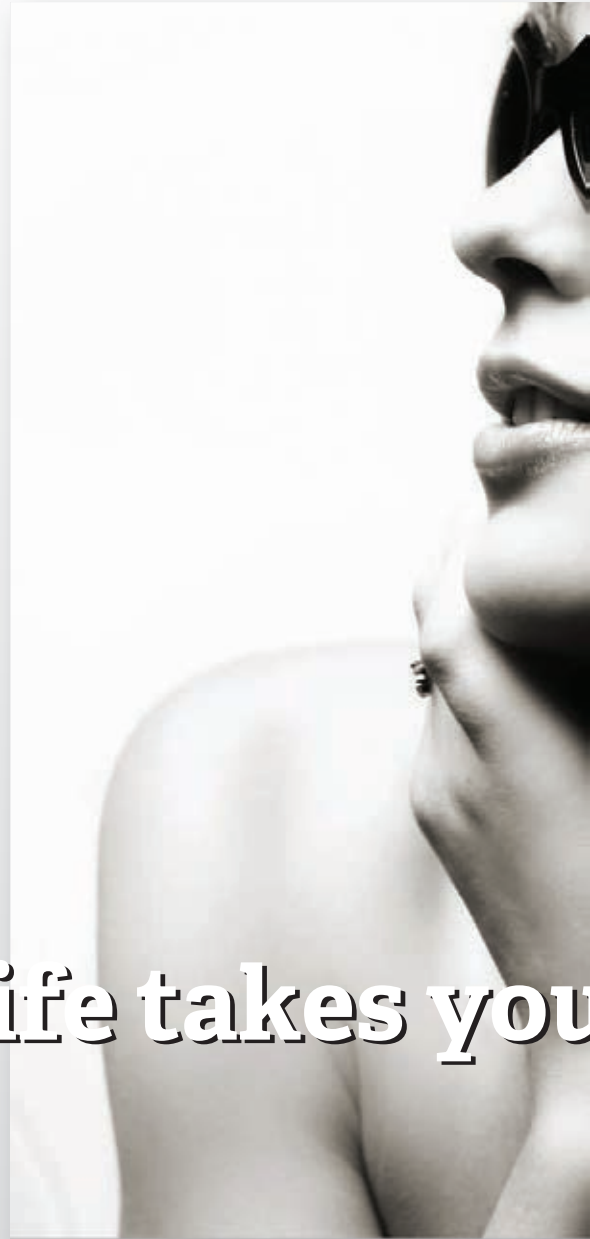
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# An explosion of fun

As theme parks flourish in Asia, expert producers urge differentiation through storyline. By **Karen Yue**

The year 2012 was a bountiful year for most of Asia-Pacific's top 20 theme parks, with total attendance rising 5.8 per cent to 108.7 million visitors, according to the 2012 Theme Index Global Attractions Attendance Report by the Themed Entertainment Association and the Economics Practice at AECOM.

The year before that was rocky too, with the region's top 20 players registering a total of 103.2 million visitors, up from 2010's 96.1 million. That was despite the dip in attendance at Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo Disney Sea (-3.2 per cent and -5.8 per cent respectively) in the aftermath of the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake. In fact, according to the 2011 Theme Index, the year was described as a bumper year for the region's industry.

Industry players agree that the robust performance of Asia's theme parks is due largely to the growing affluence of Asian consumers.

Mario O Mamon, vice chairman of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), noted that the region itself, with a population of 4.1 billion, provided a

strong feeder market for Asian playgrounds.

Mamon, who is also chairman and president of Enchanted Kingdom theme park in the Philippines, added: "Furthermore, the exponential growth of low-cost carriers in this region has enabled more people to travel and make frequent trips. They want new attractions and experiences, thus creating a great need for theme parks to innovate."

The crucial need to retain novelty is further compounded by the emergence of new attractions in the region and beyond.

Will Morey, chairman of IAAPA, and president/CEO of Morey's Piers in Wildwood, New Jersey, US, described the growth

of Asia's attractions industry as amazing, pointing to the number of major projects on the horizon such as Shanghai Disney Resort and Chimelong Ocean Kingdom in Zhuhai, China.

The race to outdo existing and upcoming attractions has created a "category of clients who want everything yesterday", said Edward S Marks, executive and co-CEO of The Producers Group, a global attraction development and production specialist.

"These clients are willing to lose some originality (in order to open quick). They tend to point at existing attractions and say 'we want one of those'. They are not a good fit for my company, as we design ideas," said Marks.

"We are also seeing a big trend worldwide towards media-driven attractions – rides that utilise 3D, 4D technology, for instance – and some attractions in China are completely media-driven."

Theme park producers have, however, warned against relying heavily on high-tech rides to draw visitors. Karlson Yang, international business manager of Playfun Culture & Technology Co Shenzhen, which plans and designs amusement projects in China, explained simply: "Technology is easy to replicate."

Natasha Varnica, CEO, global business development of US-based IdeAttack, said: "There is too much emphasis on the use of technology in theme parks. Any developer can create a high-tech ride or product that requires visitors to touch a screen and get a reaction, but few can perfect a unique storyline."

Varnica pointed out that having a unique storyline was all the more important now, as "the young generation today is addicted to video games and game apps on smartphones".

"One of the biggest challenges facing theme park developers today is to come up with a compelling experience that a video game

or game app cannot provide," she said.

Marks concurs, adding that the storyline is "the most overlooked aspect" of a theme park, a problem prevalent in Asia.

Fortunately, the growing presence of new, world-class theme parks and attractions in Asia is a boon for the industry, as it helps to raise the standards of properties, opined Paul Noland, president and CEO of IAAPA. He said: "The presence of world-class attractions helps to expand the market, as they educate the market on what truly world-class attractions are."

Varnica said: "The positive effects of competition will be seen in China, when Shanghai Disney Resort opens. Theme park developers will be forced to raise their standards."

According to Yang, the maturity of Chinese theme park developers and owners is already happening. "Future theme parks in China are already focusing on using the local culture and history to build a unique storyline, instead of just buying the latest high-tech rides."

## Numbers that matter

**9** Of the top 20 amusement/theme parks in Asia-Pacific, determined by attendance figures, nine are in China. The strongest performing attraction is OCT East in Shenzhen, which drew 4.2 million visitors in 2012 and ranked ninth on the chart.

