

VIEW FROM THE TOP

The poster girl for Asian female success in a male- and western-dominated industry, Raini Chan, regional VP and GM of The Peninsula, Hong Kong, tells [Raini Hamdi](#) why intuition, passion, patience and loyalty matter



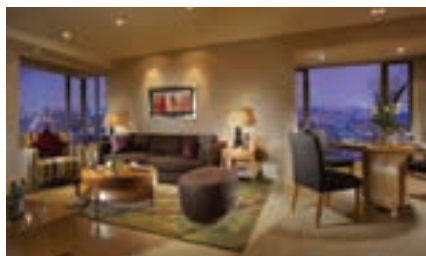
RIDING OUT THE YUAN STORM

China's sudden currency depreciation has rattled stock and financial markets worldwide, but the Asian tourism sector appears to weather the economic turbulence well – at least for the time being



A STEPPE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

To grow Kazakhstan as a tourist destination, the NTO first needs to raise awareness of the country's myriad offerings, writes [S Puvaneswary](#)



RELOCATION TRENDS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

Firms are relocating younger employees, and serviced apartment operators are responding with new products. Major players tell [Raini Hamdi](#) how



MELBOURNE'S POP-UP CULTURE

The flourishing pop-up trend is attracting visitors to Melbourne, offering a different way to appreciate the city's cosmopolitan culture, writes [Rebecca Elliott](#)






WAKING UP FROM HIBERNATION

Peace has descended on Indonesia's Toraja and it is luring tourists back with agro-tourism and cultural experiences, reports [Mimi Hudoyo](#)

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LEAN IN AND STEP FORWARD, LADIES

A recent lunch with the female chief of an established DMC left me inspired and buzzing with excitement long after the meal has concluded.

Motherhood was one big challenge, admitted my lunch companion, a successful career woman who had to overcome obstacles along the way to reach the top of the travel agency industry. But backed by strong work ethics, tenacity and a supportive partner willing to tag-team in parenting duties, she surmounted the initial difficult years during her kids' younger days to nurture a family, manage a career and get to where she is today.

Her honesty and encouragement meant a lot to me, a new first-time mother who is now trying to juggle the rigours of work with the demands of a new baby. However, seeing how other women have successfully navigated the delicate work-family balance gave me more confidence, helping me to abolish any self-doubt that holds me back from leading a full life that includes a rewarding career and a happy family.

Of course that lunch was not just about mothering and kids – that would have been such a bore, honestly! The group of us, two men including, also got into a passionate discussion on the growing prominence of women in Asia's travel sector, whether it's females taking on leadership roles such as hotel GMs or ladies venturing into predominantly-male worlds like tech startups (see page 8).

It is hence with delight that I read about another high-

flying female in Asian hospitality, Rainy Chan, regional VP and GM of The Peninsula Hong Kong (see View From The Top, page 10), who scaled the odds and smashed the glass ceiling in a male- and western-dominated industry. (Coincidentally, the Bangkok hotel where we enjoyed our lunch was headed by a female GM, an affable lady who dropped in and checked if we were happy with our meal.)

In *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg challenged women to "lean in" rather than "pull back" in the face of obstacles in their careers. While she may appear superhuman to many and some may question if Sandberg, in her privileged and highly compensated position, is the best person to offer workplace advice to women, for me the takeaway from her *Lean In* campaign is about putting our hearts, bodies and minds to achieve something we really want.

At the end of the day, I firmly believe that success is not defined by gender but by the concerted effort we make to be the best that we can be. And having more women leaders as role models in the travel sector does not hurt one bit, especially for the legions of young women – and men – who are just starting their careers in the industry.

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COMING UP

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SINGAPORE The Lion City's Golden Jubilee year has spawned good marketing opportunities for the trade

MID-SCALE HOTELS Are there enough mid/upscale hotels to satisfy inbound agencies' needs?

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Few things can sour a trip faster than lost luggage, and an innovative product now seeks to overcome that. A small device that can be stuffed inside luggage, the Tumi Global Locator uses GPS, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth technology to enable travellers monitor the location of their luggage via a smartphone app. This device is FAA compliant, with the ability to shut itself off in-flight and turn itself back on upon landing. Details are still sketchy, but the device is expected to be available in Q4 at Tumi stores and on its website.





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RIDING OUT THE YUAN STORM



When China sneezes, the world catches a cold. And when China's series of surprise yuan devaluations comes on top of a steep slowdown in the world's second-largest economy, destinations from South Korea to Singapore are bracing for the potential fallout as China has become an important source of growth in recent years.

A weaker yuan has caused ripples in the Maldives, a popular destination for Chinese travellers and where China represents the largest inbound market. An immediate impact was felt in July when arrivals from China dropped four per cent to 41,527, which the trade attributes to the yuan devaluation and stock market crash.

Yoosuf Riffath, CEO of Capital Travel, believes the depreciation could result in a possible drop in arrivals in August too. "We hope the situation will ease in the next few months," he said.

However, Hussain Lirar, Maldives dep-

uty minister of tourism, is optimistic that a recovery from the Chinese market will be seen in the coming months. "(There's) no cause for alarm," he opined.

Among the most vulnerable are attractions like Ocean Park Hong Kong, which is highly dependent on the mainland China market. Said executive director of sales and marketing, Vivian Lee: "The renminbi's slight depreciation may dampen travel sentiment for (Chinese) consumers and could modestly reduce the spending power of mainland visitors."

The Chinese are still coming

Despite the market reaction, the potential currency effects are mixed for the travel industry. The regional trade played down the immediate impacts of the renminbi woes on tourism, although there are concerns about the after-effects in the months ahead.

Ng Hi-on, director of CTS International Science-Technology & Culture Ex-

change in Hong Kong, said: "The two per cent depreciation poses no significant effect unless it devaluates by double digits. In fact, we (consultants) and hotels settle bill in Hong Kong dollars so there is no negative impact to us so far."

The Langham Hong Kong, director of sales and marketing, David Fung, said: "We have not noticed any direct booking impact on our business. It's too early to say what will happen."

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) believes the renminbi devaluation will have an "insignificant impact" on Chinese tourist arrivals to Thailand, according to an official *TTG Asia* spoke to.

Thailand has seen good growth from China to date, with Chinese arrivals surging 112 per cent year-on-year to reach 4.7 million from January to July 2015, based on preliminary figures from TAT.

Chinese visitors are also spending more as TAT reported tourism revenue of 229 billion baht (US\$6.3 billion) so far, a growth of 139 per cent from the same period in 2014.

The devalued yuan has "not yet affected outbound travel (from China)", said Patrick Bassett, COO for Accor, who added that the company is expecting "double-digit growth" in the Chinese market to Thailand for the next decade.

Likewise, South Korea and Japan will retain their appeal for the increasingly salaried Chinese. Chinese make up 50 per cent of the customers at Accor's ibis properties in Seoul, where shopping and cheap plastic surgery are top attractions, while

Japan has become even more accessible following a 40 per cent depreciation of the yen, Bassett added.

"At the moment, we are not too worried," JTB Corp spokesman Motohisa Tachikawa told *TTG Asia*, adding that some 2.8 million Chinese visited Japan in the January-to-July period, up from 1.3 million in the same period last year.

"That increase has been very large and very fast, so even if numbers do fall back, that is still a large number of Chinese coming to Japan," he said. "Even if the numbers fall back later in the year, we expect to see stable growth in the number of inbound travellers from China over the longer-term future."

For the coming months, travellers who have already booked their holidays are unlikely to cancel now, but the real test of Chinese consumers' sentiment might come at Chinese New Year when more Chinese may opt to stay at home rather than travel overseas, Tachikawa remarked.

Maho Ito, a spokeswoman for All Nippon Airways, agreed: "At this point, we do not see any effect on our business. Chinese consumers are still very keen to come to Japan and they enjoy shopping here; we expect that to continue."

Alicia Seah, director of marketing communications at Dynasty Travel Singapore, added: "If the lower yuan exchange rate continues in the next two to three months, it will result in travel (consultants) having to make adjustments to their rates to remain competitive and attractive to the China markets."

The drop in yuan is insignificant compared with the drop in ringgit over the last year. The Chinese still enjoy better value in Malaysia.

Kem Siew

Vice president sales & marketing, Swiss-Garden International Hotels, Resorts & Inns

China's sudden currency devaluation has rattled stock and financial markets worldwide, but the Asian travel sector appears to weather the economic turbulence well – at least for the time being. By **S Puvaneswary, Paige Lee Pei Qi, Julian Ryall, Michael Mackey, Prudence Lui and Feizal Samath**

More bang for yuan for some

Buyers from China at the recent PATA Travel Mart 2015 in Bengaluru said their customers are still booking travel packages in earnest despite the weak yuan.

Shanghai-based outbound specialist, Alex Zhang, regional manager for Thailand and South Asia department at Spring Tour, said: "My company has seen a year-on-year increase in bookings to popular destinations such as Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. These destinations are inexpensive for the Chinese."

Also observing an uptick in Chinese demand for Sri Lanka is Romeo Luo, FIT specialist with Spring Airlines Chongqing business office & Chongqing International Travel Service.

"The demand is up especially from honeymooners who are drawn to beach resorts (which Sri Lanka has aplenty)," Luo said.

And thanks to the yuan's relative strength against the ringgit, which has slumped significantly against the US dollar by nearly 30 per cent at press time, Chinese inbound growth still look robust for Malaysia for the time being.

Kem Siew, vice president sales & marketing, Swiss-Garden International Hotels, Resorts & Inns, said: "The drop in yuan is insignificant compared with the drop in ringgit over the last year. The Chi-

nese still enjoy better value in Malaysia."

According to Mint Leong, managing director of Sunflower Holidays and secretary-general of the Malaysian Inbound Tourism Association, ground arrangement costs have reduced by six to 10 per cent from a year ago due to currency conversions for the Chinese inbound market.

"With the lower ringgit, we've seen a definite increase in shopping especially for branded clothes, watches and bags. While imported goods may cost more because of the devalued ringgit, it is still a good buy as many items are duty-free in Malaysia."

From October 1, the Malaysian government will grant temporary social pass of 15 days for group sizes of at least 20 people from China travelling with tour operators registered with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

"However, this move is too late to capitalise on the Chinese Golden Week Holiday (starting on October 1)," said Leong.

A boost in inbound travel?

Conversely, a weaker yuan has worked in favour for outbound tour operators like Dynasty Travel in Singapore, which saw a 20 per cent spike in enquiries and bookings to China for travel during the September-December 2015 period, said Seah.

"China is a very popular and economically priced destination, thus with (the)



lower yuan, Singaporeans being a travel-savvy lot, will latch on especially quickly to currency fluctuations to save on shopping and dining," she commented.

"If the low exchange rate continues, this will definitely push forward some bookings for 4Q2015 and the upward

trend will continue to surge with greater demand from visitors to China."

Ocean Park's Vivian Lee concurred: "The weaker renminbi may increase China's appeal as a travel destination, thereby benefiting Hong Kong as a stopover enroute to China."



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ATF 2016 Sees Interest From Corporate Exhibitors

The upcoming ATF 2016 TRAVEX from 20 to 22 January in Manila, Philippines has confirmed the participation of leading hospitality brands led by its corporate office at the exhibition showcase. This includes CHM Hotels, FRHI Hotels & Resorts, Furama Hotels International, HPL Hotels & Resorts, Intercontinental Hotels Group, Park Hotel Group, Premier Inn Hotel, Sol Melia, Starwood Asia Pacific Hotels & Resorts, and global room distribution portal Hotelbeds.