**16** The number, in million, of people who visited Asia-Pacific's top 15 water parks in 2012, registering a 7.4 per cent growth. This is the first time Asian water park attendance has surpassed that of North America.

Cartoon Network Amazone



## Cartoon Network Amazone, Thailand

Turner Broadcasting System Asia Pacific, which operates multiple TV channels across Asia, is breaking new ground with the opening of the world's first Cartoon Network-themed waterpark in Thailand.

Cartoon Network Amazone is scheduled to open in 1H2014 – later than the previously planned late-2013 launch – in Bang Saray, 10km south of Pattaya on the east coast of Thailand. The attraction covers about six hectares of coastal plains and is being

developed in conjunction with Thailand's Amazon Falls Co.

The waterpark takes inspiration from the Amazon rainforest and more directly, from characters on the Cartoon Network channel. Its 150 water attractions, some soaring over 20m into the air, are divided into 10 themed zones and include The Omniverse; Adventure Zone; Cartoonival; Riptide Rapids; Mega Wave and Surfarena. The rides introduce popular characters such as Ben 10 and The Powerpuff Girls.

Visitors can also enjoy an in-

ternational selection of cuisine at Foodville.

CEO of Amazon Falls Co, Likat Dhanji, said: "We anticipate approximately one million guests in our first year of operation, or an average of nearly 3,000 guests per day. We expect half of them to be Thai residents living within a 120km radius of the waterpark. The rest of our guests are likely to comprise international visitors, primarily from Russia, South-east Asia and China."

The projected guest numbers will be welcome news for hotels and nearby attractions in the re-

gion, as families make multiple day trips to the area. Resorts such as The Tamarind, Palm Grove Resort and Sunset Park Resort & Spa will be well placed to serve large groups and families. – **David Andrews**

## Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, China

Hengqin Island, one of the largest islands of Zhuhai, Guangdong province, will see the completion of phase one of the massive Chimelong Ocean Kingdom theme park later this year.

The attraction will comprise eight themed areas, each boasting unique rides, performances and animal shows. Highlights include what is said to be the world's largest cetacea and shark aquarium, which will have capacity for 23,000m<sup>3</sup> of sea water, as well as a two-kilometre roller coaster that will weave above ground and under, allowing visitors to enjoy sightings of polar bears and sharks.

For the convenience of theme park visitors, the complex will also feature the 1,888-room Chimelong Hengqin Bay Hotel. It will be among the first facilities to be ready, opening this month. Other facilities at the hotel include several dining destinations, a 3,000m<sup>2</sup> ballroom, a 1,300m<sup>2</sup> ballroom, 26 meeting rooms, an executive club lounge and a spa. These facilities, in addition to the recreational options offered by the theme park, make the complex suitable for incentive and teambuilding programmes.

To drive awareness of the new attraction, Chimelong Group will participate in the 2014 Chinese New Year Parade in Hong Kong, among other marketing initiatives.

Perfect Tours Taiwan's planning manager, Tiffany Wu, be-





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From left: Explore The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios Japan; rest and play amid a scenic, natural environment at Villages Nature in Paris



lieves that Chimelong Ocean Kingdom will enhance the appeal of Hengqin Island and Zhuhai. “Zhuhai is perceived as a low-class tourist destination among the Taiwanese. With a new product like Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, Taiwanese travellers, who love novel ideas, will be drawn to the area,” said Wu. – **Prudence Lui**

#### Chimelong Ocean Kingdom



#### Enchanted Kingdom, the Philippines

Details are being worked out for a 10-year expansion masterplan that will transform Enchanted Kingdom, said to be the Philippines’ first and only world-class theme park, into an integrated resort with new attractions, commercial space, hotels and a convention centre.

Explaining the purpose of the redevelopment, Mario Mamon, president of the attraction in Santa Rosa City, Laguna, told *TTG Asia*: “We felt it is now time for us to realise our dream of turning our stand-alone theme park into an integrated resort concept – but without a gaming component. We like to follow the Disney model and have a product that offers wholesome family entertainment.

“We were able to acquire more land around the Enchanted Kingdom. It is now a 10-hectare park, but it will cover 35-40 hectares after expansion. I expect the first new attraction to open by end-2014 and the rest will open progressively.”

The future Enchanted Kingdom will feature a new attraction zone themed around the local culture, which will serve to “showcase (the Philippines) to the growing number of foreign

inbound visitors and educate young Filipino children on their own culture”, revealed Mamon.

A new village showcasing Enchanted Kingdom’s mascot, Eldar the Wizard, and focusing on imparting family values is also being planned, along with a water park, retail and F&B space, two or three hotels with a target inventory of 500 to 1,000 rooms, and a convention centre with a main hall of at least 10,000m<sup>2</sup>.

“This development will...encourage our visitors to stay over the weekend. Our visitors now spend an average of four to six hours here, which is so because we have no hotels to offer them,” said Mamon, adding that the convention centre will allow the company to target business events and corporate groups.

Meanwhile, the Enchanted Kingdom has partnered a local film company to launch a new attraction later this month. It will be themed after *Shake, Rattle & Roll 13*, a popular local horror suspense film. – **Karen Yue**

#### Villages Nature, France

An idea that sparked between Pierre & Vacances Center Parcs and Euro Disney in 2003 led to the joint development of Villages Nature, an eco-friendly resort in Paris that will comprise more than 2,000 cottages and apartments, an iconic 2,500m<sup>2</sup> outdoor geothermal lagoon, a waterpark, lush gardens, footpaths, a horse-back riding trail and an organic farm with educational activities for children.

Villages Nature will sit six kilometres south of Disneyland Paris and close to the La Vallée Village outlet shopping destination, making it a “very convenient retreat for travellers who still wish to be among the highlights of Paris”, said Pierre & Vacances CEO, Isabelle Wavrechin.

Phase one of Villages Nature, which will cover 180 hectares and include 1,730 cottages and apartments, a lakefront promenade with shops and themed restaurants as well as most of the recreational facilities, is expected to complete in 2016.

To fulfil Villages Nature’s sustainable commitment, 90 per cent of the resort will be retained as green space, construction will rely on sustainable methods and materials, 75 per cent of organic waste will be made into compost, geothermal energy will be used to supply heat across the re-

sort and motorised vehicles will be prohibited in the compound, among other things.

“We will ask our guests to use the foot paths and the bike and horse-back riding trails instead. With such beautiful landscaping, going around the resort on foot, bicycles or horses will be very enjoyable and relaxing,” said Wavrechin.