The annually anticipated industry event that houses the largest collection of travel trade suppliers from across the 10 member ASEAN nations has also announced that exhibition floor space is quickly filling up, with close to 70% booths already secured by hotels, resorts, airlines, tour operators, themed attractions, tourism boards and other service providers.

Like the independent exhibitors from across the region, brands are also seeing the value of having a corporate presence at the show. The unparalleled reach to 400 validated, qualified global buyers and 100 international and local media during the 3-day event is undoubtedly the biggest draw factor. In addition, corporate brands also cite valuable business generation prospects, product profiling, awareness and lead generation as must-attend reasons.

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Furama Hotels International
Regional Director of Sales & Marketing, Shirlena Tan

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Melia Hotels International
Senior Director of Sales & Marketing Asia Pacific, Ruben Casas

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Premier Inn South East Asia
Head of Sales & Marketing Indonesia, Lindawati Muhlis

For more information on booth space, email atfsellers@ttgasia.com or visit www.atfphilippines.com

Analysis

A STEPPE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Tourism is still a nascent industry in Kazakhstan, contributing about 1.5 per cent of the country's GDP. The Central Asian nation received 6.4 million tourist arrivals last year, a slight drop from 6.8 million in 2013.

In July 2014, the Kazakh government introduced a year-long pilot programme to offer visa-free entry for 10 countries, namely France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, South Korea, the UAE, the UK and the US. Kazakhstan recently extended the scheme by another year to 2016.

To grow inbound tourism and reduce tourism trade deficit – outbound travel currently exceeds inbound travel by US\$500 million – Kazakhstan added 10 more countries to its visa-free facility in July this year, extending the scheme to include Spain, Belgium, Hungary, Monaco, Singapore, Australia, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

"Eventually, Almaty will also include all OECD countries into the programme, though these markets will be brought on board gradually," said Timur Duisengaliyev, director of the Tourism Industry Department.

Alicia Seah, director, marketing communications at Dynasty Travel in Singapore, said: "With the visa waiver, we are hopeful it will attract Singaporeans, many of whom are well-heeled travellers and enjoy off-the-beaten-track destinations. While our company sells packages to Uzbekistan as a mono destination, we will consider coming up with new packages combining Uzbekistan with Kazakhstan."

Lack of destination awareness

To reduce an over-dependence on travel trade shows and consumer travel fairs, the Tourism Industry Department wants to set up marketing representation offices in key overseas markets. Currently, there are no such offices.

Duisengaliyev said: "We need to have a constant presence in key markets. It is not enough to just attend trade shows."

The NTO is keen to open marketing representation offices in China, India, Russia and Germany by this year-end, as these countries have the capability to "generate high volumes of inbound tourists" for

To grow Kazakhstan as a tourist destination, the NTO first needs to raise awareness of the country's myriad offerings, writes **S Puvaneswary**



We need to have a constant presence in key markets. It is not enough to just attend trade shows.

Timur Duisengaliyev
Director, Tourism Industry Department, Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan, said Duisengaliyev.

The trade also wants the Kazakh government to do more to promote the country overseas.

Holiday Inn Almaty's general manager, Douglas Winfield, said: "The government must come up with a clear marketing strategy to win more leisure tourists. Relaxing visa for certain markets is a great initiative, but the government must also work with the private sector to drive tourism."

Added Saya Okas, marketing manager at Shymbulak Ski Resort, where only a quarter of its 500,000 visitors each year are foreigners: "The perception among tour operators and international tourists is that the country has nothing to offer. This is mainly due to a lack of awareness."

Abdul Rahman Mohd Ali, group CEO of Poto Travel & Tours Malaysia said the 15-day visa-free entry for Malaysians and direct flights between Kuala Lumpur and Almaty has aided the selling of Kazakhstan to a certain extent.

He opined: "However, it will be easier to promote the destination if the Tourism Industry Department assists in joint destination promotions and marketing support for (consultants). Ka-

zakhstan – and Central Asia as a whole – is still a new destination for Malaysians and breaking into this new market is not as profitable as selling established markets such as Central Europe."

Golden Tourworld Travel Malaysia's 15days/13nights Central Asia package, which combines Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, uses Almaty as a gateway with Air Astana's thrice-weekly flights from Kuala Lumpur.

Said the company's marketing manager, Christine Ker: "We would consider extending stays in Kazakhstan if the Tourism Industry Department offers more consumer promotions to Malaysians and provides us with marketing support and product updates."

Air Astana as key driving force

A key driver of the Kazakh tourism sector is Air Astana, a joint venture between the country's national wealth fund, Samruk Kazyna, and BAE Systems, with shares of 51 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.

Peter Foster, president of Air Astana, laments that the government has neither a clear strategy to attract international tourists

nor joint marketing promotion efforts with the national carrier and the NTO, unlike other countries in Asia-Pacific.

On its own, Air Astana works in close partnership with The Ritz-Carlton Almaty to jointly host fam trips for foreign travel consultants. The airline is heavily dependent on travel consultants as agencies make up 90 per cent of seats sold.

"Year-round, the average load factor of Air Astana varies between 65 to 68 per cent year-on-year, (offering) plenty of opportunities for (travel consultants) in Asia to sell Kazakhstan," said Richard Ledger, Air Astana's vice president, worldwide sales.

However, he acknowledges that the airline and the destination are not well-known for longhaul markets such as Southeast Asia, thus organising fam programmes and offering special rates for preferred consultants to sell Kazakhstan packages at consumer travel fairs are important.

Urging Air Astana to work closer with the trade, Gulnora Khamidova, managing director at GM Travel House in Kuala Lumpur, said: "Otherwise, (consultants) will work with other Central Asian carriers such as Uzbekistan Airways which offers competitive rates to (consultants) or Turkmenistan Airlines which also has direct flights to Kuala Lumpur."

To attract transit visitors through Almaty and Astana, Air Astana Stopover Holidays is a pre-paid programme which includes transfers, hotel accommodation with breakfast, city tours and seasonal free tours – such as skiing in winter and mountain biking in summer.

In this tie-up with Travel Business Analyst (TBA), we crunch numbers that matter and make them meaningful. Plus, look out for our Hotel Barometer every month

Faster air passenger traffic growth between US, APAC

Air passenger traffic between the US and Asia-Pacific grew 5.5% in 1H2015, faster than the 4.8% recorded for total traffic to-and-from the US.

This trend appears contrary to the earlier performance of US/Asia-Pacific traffic. Since 2010 Asia-Pacific has been growing at 6%, below the overall (very fast) 10%. It is also the same pattern since 2000 – Asia-Pacific chalked up 2%, compared with total 4%.

Japan is still by far the biggest country-pair with the US, accounting for twice the number of passengers than China in

second place. However, Japan fell almost 9% this year and is the only country-pair in Asia-Pacific to have fallen this decade – a 1% annual average. Results have been slightly better over the past five years – an annual average 1% growth.

China’s growth this year has been 18%, higher than the 16% annual average this decade and only slightly slower than the 19% annual growth over the past five years.

‘Silent’ mover South Korea is still bigger than the China-US country-pair. Its 17% growth this year is almost as fast as

China’s, and that growth is much faster than over the past few years – an annual average 6% since 2000 and 9% annually since 2010.

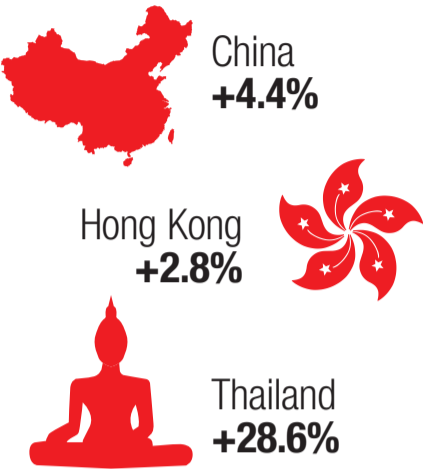
Another ‘quiet’ big mover is Taiwan – up 14% this year, much faster than the 1% annual average since 2000 and its annual average 4% since 2010.

Most disappointing is India though. Hailed as the market with great potential, growth this year was only 2%, which is lower than its 11% annual average since 2000 and 4% annual average since 2010.

Other US/Asia-Pacific travel trends in 1H2015:

- Air passengers to Asia counted 15.1 million (+5.4%) for a 15% share; Pacific (excluding Guam) counted 2.2 million (+4.7%) for a 1% share.
- Only two Asia-Pacific airports were in the top 10 – Tokyo Narita (3rd) with 4.5 million (-3.5%), as Tokyo’s traffic growth moves to its Haneda airport; the other was Seoul (8th) with 2.9 million (+16.0%).
- Outbound travel by US nationals to Asia (for June only) counted 436,000 travellers (+3%) for a 7% share; Pacific counted 54,000 travellers (+20%) for a 1% share.
- For China/US routes in the month of June, total US-arriving passengers (on non-stop flights) counted 267,199 (+14.3%). Of these, 181,168 (+17.6%) were non-US nationals, of which probably 80-85% would be Chinese nationals.
- The estimated capacity (323,764 seats; +18.6%) on non-stop flights from China to the US was above that of inbound passenger growth at 14.3%.

1H2015 visitor arrivals



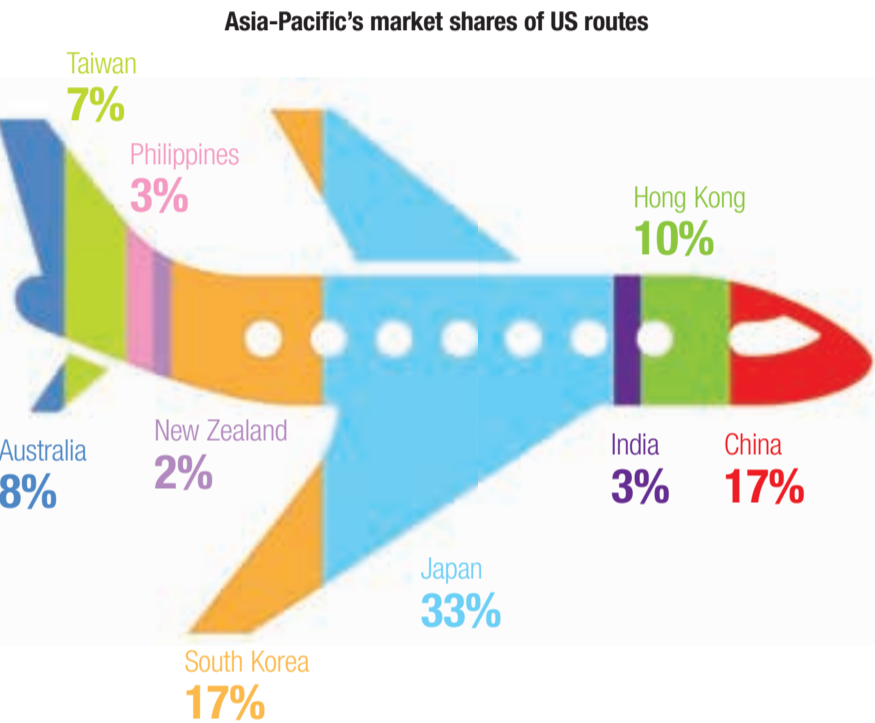
China’s visitor arrivals grew 4%, coming mainly from Hong Kong, which was four times the non-Hong Kong markets (-1%).

Hong Kong’s arrivals growth was slow at just 3%, mainly caused by a slowdown in China, which grew 5% in 1H2015 but posted a surprising fall of 2% in June. Is that a reflection of the sentiment of travellers from China, who have been criticised by some of Hong Kong’s residents?