“Villages Nature will be a family-oriented property,” she added. “It will appeal to Asians who tend to travel as one big family. With families in mind, our cottages and apartments are designed with well-equipped kitchens.” – **Karen Yue**

#### The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Japan

Universal Studios Japan in Osaka is keeping its adventures fresh for theme park fans with the creation of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Slated to open late-2014, the new attraction zone will be the first of its kind outside the US. Costing approximately US\$482 million to build, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter will house replicas of Hogwarts and Hogsmeade Village, and several rides that have already won the hearts of Harry Potter fans in the Orlando theme park.

#### KidZania Singapore

Singapore will offer another option for families with the opening of an indoor edutainment theme park for children on Sentosa island in 2015.

KidZania Singapore will be the anchor tenant of the new Family Entertainment Centre at Palawan Beach and will span 7,600m<sup>2</sup>, with capacity for 1,700 people at any one time. It has an

annual target of 500,000 visitors.

The park is a kid-sized city where children aged four to 14 can role-play more than 90 different occupations, earn ‘money’ to pay for goods and services, and manage an ATM card.

Originally a Mexican concept, the S\$90 million (US\$70.5 million) Singapore franchise is owned by Malaysian company, Themed Attractions and Resorts, which also owns and manages KidZania Kuala Lumpur, and Legoland and Hello Kitty Town in Johor.

To ensure a unique flavour for distinction from other KidZania theme parks, Themed Attractions vice president for branding and group communications, Waikuan Wong, said KidZania Singapore would offer “localised and international role-play activities”.

Six industry partners have so far been secured for KidZania Singapore, namely Maybank, Discovery Networks Asia-Pacific, Yakult, Canon, The Soup Spoon and Killiney Kopitiam – the latter two being local F&B companies.

Through a pretend environment, Maybank will teach children financial literacy; Discovery Networks Asia-Pacific, behind-the-scene filmmaking; Yakult, lab research work; Canon, photographic know-how; and The Soup Spoon, healthy eating and cooking.

Killiney Kopitiam comes in as F&B retailer for the park.

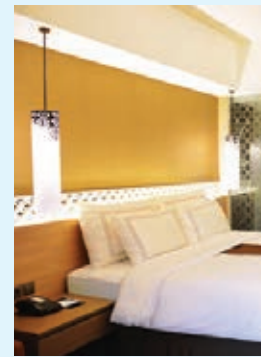
Themed Attractions will continue to forge partnerships with more industry brands during the period leading up to the park’s opening. It is targeting 30-plus partners.

Themed Attractions’ plan is “not to compete with the other more established attractions in Singapore but rather, complement them”, according to Wong.

He added: “Unlike other theme parks, KidZania will not offer any rides or arcade games.”

Wong said Themed Attractions would be working with industry partners, Singapore Tourism Board and Sentosa Development Corporation, on a series of pre-opening marketing campaigns. – **Kathy Neo**

Children can fulfil various career ambitions at KidZania Singapore



## Best Western Introduces Luxury Flagship Hotel in Bali

By Glenn de Souza  
Vice President International  
Operations – Asia & the Middle East  
Best Western International

Located in the heart of Bali’s foremost tourism and entertainment district, close to the beaches of Kuta and Seminyak, BEST WESTERN PREMIER Sunset Road Kuta offers a new premium accommodation option for the increasing number of visitors to the island.

All 260 rooms come fully-equipped with the latest amenities, including 32-inch LED TVs with international satellite channels, well stocked minibars, bathtubs and separate showers. The hotel’s 43 suites also come with separate living rooms and kitchenettes.

The hotel also offers a range of high-end facilities ideal for the modern traveler. These include a stunning outdoor pool, allowing guests to relax and soak up the tropical sun, plus a fitness center, steam room, sauna and jacuzzi. There is also a restaurant serving up high quality international and Indonesian cuisine, plus a bar and coffee shop.

The property is also well placed to serve the corporate events market, with 1214m<sup>2</sup> of meeting space catering for up to 330 delegates.

Indonesia is at the forefront of our regional expansion, and this flagship hotel represents exactly what we are trying to achieve across Asia: to create a range of vibrant, contemporary hotels that cater to the modern traveler.



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Macau wants to leverage its historic architecture to appeal to non-gaming visitors

# Reaping a Chinese windfall

While gaming remains Macau's trump card, the city seeks to diversify its economic fortunes. By **Greg Lowe**

## Arrivals

In the first seven months of 2013, Macau received 16.7 million visitors, growing 2.4 per cent from the same period last year, according to Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) data. Booming business from China, which accounted for almost two-thirds of arrivals, significantly outweighed double-digit declines in key markets such as Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan – the latter plummeted 34 per cent due to territorial disputes with China over the Senkaku Islands.

By market size, Chinese arrivals to Macau rose 10.4 per cent year-on-year to 10.6 million from January to July, followed by Hong Kong (four million, -3.8 per cent), Taiwan (550,000, -10.5 per cent), South Korea (260,000, 5.5 per cent) and the Philippines (160,000, -3.4 per cent).

Among shorthaul markets, Vietnam and Thailand posted the strongest growth of 27.4 per cent and 19 per cent respectively, but combined they only accounted for about one per cent of total arrivals.

Same-day visitors represented 51.3 per cent of all arrivals, down 0.4 percentage points from the same period last year, with

overnight guests rising to 48.7 per cent. However, the average length of stay remained static at one day and at 1.9 days for overnight guests.

## NTO

Continuing with its *Touching Moments, Experience Macau* strategy launched last year, MGTO is targeting 28 million arrivals this year, similar to last year's figure of 28.1 million tourists.

MGTO is currently researching new tour routes around the city's 25 World Heritage buildings – set to come online within the next few months – which could play a role in its bid to attract more repeat non-gaming tourists to Macau (see page 17).

The NTO will also reopen its representative office in Thailand next January.

## Hotels

There were 28,785 hotel rooms at the end of July, up 14.6 per cent year-on-year, according to MGTO. In July, occupancy averaged 88.6 per cent across three- to five-star properties, down 0.5 percentage points year-on-year, according to the Macau Hotel Association. Average room rate rose 7.1 per



“(Macau’s) key challenges remain human resources and know-how. We need to gear up and bring other qualities to be commensurate with future development needs.”

**Pansy Ho**

Managing director  
Shun Tak Holdings

cent to MOP\$1,411 (US\$177).