Nevertheless, as Hong Kong’s non-China arrivals decline 4% year-to-date, a continued fall from China will likely push the overall total into negative.

Singapore’s arrivals in the January-May period dipped 4%, following the first monthly growth since February 2014. China is once again producing good growth, growing 3% in 2014 but still smaller than its total in 2013.

Also China-driven, Thailand’s total arrivals in 1H2015 grew 29%, but China surged 108%. Without China, growth was lower, although still good at 13%.



HOTEL BAROMETER

Weak Asian currencies cast shadow over hotel performance

Hotel results in May 2015 were dominated by sizeable exchange-rate movements – mainly of Asian currencies falling against the US dollar.

As the hotel business uses mainly the US dollar as a point of reference, analysis can be distorted by sudden change. In the most extreme example, Sydney’s average room rates fell 21% in terms of US dollars in May, but in local currency there was a 1% growth!

Here are some other surprises in results in our selected centres:

Hong Kong

The city’s occupancy appears to be suffering from China’s economic slowdown. Even though Chinese travellers stay less in paid accommodation than other markets, their movement has a big impact on totals.

But what is also puzzling is that visitor arrivals from China to Hong Kong that month actually grew 5%, which was better than the preceding two months. Non-China arrivals dropped just 1%, but not as much as the hotels’ occupancy fall.

A greater surprise is perhaps the fall in rates, which rarely happens in Hong Kong and usually due to out-of-industry events such as the Occupy Central protests.

Hotel operating results in selected centres, May 2015

Location	Occupancy, %	Growth, %	ARR, US\$*	Growth, %	RevPAR, US\$*	Growth, %
Bali	63.1	-3.7	111	-18.3	70	-21.3
Bangkok	58.8	21.6	87	-10.2	51	9.1
Beijing	74.9	4.3	100	3.9	75	8.3
Hong Kong	78.2	-7.3	197	-17.4	154	-23.5
Maldives	67.4	-4.5	457	-4.4	308	-8.7
Singapore	82.8	3.1	156	-15.4	129	-12.7
Sydney	86.6	2.8	172	-21.1	149	-18.9

Notes: Compared with same month, a year earlier. ARR = average room rate, RevPAR = revenue per available room. *Calculated at exchange rate for specific month to US dollars. Source: hotels to TBA.

These falls are the same in US dollars as Hong Kong’s currency is tied to the US dollar – that is also part of the reason. Rates in Hong Kong were already high and going even higher with the appreciating HK/US dollars. This either deters some travellers or affects their plans (booking two nights instead of three, for instance).

Bangkok

Growth in Bangkok is not such a surprise anymore – although this was before August’s bomb attack in the Thai capital.

In May, occupancy grew 22%, although the resulting total of 59% is still uncomfortably very low, even for the shoulder season. Rates fell 10%, largely an exchange-rate factor.

The surprise is that rates also fell 3% in local currency, indicating that hotels may be ‘buying’ occupancy growth with good rates (for the guest; i.e., low for hoteliers).

Maldives

The Maldives has seemed different from other markets thanks to its higher-paying guests, but no longer. Both occupancy and rate fell in May, despite the fact that visitor arrivals grew 4% in the same month.

Singapore

The Lion City has recorded many monthly falls, but the surprise is that visitor arrivals in May increased, albeit by only 1%, after falling for 14 consecutive months. That produced a better growth of 3% in occupancy.

Rates, however, were still falling – by 15% in US dollars, but a less-drastic 6% in local currency. Hoteliers are presuming that this is just a lag, and that rates will now start to increase.

However, Singapore’s 50th anniversary activities over the summer would probably have caused a slowdown.

According to our Big Event Blues semi-serious theory, the event might attract international visitors, but many traditional travellers (such as business travellers and even holidaymakers) will stay away just before, during and just after the event. They assume that there will be too much disruption to normal movement in the destination. In general, they are right – not only is movement curtailed, but many prices are higher.

Agency



KL Tan (above), general manager of Borneo Trails Tours & Travel, has launched WonderfulBorneo.com, a portal that caters to same-day bookings



INNOVATORS

A MARKET FOR SAME-DAY TOURS

By S Puvaneswary

WHO Sabah-based Borneo Trails Tours & Travel is a decade-old inbound tour company helmed by general manager KL Tan, who is also vice president - inbound of the Malaysian Association of Tour & Travel Agents.

Borneo Trails' tour packages are reflective of Tan's personal interests in nature, conser-

vation and responsible tourism. In 2011, he expanded the business to include the Borneo Nature Lodge in Sukau. The environmentally-friendly lodge is located along the Kinabatangan River, where visitors can go on nature walks in the surrounding forest and spot endangered mammals such as the orangutan and proboscis monkey.

WHAT Tan's most recent venture was the development of a mobile-friendly portal, WonderfulBorneo.com, to sell Borneo Trails tour packages online.

The unique feature of this portal is the same-day tours tab, which allows same-day departures upon confirmation of bookings. Same-day tours include city tours of various combinations focusing on shopping, iconic attractions, nightlife and cuisine, in addition to cultural tours and visits to nearby islands.

Tan said: "We are able to conduct same-day tours because we have our own guides and vehicles. With the new website, tourists will be able to choose from a wide variety of

tours, make payment online using their credit cards and get instant confirmation."

WHY In recent years, the industry veteran noticed a growing preference among travellers to search for travel destinations and tips on their smartphones. At the same time, Tan also noticed an increasing number of requests for same-day tours.

He said: "These are mainly FIT and families from Australia, Singapore and the UK who have already booked their hotels but don't have any tour arrangements. Realising that this is a new and promising segment, I decided to create a mobile-friendly website to cater to what I believe will become (a) mainstream (preference) in a few years' time."

TARGET There are currently around 20 tour packages available for same-day bookings. Tan plans to progressively expand the number of products and offerings that can be purchased and instantly confirmed online.

TTG/TravelRave Focus

SE Asia, where travel startups come calling

The rapid rise of entrepreneurs entering into South-east Asia's travel landscape has been nothing short of transformative. Singapore, in particular, has been hailed as a venerable hotbed for startups to testbed their innovations before expanding into other countries in the region.

Edwin Chow, group director, industry development and innovation & startups, Spring Singapore, said: "The culture and attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Singapore have improved tremendously over the years and Singapore's startup ecosystem is well placed for growth."

"Having the best intellectual property protection in Asia also means that entrepreneurs setting up here can be better assured of their proprietary content when developing unique technologies," encouraging more innovation in the market," he added.

The number of successful travel tech startups launched in Singapore in recent years is testimony to the region's immense potential.

Singapore-based BeMyGuest, which was founded in 2012, first secured S\$500,000 (US\$353,628) in angel funding in 2013 and moved on to purchase Indiescapes in early 2014, before bagging a further S\$1



million in funding when it won Channel NewsAsia's Start-up Asia Competition last year. It is now touted as one of the fastest-growing tours and activities booking platforms in Asia.

Founder and CEO, Clement Wong, said: "The market size (in Singapore) is small and one is forced to think regional from the beginning. (But) the infrastructure here is what sets it apart, and its access to the regional tourism market is a major plus point."

TripZilla, an online travel

portal established in Singapore in 2010 to aggregate prices, packages, itineraries and travel promotions across major booking channels in a country, has since launched in Malaysia as well in 2013.

Winnie Tan, founder & CEO of TripZilla, said: "Singapore's startup ecosystem is mature compared with the neighbouring countries. Starting in Singapore means it is easier to raise seed money. There is good access to capital here - plenty of angel investors and govern-

ment grants and schemes (that) tech startups can tap on."

For instance, first-time entrepreneurs can apply for Spring Singapore's ACE Startups Grant, which is a competitive grant of up to S\$50,000, and recipients will be paired with a business mentor to offer strategic counsel.

The Technology Enterprise Commercialisation Scheme also offers successful applicants an early-stage funding of up to S\$500,000 for the creation and commercialisation of proprietary technology solutions.

Rinita Vanjre, CEO of online platform for social dining BonAppetour and a recipient of the ACE Startups Grant, said: "(We decided) Singapore is a great place to do a startup mainly because of the ease of setting up a company, the range of government grants available to kick-start the growth, and the presence of many mentors to provide good feedback and advice on the startup."

Lauding Singapore's hub status for business and leisure travel, TripZilla's Tan elaborated: "Tourism leaders and professionals often pass through Singapore for work and to attend industry events. This gives startups more opportunities to learn from the industry experts and do business with the big travel brands."

Moe Ibrahim, CEO of reward-based OTA Journeyful, concurred: "The inbound traffic (into Singapore) is excellent if you can develop relationships with outbound tour operators or build your brand regionally."

At the same time, Ibrahim also highlighted the "crippling costs" of entrepreneurship. "Startups are tedious work. There (still) needs to be more support for subsidised office space, legal advice, labour and marketing," he said.

Spring Singapore's Chow agrees that it is "no easy task" to become a successful entrepreneur.

He said: "(Startups) need to know how to translate their ideas into reality, have a good team to help scale the business quickly, and ultimately convince more customers to keep coming back. This requires a lot of perseverance, tenacity and hard work." - Paige Lee Pei Qi

This column is brought to you by TravelRave, Asia's premier travel and tourism week offering a dynamic platform for business leaders and industry professionals to convene and share insights on pertinent issues and key trends in the travel industry. The events, co-located in Singapore under the auspices of the Singapore Tourism Board (which also organises the Asia Travel Leaders Summit), will be held from October 19-23.

THE 5 DIFFERENT PROFILES

OF THE MILLENNIAL WORKFORCE AND HOW TO MOTIVATE THEM

TRAVE! 2015 RAVE

The millennial generation – almost 80% of Asia’s workforce – is set to take the tourism industry by storm. A report by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and McKinsey & Company shares the five profiles of millennial employees in tourism. At TravelRave 2014, industry leaders also gave ideas on how to engage with this workforce.

<div>1. BREADWINNERS</div> <div>32%</div> <div></div> <div>Driven by salary and career advancement. Usually older, married males with children.</div>	<div>2. IDEALISTS</div> <div>19%</div> <div></div> <div>Driven by meaningful work and prestige, and are willing to compromise on salary. Usually young, single, well-educated females who rent or live with their parents.</div>	<div>3. MONEY-SEEKERS</div> <div>18%</div> <div></div> <div>Driven by international exposure and salary, and will accept flexible working arrangements. Usually male.</div>	<div>4. FAMILY-FOCUSED</div> <div>18%</div> <div></div> <div>Appreciates flexible working arrangements and is driven by meaningful work. Usually married females with children who are willing to compromise on career prospects and international exposure.</div>	<div>5. WANT-IT-ALLS</div> <div>13%</div> <div></div> <div>Meaningful work, international exposure, and flexible working arrangements – this group wants it all. Usually young singles without previous industry experience.</div>
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5 TIPS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN MILLENNIALS

<div>1. CREATE A CULTURE THAT MILLENNIALS WANT TO BE A PART OF</div> <div>Replace a top-down working culture with a supportive and transparent culture, especially with regard to performance measurement and remuneration.</div> <div></div>	<div>2. LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND</div> <div>Millennials bring a whole new level of creativity to the workplace. Tap on this creativity, while driving their careers according to their diverse talents.</div> <div></div>
<div>3. INVEST IN YOUR MILLENNIALS – EDUCATE AND EMPOWER</div> <div>Emphasise on career development. Empowering them makes them ambassadors for your company so they become valuable influencers even after they move on.</div> <div></div>	<div>4. APPRECIATE THEM AND TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY</div> <div>Groom them from the start and show them that their contributions matter. Tap into their enthusiasm and energy to find creative solutions.</div> <div></div>
<div>5. GIVE THEM EXPOSURE AND FLEXIBILITY</div> <div>Rotate them across your business functions for experience and diversity, and encourage them to create their own career map. Look at lateral rather than linear development.</div> <div></div>	

Asia’s premier travel and tourism week returns to Singapore on 19 – 23 October with world-class events like the Hotel Management Singapore Summit and ITB Asia’s Future Leaders. Get inspired by insights from top-notch speakers and network with leading names in the industry.