No new properties were launched this year. Most significant openings are tabled for 2015-17 onwards when major Cotai developments will roll out more than 10,000 keys.

## Access

Air Macau launched thrice-weekly Macau-Zhengzhou services from September 23, which followed the inauguration of flights to Jinjiang, Wenzhou and Shenyang as well as the addition of a third daily service to Beijing under its codeshare agreement with Air China earlier this year. The flag carrier also entered into a codeshare partnership with Shenzhen Airways in May.

Chennai-based budget airline SpiceJet is expected to launch direct flights from New Delhi once it receives clearance from the Civil Aviation Authority of Macau, having already won approval from the Indian government.

From January to July, some 2.8 million passengers passed through Macau International Airport, up 13.4 per cent year-on-year, while the number of airlines serving the former Portuguese colony remained stable at 19.

## MICE

According to the Statistics and Census Service, 437 meetings and 21 exhibitions took place in Macau in 1H2013, compared with 485 and 20 respectively during the same period last year.

Despite a drop in the overall volume of meetings, the number of meetings delegates grew 40 per cent year-on-year to 53,000, with the average stay lengthening by 0.2 days to 2.1 days. While the number of exhibitions was stable, attendance surged by 72 per cent to 369,000, with the length of stay increasing by about 10 per cent to 3.1 days. Exhibition organisers generated MOP\$39.1 million in revenue and an expenditure of MOP\$62.9 million, up 56 per cent and 48 per cent year-on-year respectively.

## Events

The Venetian Macao's Cotai Arena will host the Justin Bieber concert on October 12 and *The Clash in Cotai* – said to be China's biggest boxing match featuring Manny Pacquiao and Brandon Rios – on November 24.

Meanwhile, the city is gearing up for the 60<sup>th</sup> Macau Grand Prix on November 9-10 and 14-17.



# DreamWorks Experience



## Lights Up COTAI STRIP RESORTS MACAO



A magnet for entertainment lovers from all over the world, Cotai Strip Resorts Macao has always taken huge pride in its tireless efforts to be Asia's biggest, brightest and best tourist hub.

Comprised of The Venetian® Macao, Four Seasons Hotel Macao, and Sands® Cotai Central, featuring the world's largest Conrad, Sheraton, and Holiday Inn hotels, Cotai Strip Resorts Macao is Asia's ultimate destination for all ages. Cotai Strip Resorts Macao is now offering visitors a unique opportunity to interact with beloved characters from leading blockbusters by Hollywood movie studio—DreamWorks.



Founded by Stephen Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen in 1994, DreamWorks' hugely popular movie characters have touched the lives of almost everyone on the planet.

Having made its Asian debut in Macao, the new DreamWorks Experience's thrilling attractions are providing millions of potential visitors with even more reasons to visit Macao. Highlights of DreamWorks Experience include: DreamWorks All Star Parade, Meet and Greet and signature Shrekfast with the DreamWorks Gang!. It all adds up to the finest interactive family fun in Asia!

Two sessions of Meet and Greet daily at Sands Cotai Central's Paradise Gardens allow guests to step in to the world of unforgettable international mega-hit movies such as Shrek, Madagascar, Kung Fu Panda and How To Train Your Dragon offering great photo opportunities with these animation superstars.

Don't miss the DreamWorks All Star Parade every day at 4pm on the ground floor of Shoppes at Cotai Central where 30 popular characters, dancers and performers will be working their talents on the crowds.



There are more exclusive experiences for guest staying at Sands Cotai Central. Hotel guests can upgrade their early morning meal to a Shrekfast with The DreamWorks Gang!, breakfast with themed decoration and DreamWorks characters performing on stage. Characters will even make their way through the seating area to interact with guests.



From 21 November till 16 March next year, The Venetian Macao will bring you a breathtaking icy paradise - Ice World with the DreamWorks Gang. Attracting more than 400,000 visitors over past two years, this colourful ice carving exhibition is back this year themed with DreamWorks animation all created by highly skilled Harbin artisans. Seven themed zones full of stunning sculptures of DreamWorks super stars as well as familiar scenes and backdrops from their movies will be fashioned out of raw blocks of ice. Don't miss the truly unique experience of Ice World, just HKD/MOP100 per person.



What's more, DreamWorks fans can bring home exclusive themed merchandise and souvenirs to remind themselves of the huge fun they've enjoyed long after their fantastic trip has ended.

To find out more about the DreamWorks Experience you can bring to yourself and your guests, please visit: [www.sandscotaicentral.com/dreamworks/](http://www.sandscotaicentral.com/dreamworks/)





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A S I A





# Upping the stakes for diversification

Can Macau transform itself from a gaming capital to a destination with myriad offerings? **Greg Lowe** finds out

**1** Known as the gambling capital of the world, Macau now wants to diversify the destination to attract more non-gaming visitors. How realistic is this proposition? One first needs to understand the role gaming plays in Macau's economy. Macau is the gambling capital of the world, with 35 casinos, 5,746 tables and 15,316 slot machines, and plenty more in the pipeline, according to current government data. Last year, its casinos generated US\$38 billion, six times that of Las Vegas' and equivalent to Kenya's entire economic output.

From January to June 2013, Macau's GDP was MOP\$192.7 billion (US\$24.1 billion), up 10.5 per cent year-on-year. Visitor expenditure was MOP\$196.4 billion, of which MOP\$170.4 billion came from gaming, with more than four out of five tax dollars collected on the casino floors. These figures indicate diversification will be an uphill struggle.

**2** Why should Macau even try to diversify given the importance of the gaming industry? It is never a good idea to put all eggs in one basket, particularly when casinos and integrated resorts have sprouted up in the region in recent years. Macau hence needs to have other strings to its bow to counter any potential downturn in gaming.

Pansy Ho, managing director of Shun Tak Holdings, told *TTG Asia*: "We are still basking in the



Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16's new So Spa

glory of Macau being the world's number one gaming centre. We know there will be more built. Neighbouring countries are reviewing their legislations. They have more capacity and space. If they decide to build another Cotai, then in time Macau might lose some of its appeal."

**3** Are enough new products coming online? Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) is looking at developing more touring routes around the city's 25 UNESCO

World Heritage sites to enhance visitors' experience on the peninsula. Since August, the NTO has also had pedicab drivers park their tricycle taxis outside key attractions in Macau to provide tourists with an 'authentic' photo opportunity.

Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16 recently soft-launched So Spa with L'Occitane, a six-suite spa featuring rooms for couples, hammam treatments and champagne manicures (the bubbly is for drinking). Meanwhile, Macau's integrated resorts are increasing-

ly attracting world-class music acts and sporting events such as Rihanna, the Ultimate Fighting Championship and the forthcoming Clash in Cotai boxing match between Manny Pacquiao and Brandon Rios.

Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of MGTO, said: "We are now seeing more products in Macau for the non-gaming and family markets. For example, in Cotai Central we've added the DreamWorks Experience (see below)...It's safe to say Macau is no longer only geared towards gaming."

**4** Can MICE contribute to Macau's diversification efforts? MICE offers the greatest potential for diversification, the caveat being most facilities are within the resorts, making it hard to completely remove gaming from the picture.

While MICE delegates traditionally come from around Asia, China is becoming an increasingly important market. For example, the annual Greater China Nu Skin Academy brought more than 5,000 delegates to Sheraton Macao Hotel Cotai Central for three days in September this year, twice the number who attended last year's event.

MGTO has rolled out a campaign to stimulate MICE in Macau this year. To qualify, groups must have at least 50 international participants each staying for a minimum of two nights to receive up to MOP\$300 for each non-Macau delegate. Cotai Strip

Macao has also launched Meetings for Free scheme since June 1 to piggyback the NTO's promotion by offering groups a rebate for two days of full meetings.

**5** What other developments are there? Just next door, Hengqin Island is currently being developed by the Chinese government as a gaming-free destination and creative industry hub. With five times the area of Macau, Hengqin's key properties will include Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, a US\$2 billion, 809-hectare integrated resort and theme park due to open in November.

Shun Tak Holdings also recently inked a US\$118 million deal to develop a mixed-use property on the island. With more than 50 other tourism projects underway on Hengqin, which will be connected to Macau by land and sea, there is great potential for developing multi-destination tourism, Ho explained.

"Hengqin will be a very important step to help strengthen regional competitiveness. Co-operation and collaboration are essential," she said. "We don't have the land, so we are not building Chimelong. We can work with (Hengqin); where we don't have the advantage they will have something to offer that will benefit both of us."

"Hopefully one day people will come to visit both Macau and Hengqin on the same trip," Ho added.

## Test drive

# DreamWorks Experience at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao



**Greg Lowe** tucks into an ogre-themed breakfast and takes delight in meeting a cast of animated characters

**WHY** Launched since July 1 this year, the DreamWorks Experience at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao provides family-focused entertainment for visitors of all ages, especially those with young children. Even if Mum and Dad want to hit the roulette wheels and blackjack tables later, they can ensure kids have their share of memorable fun too.

This new attraction is supported by the Macau Government Tourist Office as part of the NTO's diversification efforts to attract more non-gaming repeat tourists to the city.

**WHAT** A trio of activities take place each day, providing guests

with the opportunity to rub shoulders and take photos with larger-than-life characters from five DreamWorks Animation movies: *Shrek*, *Puss in Boots*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Madagascar* and *How to Train Your Dragon*.

All the experiences are free, except for the signature Shrekfast with the DreamWorks Gang!

**HOW** Shrekfast with the DreamWorks Gang! breakfast takes place in one of Holiday Inn Macao Cotai Central's ballrooms, whose interior has been transformed into a fairy-tale castle adorned with paintings of various characters from the Shrek franchise such as Shrek, Princess Fiona and Donkey.

Guests enjoy a 90-minute buffet breakfast comprising international and Chinese cuisine while characters from the five animated films are brought on stage for a photo opportunity. The characters then walk around the



DreamWorks Animation's popular Puss in Boots character

room, giving each table a chance to have their photos taken. Each film gets a 15-minute slot, with live commentary provided in both English and Mandarin.

**Name** DreamWorks Experience at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao  
**Venue** Cotai Strip Resorts Macao  
**Rate** Shrekfast with the DreamWorks Gang! from HK\$100 (US\$13); other experiences are free

**Operating hours**  
Shrekfast with the DreamWorks Gang!: 09.00-10.30 on Tuesdays-Fridays; 08.00-09.30 and 10.00-11.30 on Saturdays-Monday  
Meet and Greet: 12.00-15.00 and 17.00-19.00 daily  
DreamWorks All Star Parade: 16.00-16.15 daily

**Contact details**  
Tel: (853) 2828-2228  
Email: holidayinncoai.info@ihg.com  
Website: www.sandscotaicentral.com

The 15-minute DreamWorks All Star Parade passes through level one of Shoppes Cotai Central at 16.00 each day. Meanwhile, the twice-daily Meet and Greet

takes place at Paradise Gardens, where visitors can queue up along the red carpet for their chance to meet the characters.

**VERDICT** While these attractions may not appeal to everyone, they are a sure-fire hit with kids. Shrekfast offers the best chance to meet all the characters at a relaxed pace. Staff make sure each table gets face time with every character and also take pictures, which are available for purchase later.

The DreamWorks All Star Parade is too short and you need to be in the right place at the right time, armed with sharp elbows to jostle with the crowd to get your coveted shot.

The Meet and Greet experience offers ample photo opportunities, but the session takes three hours due to long queues. You also have to line up again each time the characters change.





The kecak dance can be seen at the popular Bali Arts Festival held every year

Le Méridien Bali Jimbaran

# Bali tourism gets a lift

An expanded airport and a new travel mart are giving the trade reasons to cheer. By **Mimi Hudoyo**

**Arrivals** Preliminary data from Bali Regional Tourism showed that the number of arrivals to the island between January and August was 2.1 million, a 12 per cent year-on-year increase from 1.9 million. Highest growth came from the Philippines (43.3 per cent), India (42.3 per cent) and Hong Kong (34 per cent). Australia remained the biggest market (530,861), although arrivals were down by 0.6 per cent compared to last year. China ranked second with 264,494, growing 23.6 per cent, and Japan was third with 139,652, a 14.2 per cent increase. Most of Bali's longhaul markets performed well. The US, Germany, Russia and the Netherlands grew between 10 and 17 per cent, while France was up by nine per cent. The UK, however, was down by 0.5 per cent. With international events like Miss World in September, the APEC CEO Summit in October and the WTO Ministerial Conference in December, the number of arrivals in 2013 is expected to surpass the regional tourism office's target of 2.8 million.