Visit www.travelrave.sg to read a more detailed version of this article.

TravelRave events



View from the top

The poster girl for Asian female success in a male- and western-dominated industry, Rainy Chan, regional VP and GM of The Peninsula, Hong Kong, tells **Raini Hamdi** why intuition, passion, patience and loyalty are still the backbone of success

SENSE OF A WOMAN

Four of the 10 Peninsula hotels in operation today are run by a female general manager. Is this a deliberate effort?

We don't deliberately look at gender. It's about the right timing. We look for talent through headhunters and people we know. Unfortunately there aren't a lot of female GM CVs out there – many don't make it to that level.

Still today – why?

Women are still expected to get married and take care of the kids. But in this industry, we have to travel and work long hours. If you tell your husband I'm moving every two years, he's going to look at you and say, 'Huh? Excuse me?' Hence, many women don't make it to the top, not because they are not capable or wanted, but because they have to make choices. Women just have it tougher in having to make a choice in certain stages of their career.

Your advice to young people, when it comes to making choices?

Don't overthink it. Women think too much. When I talk to students, they say, 'I don't want to be in hotels because I won't have a life.' How do you know? How do you know what kind of life you want to have? You start, then see what comes.

In general, women will intuitively know how to make a decision. If you are lucky enough to find a job you love, nothing should matter, until something else matters a lot more, and then you will intuitively make the choice.

What choices did you have to make?

I was working in the hotel industry and had moved to the US when the Peninsula Hong Kong, which was looking for a front office manager, called me. I could

not believe it. I asked did they know I'm a woman? In 60 years, they've never hired a female FOM. Did they know I'm Chinese? They said yes they know (laughs).

I was engaged. But as a Hong Kong Chinese girl looking at the Peninsula, there was no way I would say no. So I asked my ex-fiancee, 'Can I just go for one year?' He said, 'I guess the best way to keep you is to let you go.' Except of course he had let me go forever. It's meant to be. If we were meant to be together he would have moved to Hong Kong with me. I'm Chinese and I believe in serendipity. When it's meant to be yours, it will come.

Did you imagine you'd be heading The Peninsula Hong Kong one day?

Never! I was lucky to be discovered by my mentor, our COO, Peter Borer. He was a pioneer in thinking, 'Enough of this expat business, I want to hire a local, but someone with enough international perspective and training, who can balance the new and the old, the west and the east.'

Then there was this unconditional giving – the opportunity to learn, to improve myself but, importantly, he knew that the key area where I needed the most support was confidence. I did not go to college or hotel school; I learnt everything at work. He let me do it, he believes

if you do something with the intention of benefiting the hotel or the company, you will always make the right decision and even if it's wrong it can't be that bad because your intention is good.

What mistakes do you see young people make in their career?

They give up too quickly. They think they're bored, they think they have learnt everything. But they have not; no, in the service industry you can't possibly graduate from learning

how to care for, or manage people, too quickly.

I think they just don't want to face the challenge. They give themselves new challenges without overcoming the old ones, not realising that eventually the old challenges will come back, no matter what company or field they are in. That kind of attitude will prohibit them from building a solid portfolio for themselves.

I've a solid portfolio. I've managed people in different countries and gone through earth-shattering events – 9/11 in New York, tsunami in Bangkok and SARS in Hong Kong – as a senior executive of this company. Sticking with the same company, you grasp its DNA – that's why the company trusts me to run its flagship hotel. What's wrong today is if you stick around for so long, people say what's wrong with you!

Loyalty goes a long way. In my tenure with the company, I've established so many friendships and these form my rock. In hard times, I reach out for them; we open hotels together, go through crises such as 9/11 together. These relationships would never happen if I didn't stay put.

But what made you stay?

It's a unique hotel company, and quite wonderful. There are other wonderful hotel companies but because their model is management contracts, they are not in a position to keep all of their hotels consistent in quality and reinvestment. Most of our hotels, on the other hand, are undergoing some kind of upgrade – no other hotel company can say that. The Peninsula Chicago, for instance, is renovating its rooms and suites, which are in great condition still. We don't wait to renovate. It is all about consistency: the renovation in Chicago and Beijing will put the hotels in line with those in Hong Kong and Paris, which now field the best technology.

The fact we own our hotels gives us that freedom to reinvest to ensure our quality is maintained. Also, it enables us to keep the hospitality tradition. It's different when you are just managing; you have different owners, some are short-term thinking,

10 NEED TO KNOWS ABOUT RAINY CHAN

■ **Who's in your family?** My dog Bella, an adorable 11-year-old west highland terrier.

■ **What do you do for fun?** I love to spend time with my friends. Our favourite pastimes are going to the movies, enjoying spa days, checking out new restaurants (or going back to the one we love over and over again!) and playing golf with some of my friends who would tolerate my not-so-great skills. One of my greatest passions is to travel, especially when I can travel to places to meet my friends.

■ **Your ideal vacation?** To enjoy great weather, a beautiful sunset and carefree days with no scheduled itineraries.

■ **How do you book your own leisure trips?** I always book my trips through a travel adviser.

■ **What are you reading right now?** I am reading *Outside the Window* by Qiong Yao, my favourite novel when I was a teenager.

■ **How do you stay healthy?** I try to have a balanced diet, I work out three to four times a week and I make sure I get some good sleep.

■ **Favourite food?** It's hard to name a single dish, but I love Asian and Italian cuisine.

■ **A bad habit you cannot kick?**

I check my e-mails far too often, even when I am off work and on holiday.

■ **Your pet peeve, something that never fails to annoy you?** Arrogance – no matter how successful, rich or famous you are, if you are arrogant, that will be the only quality that people see.

■ **Most people don't know that you...** can't cook, and I mean I really can't cook!

others a bit more long term. That model still works, but I look for a company like Peninsula, where I know I am working for the chairman and that I would not have a hotel that I'm managing today having a different name tomorrow!

There's a strong sense young people aren't loyal. What's an industry to do?

I run a hotel with people of four generations. When I started as a GM, I knew I had to build a hotel for the son of Sir Michael (Kadoorie), not for Sir Michael, so that when he takes over, the hotel will have people who have served for 40 years.

So how do I do that? First, we have to change our expectations. Long service today is five to 10 years, not 25 years. We launched a five-day work week two years ago so we can compete with other industries. We find out what young people want, just as we learn what our guest needs are, and we create the environment for them.

I also meet all long-service staff who are leaving – I give them my phone number. Many call when they want to come home.

Young people give up too quickly. They think they're bored, they think they have learnt everything. But...you can't possibly graduate from learning how to care for, or manage people, too quickly.



Social

From the newest executive movements to recent trade celebrations and major upcoming events, we round up the latest happenings to keep you plugged in

GALLERY

ALL ROADS LEAD TO MACAU FOR GTEF

The Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) recently kicked off its South-east Asia roadshow to promote Macau's cultural tourism to the travel communities in Singapore and Malaysia. To be held at the Venetian Macao from October 12-14, 2015, this year's forum will focus on the theme of *Belt and Road initiative: Unleashing the New Dynamics of Cultural Tourism*.

The media luncheon in Singapore was attended by (from left) Michael Chow, group publisher of TTG Asia Media; Charles Leong, managing director, MGTO representative office in Singapore; Peter Wong, vice chairman of GTEF and executive chairman of China Chamber of Tourism; Darren Ng, managing director of TTG Asia Media and chairman of PATA Singapore Chapter; and Paul Chung, director of sales of MGM Macau.



A NEW SABRE IN FOCUS

Sabre recently hosted a cocktail networking party with Cathay Pacific in Hong Kong to celebrate its acquisition of Abacus. Inset: Roshan Mendis, senior vice president of Sabre Travel Network Asia-Pacific poses with Larry Lo, managing director of Westminster Travel; right: Alvin Miu (centre) of BCD Travel chats with Mendis and Brett Henry, vice president, commercial of Sabre Travel Network Asia-Pacific.



OAKWOOD BUILDS NEW BRAND IN SINGAPORE

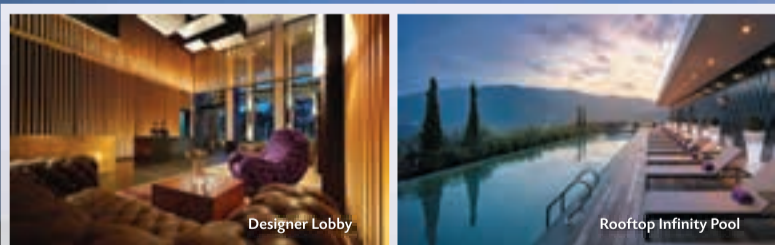
Oakwood Asia-Pacific's chief financial officer Yafang Bao and managing director Dean Schreiber signed a management contract with Newfort Realty's directors Calvin Tan and Vincent Toe to launch Oakwood Studios Singapore, the first Oakwood-branded property in the city, come November 2016.



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TECHNOLOGY

LUXE CITY GUIDES LAUNCHES ITINERARY APP FOR TRADE

Hong Kong-based publisher Luxe City Guides now offers an enterprise version of its

consumer application. Named Luxe Concierge, the subscription-based app is aimed at travel consultants and hotel concierges, offering them a platform to conveniently input

and share their client's itineraries with them on their smartphones. The app also allows subscribers access to Luxe's full range of recommendations in 25 cities worldwide.



HOTELS



ST REGIS MUMBAI, INDIA

Marking the brand's debut in India and South Asia, St Regis Mumbai will be situated in Lower Parel, the city's commercial, residential and entertainment district. The hotel, residing within India's tallest hotel tower, will boast 386 guest rooms including 27 suites, 33 residences, as well as a wide range of F&B options and amenities.



THE SOUTH BEACH, SINGAPORE

Currently the preview phrase, the 654-key hotel is now welcoming guests and is offering a *Stay 3 Pay 2* promotion before being fully operational by this year-end. Part of the South Beach mixed-use development, the hotel features Philippe Starck-designed rooms and suites, with amenities such as two sky gardens, two infinity swimming pools, a gym and a variety of F&B and entertainment offerings.



AVANI DEIRA DUBAI HOTEL, UAE

Minor Hotel Group in partnership with real-estate company Nakheel are co-investing and developing a 500-key Avani hotel in Dubai, set to open in 2018. The property will be sited on the Deira Islands and marks the Avani brand's first foray into the UAE.

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Report Serviced residences

Firms are relocating younger employees, and serviced apartment operators are responding with new products. Major players tell [Raini Hamdi](#) how

RELOCATION TRENDS



Lanson Place Hotel, Hong Kong



Fraser Residence Kuala Lumpur



“With advanced technology, Millennials are signing shorter-term tenancies, wanting to do conduct business faster and more efficiently.”

Marc Hediger
CEO, Lanson Place Hospitality Management



“Younger executives are being deployed for overseas assignments and as such there is also less need to accommodate an entire family.”

Choe Peng Sum
CEO, Frasers Hospitality

3 hottest relocation cities in Asia now and why

Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai are still the hottest Asian cities to relocate to, despite capital investments trending outward from these cities.