**Hotels** Bali is seeing

the arrival of more upscale and upper upscale properties (read more on page 19). Most recently opened in Jimbaran was the 297-key Rimba Jimbaran Bali, the sister property of Ayana Resort and Spa Bali. Earlier this year, Le Méridien Bali Jimbaran also welcomed guests with 118 rooms. Elsewhere, Amarterra Villas Bali Nusa Dua, part of Accor's MGallery collection, added 39 luxury villas within the Bali Tourism Development Corporation complex in June. Amarterra Villas Bali Nusa Dua general manager, Pascal Bellon, said: "The villas are well positioned to cater to both up-market leisure travellers and top management who come for conferences and are looking for privacy." In Sanur, Regent Hotels & Resorts opened in June its first property in Indonesia. The 120-unit all-suite resort is the first new build on Bali's south-east coast in 40 years. Meanwhile, the 16-year-old Nikko Bali Resort & Spa has transformed itself into Grand Nikko Bali. Launched in July, it now offers 19 garden and ocean view villas, an exclusive villa lounge, a multi-purpose func-



"There seems to be a lot more new upscale rooms in Bali, but the number of arrivals is also increasing."

**Gregory Gubiani**  
General manager  
Le Méridien Bali Jimbaran

tion room and a wedding gazebo. **NTO** To be launched next year, the Bali and Beyond Travel Fair (BBTF) aims to become the biggest travel fair in Indonesia. Organised by the Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA) Bali and supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, the event will run from June 10-14, 2014 in Nusa Dua for the B2B component and in Kuta for the B2C portion. ASITA Bali Chapter chairman, I Ketut Ardana, said: "We will serve the inbound, outbound and domestic markets as well as bring together over 500 domestic and international sellers representing the top hospitality and travel brands – not only from Bali but all over Indonesia – and more than 500 domestic and international qualified buyers representing the top multinational and unique leisure brands across the globe." He added that the event was planned to coincide with the annual Bali Arts Festival, which draws an international crowd.

**Access** Bali Ngurah

Rai International Airport has been expanded to be able to cater for 25 million passengers a year, an improvement from seven million currently. Last year the airport handled around 13.5 million passengers, according to data from Angkasa Pura I Ngurah Rai Airport. Passenger traffic has been growing by 15 per cent annually over the past few years on average. The new international terminal has been in operation since September 19, while the old international terminal has been renovated and now functions as the domestic terminal. The Rp2.8 trillion (US\$280 million) project includes the expansion of the domestic and international terminals as well as the upgrading of the apron area and parking facilities. The new developments have not only been applauded by the trade in Bali but also those operating outside the destination as Bali is a major gateway to Indonesia, especially for leisure travel. Aneka Kartika Tours and Travel Services Surabaya operations manager, Adjie Wahjono, said: "With the expansion in Bali, we can expect capacity (to other parts of Indonesia) to double."



# Growth at the upper end

Will Bali be able to fill its upscale rooms? **Mimi Hudoyo** reports

**1 How many more high-end rooms are due to open?** According to a joint Horwath HTL and C9 Hotelworks report, there are 12,000 rooms in Bali's pipeline, which will help the destination hit 34,000 rooms by 2015. Among these, some 3,000 are in upscale and luxury properties, mostly located within Nusa Dua and its surroundings.

These include the 68 suites and 14 pool villas in Centara Grand Nusa Dua Resort & Villas, targeted to roll out by October; the 400-room and 17-villa Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua, which will fully open by the first quarter of 2014; and The Ritz-Carlton Bali, scheduled to welcome guests next year with 288 keys including 90 suites and 14 villas.

Further on the horizon are Parkroyal Pecatu Bali Resort (2016) and Shangri-La's Nusa Dua Resort & Spa (2016).

In 2012, the island had 14,695 five-star and luxury rooms, with the number expected to increase to more than 16,500 by the end of this year, according to Horwath HTL.

**2 Will filling these rooms be a problem?** Existing upscale and luxury properties on the island report an average occupancy of between 65 and 70 per cent in the first half of the year, while some hotels claim to have reached 80 per cent.

Le Méridien Bali Jimbaran general manager, Gregory Gubiani, feels that the growing number of high-end properties will allow Bali to attract upmarket travellers, adding that China is a target market for his property.

Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua general manager, Goran Aleks, said: "The APEC Summit will give

Bali an additional push for the next couple of years...The new developments (hotels, convention centre and other facilities) in (Nusa Dua) will give people new reasons to come."

Amarterra Villas Bali Nusa Dua general manager, Pascal Bellon, however, feared there might be an oversupply of rooms at the top end.

He said: "We can expect the number of arrivals to grow, but not double or triple; only around 10 per cent usually."

**3 What are hotels doing?** Grand Nikko Bali general manager Jean-Charles Le Coz said the challenge is to find new markets.

He said: "The number of travellers who are looking for mere leisure, staying in the hotel and spending much time on the beach is not as many as it used to be many years ago."

"(South) Korea, China, Taiwan are growing markets but they are price sensitive. The European market has not bounced back (fully), and the Australian market, with its currency situation, is expected to be down by a bit."

Amarterra's Bellon added: "We are looking at new markets such as Russia, Middle East, Japan and (South) Korea, either for business or family leisure."

But it is the MICE market that both Le Coz and Conrad Bali's general manager Jean-Sébastien Kling feel will keep businesses thriving.

With two convention centres, new roads and an expanded airport, Kling thought it was timely to promote Bali as a MICE destination more intensively.

Le Coz added: "The opportu-

nity is big, not only for major up-market hotels but also the small ones, as the majority of hotels have meeting facilities."

Destination Asia Indonesia managing director, Sediya Yasa, on the other hand, wants more promotions for Bali as a cruise destination. "We do hope the plan to make Bali a turnaround destination for cruises will materialise soon," he said.

**4 Other than hotels, does Bali have what it takes to attract the luxury market?** Asian Trails Bali managing director, Andre Seiler, said: "There are good cars available, very good restaurants (in most areas) and nice yachts to rent. A few five-star hotels in Bali also have helipads."

"Helicopter company Bali Air has just opened its own airport near the Benoa Harbour, and it is easily accessible via the new (road) from the airport. There are flights to hotels in Ubud or North Bali as well as flights to Java and Lombok, and of course, sightseeing flights over Bali."

However, Pacto's COO-in-bound, Umberto Cadamuro, pointed out that Bali needs a separate airport for small-size private jets. "This will give us the option to cater to the top-end luxury market, which Bali can appeal to," he said.