Considered the gateway to China, Hong Kong consistently offers an exciting city for expats: easy to reside in, great to establish business networks and very family friendly. Within the past 10 years, the city has seen a 50 per cent growth in the extended stay market.

Global MNCs will also easily consider relocating their employees to Hong Kong's friendly neighbouring competitor cities though, specifically Singapore or Shanghai.

Singapore saw a 30.4 per cent increase in serviced apartment supply last year and is perceived to be a city as easy to move to as Hong Kong. Shanghai continues to boom; although serviced apartment inventory have quadrupled in the past four years, occupancies are still in the 80 per cent levels. We have just announced our fifth property there.

Aside from these three established key cities in Asia, Lanson Place residents are also relocating to other prime cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Jakarta and Manila. Most offer more affordable living, but are also exciting up-and-coming business destinations.

What's trending

We've seen a shift in resident demographics throughout all our properties in Asia-Pacific, mostly in the past two years. With

advanced technology, Millennials are signing shorter-term tenancies, wanting to do conduct business faster and more efficiently. Baby boomers and Gen X are residing without families, while younger families are seeking smaller and more versatile units.

More significantly, residents who have been educated abroad are coming back to their own countries and relocating from within the Asia-Pacific region. In China, corporations are expanding their companies to second- and third-tier cities but are still seeking a comfortable yet affordable lifestyle for their employees.

How operators match changing trends

Lanson Place has specifically introduced a third business model called Serviced Suites by Lanson Place to address the changing trends and needs of corporates relocating.

This lean, efficient and contemporary serviced apartment style not only provides a higher return in investment for developers but most importantly offers residents a niche lifestyle, no matter the location or purpose of their residency.

Smaller units are creatively designed with unique combined open living and working spaces; public areas are the extension of their homes offering seamless connectivity throughout the entire development; 'grab n go' F&B concepts and energising activities promote well-being. This model forms the majority of pipeline deals for Lanson Place, be it in secondary locations in key gateway cities or 1.5-tier cities within China.

3 hottest relocation cities in Asia now and why

Singapore – the world's number one city for business friendliness – remains one of the hottest business destinations in Asia. A key gateway city for the South-east Asia market, it is known for its open-trade environment, corruption-free government and high quality of living, attracting large MNCs pursuing business opportunities in the region.

Kuala Lumpur has become an increasingly attractive business destination particularly for global manufacturers, offering lower tax and stricter intellectual property protection regimes, in comparison with other markets like China. It is ranked among the top 15 countries most favoured by MNCs in 2014-2016 with various government incentives for foreign companies geared towards making Malaysia a gateway to the ASEAN market.

Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi have also been successful in attracting foreign investment, quickly becoming an important market for companies looking to expand into second- and third-tier cities in Asia. Some of our residents who have completed their assignments in Jakarta have been relocated to Vietnam to take on new assignments.

What's trending

We have observed that overseas assignments are increasingly shorter, on a more regular basis of between two weeks to a month, as opposed to the previous trend of longer assignments of up to three

months at a time. Younger executives are being deployed for overseas assignments and as such there is also less need to accommodate an entire family. These, plus the increased overall appreciation of the advantages of serviced apartments, have contributed to the rising adoption rate of our serviced apartments in general and the one- and two-bedroom apartments in particular.

Most companies also now offer staff flexi-benefits packages as a measure to improve cost efficiency, where expatriates have the option of cashing in on their allocated accommodation expense if it is not fully utilised. This has led some expatriates to either opt for more affordable alternatives or shorten their length of stay.

How operators match changing trends

Plans are in place to further boost our inventory in these three cities as part of our goal of achieving 30,000 apartments units globally by 2019.

With the trend of shorter stays in mind, our newer properties have been configured with a larger number of one- and two-bedroom apartments to cater to more business executives who now tend to travel on their own, while at the same time maintaining the spacious defined living, kitchen, bedroom and study areas our serviced apartments are known for.

We also work closely with our corporate clients to better understand their evolving needs and customise solutions to complement their travel and relocation policies.

Report Serviced residences



“(We notice) an increase in short-term assignments as companies look to plug skills gaps, contain costs and appeal to younger workers who want to broaden their experience.”

Craig Ryan
Managing director, Asia-Pacific, Oakwood Worldwide

3 hottest relocation cities in Asia now and why
Both Singapore and Hong Kong lead the relocation markets in Asia-Pacific as they continue to serve as business hubs for multinational organisations.

As one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, China is also a key relocation market. Encouraged by the Chinese government’s opening up and increased pace of reform, more companies are establishing operations in China’s emerging cities in the mid-west. This trend, combined with the increased demand for serviced apartment in primary cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, is stimulating new serviced apartment projects, resulting in rapid development and progression across China.

Oakwood Worldwide has an aggressive expansion plan for China, with a second property in Beijing and one in Sanya and Haikou in the pipeline. We have also expanded our Asia-Pacific operations with the opening of an office in Hong Kong to meet the increased demand for serviced apartments in the region.

What’s trending
Some of the key trends we have noticed in the global mobility industry:

- An increase in short-term assignments as companies look to plug skills gaps, contain costs and appeal to younger workers who want to broaden their experience.
- A drop in the average age of assignees – in 2014, the 30-39-year-old age bracket had one of the highest percentages of international assignees (33 per cent), taking over from the 50-59-year-old age bracket, as reported in the 2014 Brookfield Global Relocation Trends Survey.
- Continued growth in the number of assignments in Asia-Pacific due to the increase in business travel.
- The growth of emerging markets as companies continue to broaden their reach and send assignees as project work increases.

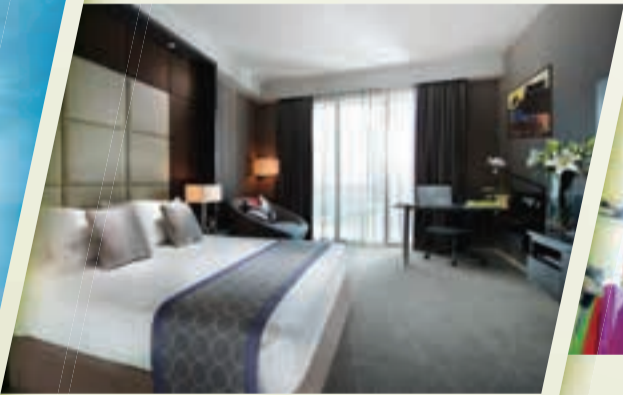
How operators match changing trends
Oakwood Worldwide has a four-

pronged approach in preparing to meet the needs that will result from the aforementioned trends:

- Robust development strategy in Asia-Pacific: Oakwood Worldwide is looking to double our current Asia-Pacific branded portfolio of 28 properties over the next three to five years.
- The launch of a hotel desk at the end of 2014 to give clients access to accommodation in smaller and remote cities where serviced apartments are not as readily available. This also provides flexibility for short to medium, and long-term stays.
- Strengthening our vetted supplier network: In Asia-Pacific, Oakwood Worldwide offers more than 400 properties across the region through local network partners.
- Evolving business model: By using Lanyon to contract rates from serviced apartment providers and hotels, we help organisations save time and resources, offering greater efficiency throughout the relocation.

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Ascott Kuningan Jakarta



"Younger executives are seeking smart living that integrates work, rest and play, as well as

unique, personalised and authentic local experiences when they are overseas."

Tony Soh
Chief corporate officer, The Ascott Limited

3 hottest relocation cities in Asia now and why

Indonesia, the Philippines and China.

Indonesia is the biggest economy in South-east Asia while the Philippines' strong economic fundamentals continue to attract foreign investors, in particular the back-office processing operations sector.

In China, demand for serviced residences remains strong in the first- and second-tier cities of Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou.

Given the strong economic potential of Asia, we will continue to deepen our presence and grow our network in Asia. We have expanded Ascott's presence in key cities such as Jakarta, Manila and Shanghai with the opening of Ascott Kuningan Jakarta, Ascott Bonifacio Global City Manila and Ascott Heng Shan Shanghai in recent months.

What's trending

With increasing talent mobility, our serviced residences con-

tinue to receive many guests who stay for an extended period of a month or more for relocation or project assignments.

As travellers get savvier and companies tighten their travel budgets, they recognise the value that serviced residences provide as compared with traditional hotels.

They appreciate the flexibility for project team members to share an apartment while enjoying the privacy of individual bedrooms and the convenience of a kitchen.

Younger executives are seeking smart living that integrates work, rest and play, as well as unique, personalised and authentic local experiences when they are overseas.

Staying healthy while on the move is also a trend.

How operators match changing trends

By constantly innovating and looking at new ways to delight guests.

Ascott is the first global serviced residence company to embrace smart home technologies.

We have forged an exclusive partnership with Samsung Asia to jointly develop smart solutions customised for serviced residences. Guests will be able to use their mobile or wearable devices to control washing machines, refrigerators, smart TVs and the like.

We aim to test-bed the technologies at selected Ascott serviced residences by the first half of 2016, with plans to roll out to our properties worldwide in phases.

We have also launched the Ascott Lifestyle programme, offering guests bespoke cultural, gastronomic, local and wellness experiences.

For instance, to help guests settle in a new city, there are local language classes and guided tours of the local market. Guests can stay fit by exploring the neighbourhood they are in with our customised jogging routes.

There are also cultural programmes such as batik making workshops and personal cooking sessions being conducted right in their apartment.



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Guide Beach resorts

South-east Asia's tropical beaches sees no shortage of sunshine and visitors. *TTG Asia* takes a closer look at how four classic beach destinations in the region are faring

SUNNY WITH A CHANCE OF MORE GROWTH

Phuket retains its strong appeal especially for Asian tourists

Phuket

By Michael Mackey

Performance in the last six months

Phuket continues to log healthy growth, driven by strong Asian arrivals and spending, observed the island's hoteliers and tour operators.

"The first two quarters of the year have been very good for our hotels, (with) average occupancy 80 per cent and above, and RevPAR above 2,200 baht (US\$62)," a Best Western International spokesperson told *TTG Asia*.

Confirming the trend of higher occupancy and spend, Keith Won, director of sales & marketing, Anantara Phuket Villas, said: "The overall RevPAR has also shown good increases in line with the overall occupancy."

Following its relaunch, Amari Phuket saw a "superb" 1H2015 that accounted for the resort's best performance in 30 years, according to Pierre-Andre Pelletier, vice-president & area general manager - South Thailand, Onyx Hospitality Group.

Ianic Menard, Accor's vice president for sales, marketing & distribution in upper South-east Asia, attributes Phuket's growth to the "strong increase in intra-Asia travel" that is led by China, Australia and India.

"The increase in Chinese guests has buoyed the island through what is meant to be low season," Menard commented.

On the other hand, Europeans are increasingly shifting from Phuket to other beach destinations like Krabi, Khao Lak and Koh Lanta, observed Laurent Kuenzle, CEO of Asian Trails.

"The image of Phuket is becoming one that is more focused on entertainment and preferences of Asian visitors," he added.

Outlook for the next six months

Despite the recent Erawan bombing in Bangkok, hoteliers in Phuket are confi-

dent that growth on the island will continue. They are also watchful of the international economy but stay upbeat.

"We remain positive about the outlook for the rest of the year and expect to see a continued increase in occupancy and ADR," said Anantara Phuket Villas' Won.

Menard said that Accor is already seeing increasing bookings for Phuket, especially during the Christmas and New Year period. The MICE sector is expected to do well too.

"The cost of organising meetings, events and incentive travel programmes in Phuket are feasible with reasonable prices, so the island will continue to be a South-east Asian hub for MICE travellers. This sector will continue to be a significant source of revenue for stakeholders in Phuket," added Menard.

Improved infrastructure on the island is also contributing to the growth of arrivals. The airport is undergoing upgrading, while new shopping malls are also likely to increase the number of high-end tourists, sources said.

What's new

● **Keemala** This luxury villa property located near Kamala Beach is seen as a key part of the island's renaissance. The 38 pool villas are inspired by the way the island's early settlers built their homes.

In the pipeline

● **Cassia Phuket** Banyan Tree's newest brand Cassia will open in October this year. Located within Laguna Phuket in Bang Tao Bay, it will have 221 residences and an additional 105 when a second tower is added in 2017.

● **Phuket International Airport** General improvements will be made and a private jet terminal added. When the 5.7 billion baht (US\$15.9 million) expansion is completed by February 2016, it will enable the airport to handle 12.5 million travellers a year.

Bintan

By Paige Lee Pei Qi

Performance in the last six months

The opening of Lagoi Bay in May has elevated the allure of Bintan island with its crop of resorts and lifestyle attractions.

According to Bintan Resorts International (BRI), director of marketing, Asad Shiraz, although year-on-year arrivals declined 2.5 per cent in 1H2015, the numbers in May and June climbed 9.2 per cent and 9.5 per cent respectively following Lagoi Bay's launch.

Shiraz said: "(Lagoi Bay) attracted both locals and visitors alike to (experience) the new activities. We hyped up our marketing campaigns as well for this opening to increase exposure and awareness."

This 1,300ha development consists of residences, shopping centres and five resorts. The Sanchaya and Swiss-Belhotel Grand Lagoi have launched, while MoUs were signed for new hotels to be managed under the following brands: Four Points by Sheraton, ibis Styles, Novotel, Dialog Hotel, Prime Plaza and Ambhara Hotel.

Lagoi Bay's opening also went hand-in-hand with that of the 60-outlet Plaza Lagoi Mall, with Indonesia's major retail operator Pasaraya as both anchor tenant and manager.

Outlook for the next six months

The outlook for Bintan is upbeat with the opening of Lagoi Bay, which will be further complemented with the crop of dining options and attractions coming online in the second phase of development.

Shiraz added: "The addition of these new hotels will significantly increase the rooms, activities and amenities available. Bintan Resorts will become an even more sought-after island destination and a twin destination with Singapore."

He is confident that the intensified marketing efforts, targeted primarily at

Singapore, China and India markets, will "yield positive results as well".

For example, Bintan Resorts earlier partnered with Changi Airport Group to promote the twin-destination concept, particularly to the India market. Visitors from India heading to Bintan Resorts can now enjoy a S\$30 (US\$22) voucher while in transit at Changi Airport, along with a free Mangrove Discovery Tour.

Shiraz added: "The soon-to-be-implemented visa-free facility for 30 nationalities entering Indonesia via Bintan ports is also expected to give arrivals a lift."

What's new

● **Plaza Lagoi** Touted as Asia's first beach village mall, the 20ha Plaza Lagoi has the highest concentration of commercial and recreational activities on the island. A ferry check-in facility at Plaza Lagoi allows easy check-in of luggage and collection of boarding passes.

● **Swiss-Belhotel Grand Lagoi** Located at the northern tip of the island, next to Lagoi Beach Village, this 196-room hotel offers meeting facilities, a rooftop pool and shopping outlets.

● **The Sanchaya** Besides offering guests the romance of colonial elegance of a bygone era, this 30-key luxury resort boasts its own VIP lounge in the ferry terminal.

● **The Canopi** This 41 tent-suite resort offers the unique experience of glamping with modern amenities and furniture.

In the pipeline

● **Alila Villas Bintan** Set on a hillside location in Lagoi Bay, the 14.4ha property will comprise 12 three-bedroom beachfront residences and a boutique resort with 52 one- and two-bedroom guest villas.

● **Bintan Resorts International Airport** Slated to open in 2017, the airport will have a 2.5-km runway and can accommodate aircraft such as the Boeing 737 and Airbus 320, giving it an operational radius of about five hours – placing southern China and southern India within reach.

Guide Beach resorts



From left: The influx of new properties exerts a downward pressure on Bali's occupancy; Langkawi is a popular destination for tourists from the UK

Bali

By Mimi Hudoyo

Performance in the last six months

Bali's popularity as a beach destination continues to grow, with international visitor arrivals reaching nearly 1.9 million in 1H2015, up 9.4 per cent from 1.7 million the same period last year, according to data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS).

However, Horwath HTL reported a dip of five to 10 per cent in Bali's hotel occupancy. Matt Gebbie, director, Pacific-Asia of Horwath HTL, said: "Occupancy at lower priced hotels, particularly those with an average daily rate below US\$59, was the hardest hit."

Trade members attributed the occupancy drop to an oversupply of rooms. BPS data shows that Bali had 249 star-rated hotels with 28,811 rooms in 2014. This year, 30 more hotels are expected to open and add another 5,677 rooms.

Gebbie said: "The opening of new properties had an impact on hotel performance as there is greater competition. Besides, hotels don't open at peak performance and it takes time to ramp up, so this drags market averages downhuh."

The domestic market also plays a big role in filling up rooms, but domestic arrivals at Ngurah Rai International Airport in the first five months (available data at press time) fell five per cent from the same period last year.

"(The) higher cost of (domestic) flights compared with other destinations negatively impacted domestic tourism," Gebbie reasoned.

Bali Airport's closures during the Mount Raung eruption in July also caused some traffic diversion from the destination. Ida Bagus Ngurah Wijaya, Bali chapter chairman of Indonesia Tourism Industry Association, said: "(The closures) took place during the school holidays, so travellers were likely to divert their trip to other countries."

"It was a force majeure and we do not expect any long-term impact. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Tourism has planned a recovery programme," he added.

Outlook for the next six months

Industry players are expecting higher arrivals to Bali in the second half of the year.

Horwath's Gebbie said: "New direct flights from the Middle East will have a positive impact on accessibility (between

Bali and) the world. The weak rupiah will encourage Indonesians to stay within the country and foreigners to visit. There is also optimism over the new visa-free entry regulations – time will tell."

The struggling Indonesian economy is likely to affect hotel performance though, opined Marc Steinmeyer, president director, Tauzia Hotel Management. "The hotel projects we see today were planned three, four years ago, when the economy was booming. While there will be opening delays, developers will try their best to open their properties to avoid losing the land value."

Gebbie added: "I fear that hotels will continue to drop rates in an attempt to capture demand. Many of the newer hotels are between a rock and hard place with revenues lower than budget and construction/land debts to pay."

"This will impact booking lead times as domestic guests in particular are aware of the situation and delay booking their rooms until the last minute (to land) a great deal," he added.

What's new

● **Surf & Turf** Tjendana Corporation, Bali launched a new beach club and amusement water park at Nusa Dua Beach. It offers the first surf rider in Bali along a space bowl and 6m-tall water slides.

In the pipeline

● **Rosewood Tanah Lot Bali** The group will mark its entry into Indonesia with its first property in Bali in 2017. The 12ha property will feature 80 suites, 27 villas and 29 Rosewood Residences.

Langkawi

By S Puvaneswary

Performance in the last six months

Arrivals to Langkawi are generally stable, with the destination receiving close to 1.5 million international and domestic tourists in the first five months of 2015, a slight increase of one per cent compared with the same period in 2014.

Working in Langkawi's favour is the depreciated ringgit, which compels locals to visit the archipelago while making the destination comparatively cheaper than its regional competitors too.

The longhaul market in 1H2015 was a mixed bag of performance, according to

inbound consultants *TTG Asia* spoke to.

Discovery Overland Holidays saw a 10 per cent increase in UK tourists from 2014, said Kingston Khoo, senior manager, product development and contracting.

"The British pound has appreciated and the UK economy has improved, (so) we think this resulted in renewed interest for the destination," he added.

Bookings from the UK and Central Europe during the summer months of July, August and September, traditionally the peak season for European arrivals to Langkawi, were strong, added Khoo.

For Diethelm Travel Malaysia, the German market to Langkawi decreased more than 10 per cent in 1H2015, a likely result of the two Malaysia Airlines disasters in 2014, as well as the weaker European economy, said managing director, Manfred Kurz.

Meanwhile, Andy Yow, director of sales and marketing at Vivanta by Taj - Rebek Island Langkawi, said Langkawi saw stiff competition in the first half of the year as many resorts in Phuket courted the European market with aggressive promotions.

"We started our own promotion in May 2015, which will run through to March 2016, for the Europe market. However, this promotion was too late for 1H2015 and we saw a four per cent dip in arrivals from the UK and Germany," he shared.

On the other hand, Langkawi is steadily building up its appeal to Chinese visitors. Winnie Ng, deputy general manager, Pearl Holiday Travel & Tour, recorded a 60 per cent surge in Chinese arrivals to Langkawi in 1H2015, with interest coming mainly from FITs and incentive groups.

Outlook for the next six months

Looking ahead, the Chinese market is expected to do well for Langkawi although the Middle East and European markets appear more unpredictable.

Pearl Holiday's Ng does not think that a slowdown in the Chinese economy and the recent renminbi devaluation would impact arrivals, especially with a weakened ringgit, and predicts a good 2H2015 and 1Q2016.

Having welcomed a Perfect China incentive group of 2,000 pax to Langkawi in July, Sunflower Holiday's managing director Mint Leong is projecting "a 20 per cent increase in arrivals to Malaysia".

At press time, there were 62 confirmed charters from Xi'an and Chengdu in 2H2015, according to Rosnina Yaacob, tourism division manager at Langkawi Development Authority.

Diethelm's Kurz added: "Bookings from Germany looked better in the second half of the year, but it is still slower than 2014. The euro is still weak, thus prompting many holidaymakers to choose medium-haul destinations instead of long-haul."

Ally Bhooonee, executive director of World Avenues, saw a "big drop" from the Middle East market mainly due to political instability in the Middle East, but also in part due to the EU granting Emiratis visa-free entry to Schengen zone countries which diverted some traffic away to Malaysia.

What's new

● **Langkawi International Convention Centre** Located adjacent to The Westin Langkawi Resort & Spa, the centre features a grand ballroom with a 1,000 pax capacity and seven meeting rooms.

● **Langkawi Art of Paradise 3D Museum** This three-storey museum at Oriental Village in Burau Bay showcases more than 100 interactive 3-D paintings.

● **Langkawi SkyDome** South-east Asia's first outdoor dome on top of Machinchang Mountain is accessible via the Langkawi Cable Car.

In the pipeline

● **St Regis Langkawi** Scheduled to open in November 2015, the resort will have 85 suites and three water villas. Each guestroom will also feature the signature St Regis Butler Service.

● **Ritz-Carlton Langkawi** The 150-room luxury resort at Pantai Kok will open in late 2016. The property will also have 42 villas and three swimming pools.

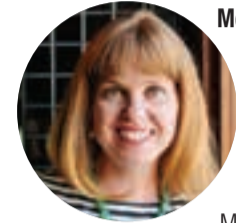


The Sanchaya's colonial-esque bathroom

MELBOURNE'S POP-UP CULTURE

Viewpoints

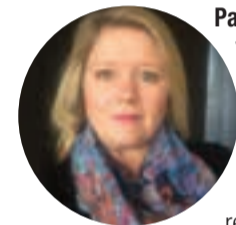
What opportunities and challenges do you currently experience in selling Melbourne city and its pop-up culture?



Monique Bayer, owner, Walk Melbourne Tours

It's a good way for visitors to tap into what's local, creative and trendy right now.