Added Cadamuro: "While the Asians are mostly interested in fine dining and shopping for top-quality local goods, the Americans, Europeans and Australians are interested in interaction with the locals, be it learning cooking, farming, painting or traditional dance. They are also interested in bird watching, trekking, traditional medicine and CSR programmes."

## Test drive



## L'Atelier Parfums et créations



**Mimi Hudoyo** gets a lesson in perfume making and goes home smelling sweet

**WHY** Indonesia is one of the leaders in producing essential oils and supplies many international perfume brands with raw materials.

Besides, what could be more exciting than creating a blend of scents that expresses your character and personality and, at the same time, reminds you of the destination you have been to?

**WHAT** The 90-minute perfumery workshop started with a questionnaire about my favourite perfume brand, scents, colours and other aspects that form my character and personality. The instructor then picked a number of essential oils for me.

I learned that there are three parts to creating a well-balanced and harmonious fragrance. The high notes, which is the first smell you get when a perfume is sprayed, are made of fresher oils, such as citrus. Fruits, flowers or warm spices are used for the middle notes, which give out the pleasant aroma. This is the main theme of the perfume. Finally, the base notes are the longest

**Name** L'Atelier Parfums et créations  
**Rate** From Rp725,000 (US\$64)  
**Contact details**  
Tel: (62-821) 4521-4045 or (62-361) 702-222 ext 7020  
Email: nora@parfumsetcreations.com  
Website: www.parfumsetcreations.com

lasting.

As each category can be a combination of a few aromas, I chose lemon and aquatic for the high notes, frangipani and green tea for the middle notes, and oriental for the base notes.

Then came the most exciting part: mixing the three components. In a test tube, I put two drops of lemon, four of bergamot, four of frangipani...and so on. The result was a fresh and light lemony scent at the beginning followed by a more gradual sweet flowery aroma.

I signed my personal formula and called it Breeze.

**HOW** There are three types of workshops: the three-hour workshop that includes perfumery theory and perfume making; the 90-minute perfume-making workshop; and the perfume-making workshop for children. Each includes a 30ml bottle of perfume plus a diploma for those attending the three-hour class. Formulas are kept in the studio's database and participants can order a second bottle any time in the future.

The studio can accommodate up to eight participants at any one time, but it can cater for a group of up to 40 people in another venue, such as the meeting room.

Opened in 2010, the perfumery workshop is popular among tourists from Australia, India, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Russia and Europe.

**VERDICT** It's a treat to be able to create a signature perfume for myself or loved one.

## Checking in

## Le Méridien Bali Jimbaran



Le Méridien Bali Jimbaran marks the re-entry of the brand to Bali. **Mimi Hudoyo** finds it to be younger and fresher

**LOCATION** The resort is located along the south-west coastline of Bali, a few minutes' walk from Jimbaran Bay, famous for its beach, panoramic sunset and nighttime seafood cafes. Places of interest such as the Uluwatu Temple, Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park, Kuta Beach as well as the airport are not too far away.

**ROOMS** Mine had lagoon access and it was located on the

ground floor, allowing views of and access to the 1,300m<sup>2</sup> saltwater lagoon pool, the resort's main feature.

Rooms sport contemporary design with a touch of Indonesian elements, such as the modern batik and bed-side hanging lamps in bright blue that resemble fishing nets, a reference to the resort's location in Bali.

I liked that my room had a spacious separate seating area, comfortable bed, smart 3D LED TV and free Wi-Fi access.

**F&B** The three-storey building sited between the resort's main building and Aqua Suites Towers houses the dining venues, which include Bamboo Chic, the all-day dining dishing out pan-



Asian cuisine, the rooftop Smoke Sky Bar and Lounge, and the Wala gelato parlour. Latitude 8 at the lobby area also serves coffee during the day and wines and tapas in the evening.

The buffet breakfast spread at Bamboo Chic offered fresh juices and a wide choice of food items made from organic ingredients. While appetising, some improvements can be made in the taste department. For exam-

**Name** Le Méridien Bali Jimbaran  
**No. of rooms** 118  
**Rate** From US\$420  
**Contact details**  
Tel: (62-361) 846-6888  
Email: lemeridien.balijimbaran@lemeridien.com  
Website: www.starwoodhotels.com/lemeridien

ple, the noodles I ordered for in-room dining came in a generous portion but was a tad too salty.

**FACILITIES** Dubbed The Hub, the lobby does not only serve as a reception area but a nice place to relax as it overlooks the pool. It is also filled with interesting décor such as bright-coloured couches, flower-shaped wooden fans and water wall features.

The resort also has a spa, fitness centre and kids' club.

Meeting facilities include the rooftop Bale Banjar ballroom, Celebration Pavilion for weddings and other events, and three meeting rooms.

**SERVICE** Staff were young, enthusiastic and helpful. The room service I ordered came earlier than expected, while housekeeping was also great even though the resort was quite busy.

**VERDICT** A much different Le Méridien from the one I used to know.



# Best Western banks on Indonesia

Encouraged by an increasing appetite for travel, properties will open in both primary and secondary cities

By Mimi Hudoyo

**JAKARTA** Best Western International (BWI) is plotting a massive expansion across Indonesia, sextupling its number of hotels within the next two years.

BWI currently has five hotels in Indonesia – one in Jakarta, one in Semarang and three in Bali – with an inventory of 700 rooms. With 26 more hotels in the pipeline, the company expects to operate at least 31 hotels by 2015 totalling 6,000 rooms. Many of these properties will be under the core midscale Best Western brand, with some designated as the upscale Best Western Plus and a few as the luxury Best Western Premier.

BWI recently unveiled its first Premier hotel in the country: the Best Western Premier Sunset Road Kuta in Bali.

Speaking during the launch, BWI's vice president of international operations for Asia & the Middle East, Glenn de Souza, said: "Across the country, dis-

posable income is rising and demand for travel is increasing. With the ASEAN Economic Community due to start in 2015 with Indonesia at its heart, this growth trajectory will only get steeper in the coming years."

Five new properties are now undergoing a quality assurance assessment by the head office team, and if all goes well, the number of properties in Indonesia will already double by this week.

BWI area development office Indonesia CEO, Iwanto Hartojo, said: "Regional autonomy and improved accessibility with the increasing number of LCCs have triggered regional governments to create better business climates. Our projects are not only in major destinations but secondary cities. In fact, we have been receiving requests to operate hotels in small towns like Sendawar in East Kalimantan."