My business is about sharing stories through food, so when new things pop up with a food focus, we incorporate them on tour when we can. It really affords us the opportunity to talk about that part of Melbourne's culture, which is great. The most common thing we hear is 'you wouldn't even know this was here'. They love to discover.



Pamela McMurtry, travel specialist, World Travel Professionals

For a traveller who may visit the same destination regularly, I like the

concept of being able to offer them a different experience. However, we are selling a city that is constantly changing, and it is about having the knowledge of what is new.

Other challenges are the stability of these brands and pop-up venues when it comes to legal obligation, risk-free due diligence and insurance cover. Once we get past these, the concept of using pop-up venues for future travellers would tick the boxes from an experiential aspect and ensure that we are creating a buzz.

change in Melbourne in June.

Tourism Victoria's chief executive, Leigh Harry, said that Melbourne's hidden and unexpected experiences such as its laneways and hole-in-the-wall cafés have long been a signature of the city. "For international visitors, uncovering these hidden gems adds to their appreciation of Melbourne's culture and enables them to rub shoulders with locals," he said.

A guest speaker at Insights@Melbourne was Bec McHenry, the chief executive of The Space Agency, a local company specialising in activating vacant or under-utilised spaces. She said that in order for Melbourne to remain relevant and retain its title as the World's Most Liveable City, it needs to stay ahead of the curve and pop-ups help to achieve that.

McHenry and her team are in the early stages of utilising pop-ups to re-energise popular tourist destinations like St Kilda's Fitzroy Street and Acland Street, which over time, have become tired.

"We are working with a number of local stakeholders to help activate Fitzroy Street and bring commercial density back to the area," she said. "We see great opportunities for businesses, both existing and newcomers. I don't think we will recognise Fitzroy Street in two years' time."

Watch this space.

Glamping in the city at St Jerome's – The Hotel, a pop-up outfit perched on Melbourne Central's rooftop

In May, Melbourne welcomed the world's first pop-up rooftop 'glamp' site, St Jerome's – The Hotel. Inhabiting the vacant rooftop of Melbourne Central shopping centre, the luxury camping ground features 25 standard 'rooms' and five 'suites' – four- and five-metre canvas bell tents – a guest-only communal lawn and bar, 24-hour concierge service, free tai chi and meditation classes each morning and breakfast hampers.

Yet, despite being "really well received" according to owner Jerome Borazio (co-founder of St Jerome's Laneway Festival), it will not be around for long. Originally slated to open for six months, Borazio and his team are hoping to extend its lease to take advantage of the summer months.

St Jerome's – The Hotel epitomises the pop-up culture that Melbourne has

Destination in numbers

11.6 per cent

The increase in international arrivals to Victoria in year ending March 2015

34.3 per cent

The share of international visitors to Australia who visited Victoria in year ending March 2015

1.5 per cent

The increase in average hotel occupancy rates in Melbourne in year ending June 2014

embraced over the last few years, transforming the city into an experiential playground. "I think overall, pop-up has a reputation for providing great services and experiences," said Borazio.

In addition to St Jerome's – The Hotel, recent examples of Melbourne's pop-up initiatives include Rue & Co, a collective of three popular eateries – Kong, Jimmy Grants and St Ali – housed in shipping containers; MPavilion, an architectural commission that saw a temporary structure erected in Queen Victoria Gardens to host public events; and the Magnum Ice-cream Pleasure Store, a design-your-own concept store set up in Emporium Melbourne shopping centre.

Tourism Victoria is actively promoting the city's burgeoning pop-up culture. Pop-up was also a major theme at the recent Insights@Melbourne media event held as part of the Australian Tourism Ex-

The flourishing pop-up trend is attracting visitors to Melbourne, offering a different way to appreciate the city's cosmopolitan culture, writes **Rebecca Elliott**

NEWS IN A MINUTE

1 Taste Byron Bay

To celebrate New South Wales' local produce, chef Teras Davidson started Taste Byron Bay, an outfit which conducts weekly food tours and cooking classes in the New South Wales' coastal town.

The food tours visit farmers' markets, producers and eateries in Byron Bay, and guests are transported to each location in an iconic combi van. The cooking classes take place at Fig Tree Restaurant in Ewingsdale. Private tours are available.

2 Eco Adventures Margaret River

Visitors to Margaret River in Western Australia can now explore the region in the seat of the world's first Eco-Bike with Eco Adventures Margaret River. The electric 4WD quad bikes have been designed with low inflation tyres (that inhibit wheel spin) to be eco-friendly.

The 1.5-hour, 15km guided tour explores the picturesque Boranup Forest and Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park. Each bike comes with its own iPad mini, offering facts about the environment and history of the region along the way.

3 Bennelong Restaurant

One of Australia's most revered chefs, Peter Gilmore, has reopened the doors to Bennelong Restaurant at the Sydney Opera House after an 18-month closure for renovations. The venue offers spectacular views of Sydney Harbour.

A variety of dining experiences are available such as the Restaurant, showcasing Australian produce; the Cured and Cultured Counter, with an emphasis on raw and cold produce; and The Bar, the perfect spot for a quick drink or bite. Private functions are limited to 10 per year.

4 The Watson

The Art Series Hotel Group has opened its first hotel outside of Victoria, The Watson in Walkerville, about 3.5km from Adelaide's city centre.

Named after one of Australia's Indigenous artists, Tommy Watson, the new luxury boutique hotel features 140 hotel suites. Facilities include meeting spaces, an on-site restaurant, complimentary Wi-Fi and art tours with trained in-house art advocates.

5 The Old Clare Hotel

The Old Clare Hotel in Chippendale, the first Unlisted Collection property in Australia, is located on the historic site of the former Carlton and United Brewery Administration Building in Sydney.

The Old Clare boasts 62 rooms, a rooftop pool and bar, a meeting room in the building's original boardroom and three independent restaurants including Silvereye, headed by Sam Miller – Noma's former executive sous chef.

6 Spicers Retreats

Spicers Retreats has launched a new four-day Scenic Rim Trail exploring the Scenic Rim Region of south-east Queensland's high country.

The guided walk covers roughly 30km through parkland, state forests and national parks. Two nights' accommodation in Spicers Canopy's luxury eco-tents or Canopy Eco Lodge, along with gourmet food and wine, are provided. On the third day, guests can relax and unwind at Spa Anise at Spicers Peak Lodge.



How to sell

DO If your client wants to uncover the city and find out what's hot, then the **Walk Melbourne** tour with author Monique Bayer is the experience for them. Choose from the likes of a rooftop bar, dumpling discovery or coffee lovers walk, or the all-encompassing The Melbourne Experience.



Walk Melbourne tour

SEE The not-for-profit **Tram Session**'s catch cry is 'we put bands on trams for your commuting pleasure' and celebrates the city's live music scene. Sessions include taking a ride on an iconic tram, discovering local musical talent and seeing the city.

EAT No matter where you are in Melbourne, there'll be a **food truck** close by serving everything from gourmet sausages to crème brûlée. Their locations change daily and are best tracked via the Where The Truck At app.

STAY There's no other destination in the world that offers five-star glamping in the heart of the city. At **St Jerome's – The Hotel**, prices start at A\$330 (US\$239) for a luxe tent complete with a double bed fitted with designer linen and electric blanket, as well as a complimentary stocked esky.

MY WAY

Pick your favourite meal of the day and tell us where to go.

I would choose breakfast, although it's a tough decision over dessert!

Living in Melbourne, we are spoiled for choice with the breakfast and brunch scene. Each weekend I aim to explore new restaurants and cafés, especially around St Kilda. Acland Street is a favourite dining spot of mine, as you can go for a stroll along the beach after your meal – even in winter!

Where is your favourite spot in regional Victoria for a weekend getaway?

I've always had a love affair with Daylesford. Just two hours out of Melbourne, it's the perfect spot for a weekend away to relax and unwind. With natural mineral springs and amazing spas on offer, it's a great location for some R&R.

What is your favourite activity to wind down after work or do on a day off?

I must admit I am a devoted Essendon Bombers fan (AFL football team)! Like most Melburnians, I love going to the Melbourne Cricket Ground to watch my team play on my days off. My son is a bit too young to understand the game just yet, but I am looking forward to taking him along dressed in red and black in a couple of years.



Lake Daylesford

When in Melbourne, everyone must do... a drive down the Great Ocean Road! The scenery is stunning with great beaches and small towns to visit along the way. At the right time of year you can even spot a koala or two.

Once down the Great Ocean Road, I'd definitely recommend viewing the remaining eight of the 12 Apostles by helicopter. For Melburnians and tourists alike, the scenic flights are a great experience.

Where is your favourite holiday spot in Australia?

It is difficult to pick a favourite, but I would have to say the Hunter Valley in New South Wales. I've been visiting the region for family holidays for many years now with my wife and son, and they love it. Outside of the incredible wining and dining expe-

riences, there are plenty of family-friendly activities too.



Shaun D'Cruz
General manager,
Crown Towers

Destination Australia

TRIED & TESTED

The Sebel Melbourne Docklands

Rebecca Elliott is charmed by the serviced apartment's harbourside location, large living space and its striking swimming pool

LOCATION Located in Melbourne's NewQuay Docklands waterfront precinct, The Sebel Melbourne Docklands is well positioned for both leisure and business travellers. It is within easy walking distance of the city centre, Melbourne Star Observation Wheel, Etihad Stadium and Central Pier, and a short taxi ride to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

ROOMS The newly built property, designed by architects McBride Charles Ryan, features 124 one- and two-bedroom apartments. Each apartment is completely self-sufficient, making them suitable for long-stay guests.

I occupied my one-bedroom apartment for five nights and was particularly taken with the comfort of my king-size bed, the 1940s-style studio floor lamp in the living area, European kitchen appliances and deluxe bathroom amenities by Appelles Apothecary.

F&B While the hotel does not have an on-site restaurant, it is serviced by Capri Café and Bistro, which makes a sensational vegetarian omelette for breakfast, within the same complex. It is worth making the extra effort to head into the city centre for lunch or dinner to take advantage of Melbourne's thriving food and wine scene.

FACILITIES My number one tip for a stay at The Sebel is to pack swimmers. The hotel has a 25m-long indoor pool and spa housed behind an imposing glass water wall that runs the length of the foyer out to the harbour. The interior is equally as striking, with its concrete floors and ceiling contrasted by the pool's aqua mosaic lining.

Other facilities include a rooftop garden and tennis court, while The Guest Lounge provides conveniences such as a private lounge, cinema, library, reading room, business centre with boardroom and a private dining room with kitchen and bar. There is also complimentary Wi-Fi in reception and The Guest Lounge.

SERVICE The service at the check-in desk – the only



place where I came across the hotel's staff – was friendly and efficient.

VERDICT In terms of serviced apartments, The Sebel is definitely a winner. The size and sophistication of the rooms, along with the pool in particular gave this property the tick for me.