Despite the increasing competition among hoteliers in Bali,

Fast-paced growth

# 31

The number of hotels Best Western will have in Indonesia by 2015

Hartojo was unfazed.

"Bali is an international destination, and its market continues to grow. I don't deny the competition is tougher, but as an international brand with more than 4,000 properties in 100 countries, there is brand recognition. Besides, with BWI's distribution system, we are confident that we will be able to meet our business targets," he said, revealing that the online channel now con-

tributes 70 per cent of BWI Indonesia's business, especially for hotels in Bali.

"We also have the sales team to grab business from (bricks-and-mortar) travel agencies, corporates and MICE to fill our meeting rooms." All hotels in Indonesia have managed to operate on their own within a month of opening, he added.

Hartojo pointed out that choosing the right location and brand level is key.

"In Kuta, for example, we will not open another hotel, but there is still a chance (that we will open) in Ubud. We have one Premier property under construction there," he said.

This same principle applies elsewhere. "It is easy for us to get three projects for Semarang, but we have refrained from doing so. We want the existing hotel to run well before adding a new one of the same core brand. However, we will not hesitate to operate properties of different brand lev-

els there."

As for challenges on the horizon, Hartojo remained optimistic even though Indonesia's economic growth is slowing and the rupiah has slid against the US dollar.

He said: "Investors who are planning to develop properties might take a wait-and-see stand, but the hotel projects we have announced are already under construction, so their opening targets stay."

"I still believe that the market will continue to be there. The Indonesian population is huge and the travelling public is increasing. The way I see it, there will be a shift in the market but not a decline. Those who used to travel outbound may turn to domestic destinations, and those who stayed in upscale hotels may turn to hotels in a lower category."

"Business travellers will also need to travel more to improve or maintain sales if the business climate is slower."

## Come back to Egypt: NTO

By Mimi Hudoyo

**PTM 2013, CHENGDU** Egypt, whose tourism trade has suffered at the hands of political instability in 2010 and again in August this year, is stepping up promotions to regain the confidence and interest of travellers and tour operators.

Egypt Tourism Office director for Asia, Adel El Masry, told *TTG Asia* that the situation in the historical destination had stabilised and more budget would be set aside for upcoming promotions. He has, however, declined to reveal the amount of funds allotted to campaigns in Asia.

According to Masry, arrivals to Egypt had improved after the 2010 revolution, although it was a shadow of pre-crisis tourism performance. Prior to the revolution, the country welcomed 14.7 million tourists annually. In 2012, arrivals was around 11 million.

Widely reported riots in August that followed the crackdown on supporters of ousted president Mohammed Morsi had caused arrivals to dip by some 20 per cent.

"Tourism contributes to Egypt's economy in a big way, providing direct and indirect employment to 12.6 per cent of the workforce, and it is the country's second largest source of foreign revenue."

"Therefore, it is critical that our tourism offices around the world gear up to address the concerns of prospective travellers to the country," said Masry.



The pyramids are an enduring favourite among travellers

Commenting on Egypt's tourism recovery efforts, Masry said: "We are planning media campaigns and familiarisation trips for the media and tour operators as well as working with tour operators to produce brochures."

"(Our efforts) will start in the next couple of weeks until the end of the year, and we will increase our budget for 2014 too. Our goal is not only to (restore) confidence but also to increase the number and (demographic) profile of travellers from Asia."

Through its participation at PATA Travel Mart 2013, Egypt Tourism hopes to broaden its network of tour operator partners. The NTO is also exhibiting at several upcoming travel trade-shows including ITB Asia.

Meanwhile, Egypt Tourism

has started raising the awareness of attractions beyond the pyramids and Nile cruises, which are traditional favourites.

"We are introducing new products such as golf, adventure and religious tours. We are also trying to attract MICE groups," said Masry, adding that the mass market would be targeted.

India, China, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore have been identified as key Asian source markets.

"Asia is still a very small market compared to Europe, which contributes 70 per cent of our arrivals, but it is a region that is becoming increasingly important to us. We have recently facilitated visa-on-arrival for some Asian nationalities," he added.

## China finds fans among younger Singaporeans

**SINGAPORE** China is striking gold with young Singapore travellers as growing LCC services into the country vamp up the appeal of secondary cities.

Eileen Oh, marketing and communications head at ASA Holidays, said: "Five years ago, most of our travellers to China were aged 40 and above. But today, as more LCCs start to ply routes to and from China, we are seeing more customers below 35 years old travelling to China, be it by themselves or with their families."

Chan Brothers Travel marketing and communications manager, Jane Chang, observed: "While silver travellers over the age of 55 constitute over 60 per cent of our bookings to China, market trends also hint at the growing appeal of China to younger independent travellers below 35."

More are also heading to previously less accessible destinations such as Nanjing, Qingdao, Shenyang and Tianjin thanks to cheaper flights by budget carriers, Chang pointed out.

Singapore Airlines' subsidiary, Scoot, debuted thrice-weekly direct flights to its fourth Chinese destination, Nanjing, in June.

Earlier this month, Jetstar Asia also announced additional direct flights to Shantou and Hangzhou, raising frequencies of the services to four- and five-times-weekly respectively.

"LCCs help to introduce sec-

ond- and third-tier cities that will appeal to youngsters who are more adventurous as they want to learn more about the food, culture and history in China," said Alex Tan, head of sourcing (Asia), Gullivers Travel Associates. "Also, with the high-speed rail system, it becomes much easier to connect to different cities that are less heard of."

Chan Brothers' Chang concurred, saying: "Younger independent travellers want to earn 'street cred' for uncovering the quaintest village off the beaten track, while others just want to soak up the one-of-a-kind experiences in exotic destinations."

Alicia Seah, senior vice president of marketing and PR, CTC Travel, said LCCs have helped to push down

ticket prices by full-fledged carriers. "LCCs not only generate interest in new (destination) cities, they have also helped to drive competitive pricing among full-service airlines that do not want to lose out on this emerging market," she explained.

Besides new flights by LCCs, improved infrastructure across China has contributed to the destination's rising popularity.

ASA's Oh said: "The increasing number of international hotel chains and resorts sprouting across China has also helped to increase the destination's appeal to this segment of customers."

– Lee Pei Qi



Tan: introducing new destinations