Name The Sebel Melbourne Docklands

No. of rooms 124

Rate A\$239 (US\$172)

Contact details

Tel: (61) 3-9641-7500

Email: reservations@sebeldocklands.com.au

Website: www.sebeldocklands.com.au

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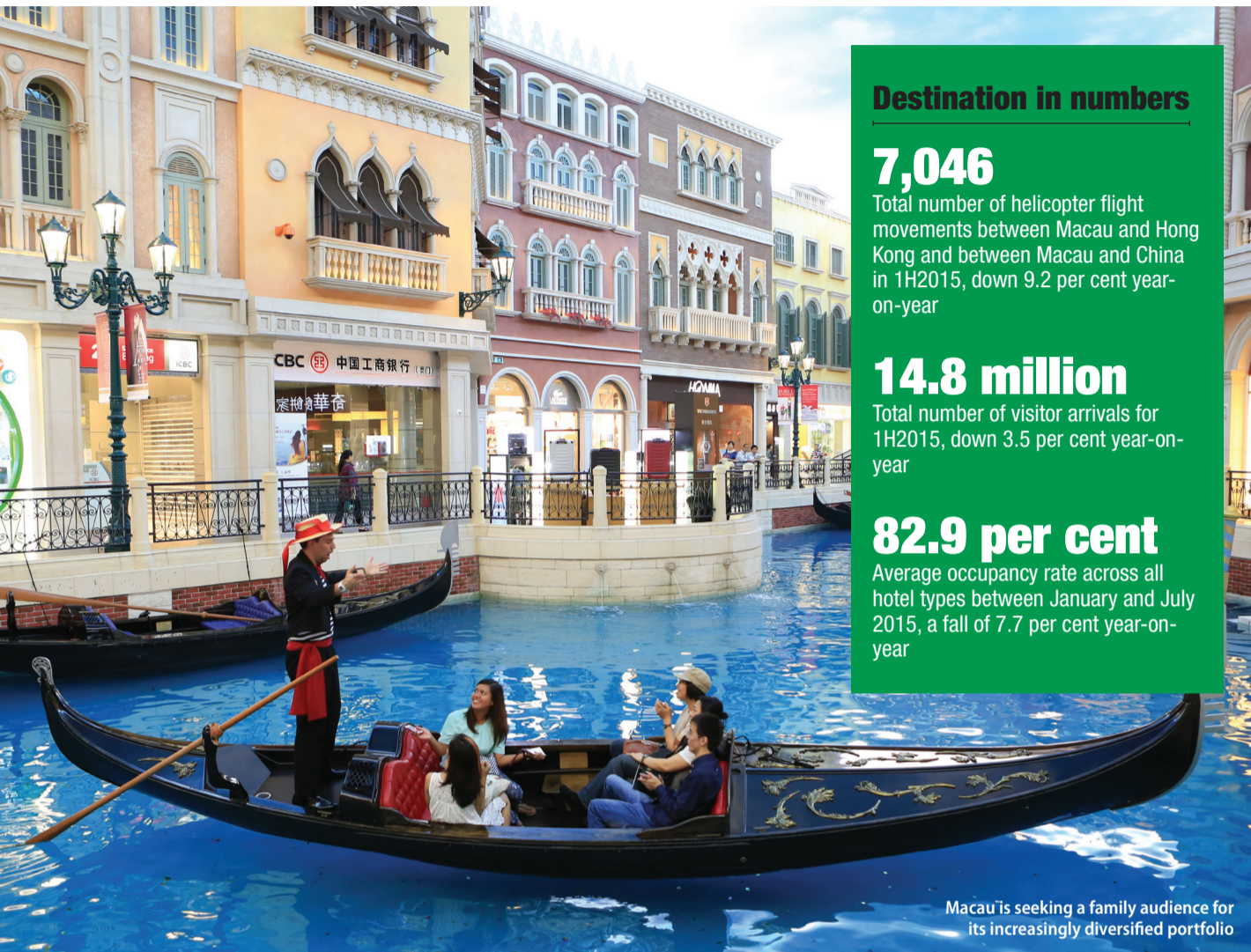
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Destination Macau



Destination in numbers

7,046

Total number of helicopter flight movements between Macau and Hong Kong and between Macau and China in 1H2015, down 9.2 per cent year-on-year

14.8 million

Total number of visitor arrivals for 1H2015, down 3.5 per cent year-on-year

82.9 per cent

Average occupancy rate across all hotel types between January and July 2015, a fall of 7.7 per cent year-on-year

Macau is seeking a family audience for its increasingly diversified portfolio

GLITZ, GLITTER AND FAMILY FUN

Macau is currently undergoing a rejuvenation drive, with a spate of new hotels and integrated resorts coming online within these few years.

Following the lavish opening of the Galaxy Phase 2 development and Broadway Macau in May, upcoming debuts this year include Studio City, St. Regis Macao and Crowne Plaza Macau. The list would extend beyond 2016/17 as Lisboa Palace, Palazzo Versace Macau, The Parisian Macao, the Karl Lagerfeld hotel, Wynn Palace and MGM Cotai are currently under construction.

Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO), director, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, said: "The MGTO, along with the city tourism stakeholders, have been working to diversify both the tourism products and source markets to the city so that visitors from around the world have more reasons to come and stay longer."

"Our strategy all along has been to leverage the city's well-known leisure and entertainment industry to develop related areas, such as reinforcing our calendar of events and festivals, organising MICE events and world-class shows, while enhancing elements such as shopping and dining."

Galaxy Macau's Phase 2 has seen the addition of more non-gaming elements. For instance, the expanded Grand Resort Deck features the Skytop Aquatic Adven-

ture River Ride with the world's longest skytop aquatic adventure river ride at 575m. Also, young ones can be kept entertained at the world's largest JW Kids Club at JW Marriott Macau with its abundance of interactive activities.

When Studio City opens in 3Q2015, the US\$3.2 billion destination will boast attractions such as the Golden Reel, Asia's highest Ferris wheel; a Warner Bros-themed family entertainment centre; the Batman Dark Flight themed ride; a 5,000-seat multipurpose live performance arena; a live magic venue; as well as 1,600 hotel rooms, a vast array of F&B outlets and 32,500m² of retail space.

MGM Cotai, set for a 2016 opening, will feature a convertible theatre capable of accommodating a variety of shows, and restaurants with American and Peruvian-Japanese cuisines.

Macau's diversification drive has so far found favour with travel operators, many of whom are now keen to bait more families from the region with the city's new offerings.

EGL Tours (Macau), general manager, Sabina Long, noting that Galaxy Macau's pool has drawn many South-east Asian families this summer, said: "If Macau wants to vie for more traffic, it needs newer elements like playgrounds, theme parks, circus and magic shows to appeal to kids."

The family market is an important and key differentiator for Sheraton Macao, which has been offering family packages and DreamWorks-themed family suites since its launch in 2012.

Said the hotel's general manager of sales & marketing, Daniella Tonetto: "For Macau to grow as a family destination, more non-gaming offerings are needed to entertain the entire family. The good news is that Macau is moving in that direction, and we will soon see new properties offering much more activities for children and the young at heart."

To woo more family visitors, Grand Lapa Macau and Grand Coloane Resort have rolled out value-added, family-oriented packages via third-party distribution channels such as OTAs and wholesalers, said regional director of sales for Hong Kong and new markets development, Antony Box.

He said: "We retain our usual mix of guests from key outbound destinations, primarily Hong Kong and southern China. Staycations are fast becoming popular among families wishing to avoid expensive airfares, in favour of more affordable options to escape and unwind."

"If Macau wants to drive this segment, it needs to provide (attractions) other than gambling. The challenge is to establish what that (attraction) is, especially in relation to the (mainland Chinese) market."

How to sell

DO Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) recommends eight walking tour routes themed **Step Out, Experience Macau's Communities**, covering different areas such as Macau Peninsula, Taipa and Coloane. In August, the MGTO launched the hop-on, hop-off highlight bus tour through a local travel agency, offering three routes that connect to various points across the walking tour routes.

SEE A pair of pandas called Kai Kai and Xin Xin have made their home at **Macau Giant Panda Pavilion**. A gift from the Chinese government, the duo has been greeting the public since June 2015.

EAT **The Broadway** at Broadway Macau, the first ever hawker-style street market, has stormed into the dining scene with some 40 F&B outlets. Many stores are Macanese owned and operated, specialising in local treats such as peanut candy, almond biscuits and ginger milk curd.

STAY Existing properties in the city are maintaining their competitiveness by upgrading their facilities. The **Rio Hotel & Casino** has refurbished all 449 rooms, and restaurant and bar. After a major revamp, Best Western Macau rebranded as **Inn Hotel Macau** in July. All rooms will have mod-cons like a flatscreen TV and complimentary Wi-Fi.

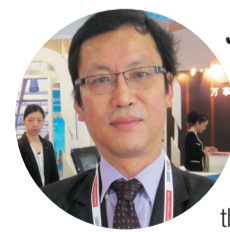
Viewpoints

What should Macau do in order to attract more overseas family visitors?



Ng Hi-on, director, CTS International Science-Tech-ology & Culture Exchange

Macau cannot stand alone and should strive for more partnerships with neighbouring Chinese cities like Zhuhai. The Chimelong Ocean Kingdom drives a lot of transit traffic to Macau given the close distance, which means a win-win situation as this theme park strongly eyes family travellers.



Johnny Choi, director of sales, Es-toril Tours Travel Agency

The city needs more hardware to nurture the family segment because I don't see much on offer except casinos. When Macau Studio City opens its doors in October with new attractions like the Batman ride and the Golden Reel, it may draw family traffic. Given keen competition from neighbouring destinations like Japan and South Korea, we are still less attractive based on existing attractions.

The city wants to shed its gaming skin and position itself more as a leisure destination for families, reports **Prudence Lui**

MY WAY

What do you do to relax?

I love swimming with my six-year-old son as it helps me to de-stress. My favourite spot is the Taipa Central Park swimming pool, which is the biggest in town. It is situated in a park with recreational facilities like a basketball court, playgrounds and even a library.

Where is your favourite spot to meet with friends?

We meet once or twice a month at Neway Karaoke Box, locking ourselves in a room to sing and chat freely. We usually have a special theme song each time we meet and the majority of songs are golden oldies. The venue has about 70 rooms and is ideal for gatherings. Most importantly, its dinner buffet is value for money.

What would you recommend for a first-time visitor?

The nightlife should not be missed. For instance, there is the high-end



Eric Chang
Managing director,
Motivation
Destination
and Events
Management

China Rouge situated at Galaxy Macau, whereas casual nightlife can be found at the newly opened Broadway Macau. Broadway's hawker-style street food concept also offers night-time entertainment.

What's Macau's best-kept secret?

The best way to experience the city is to stroll through the old districts. The St. Lazarus Parish area is a perfect spot as tourist traffic is still low. It is characterised by old Portuguese ambience and architecture.

NEWS IN A MINUTE

1 Jao Tsung-I Academy

Launched in August, the Jao Tsung-I Academy comprises a series of Neo-classical buildings constructed in the early 20th century. It is home to a permanent exhibition that features the talented Jao Tsung-I's paintings and calligraphy works. The academy also has an auditorium and a gallery for other themed exhibitions.

2 Bassaka Air

Since May 1, Cambodia-based Bassaka Air has switched its twice-weekly charter Macau-Phnom Penh operation to become regular schedule services. The round-trip flights are operated every Monday and Friday on Airbus A320 aircraft.

3 Fook Lam Moon

Hong Kong-based Fook Lam Moon has opened a 160-seat outlet in Galaxy Macau. The 43-year-old restaurant group is acclaimed for serving traditional Cantonese cuisine, where chef Chan Yau Leung has created a menu featuring signature dishes such as roasted suckling pig and braised dried abalone.

4 Macau Studio City

Scheduled to open in 3Q2015, Macau Studio City has revealed its line-up of international magicians for The House of Magic. Curated and hosted by acclaimed illusionist Franz Harary, the first maestros include British magician James More and Portugal's Luis de Matos.



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Destination **Macau**

TRIED & TESTED

Macau Open Top Bus Tour

Prudence Lui plays tourist for an afternoon and finds out how the city's hop-on, hop-off bus operates

WHY As the only open top bus operator in town offering scheduled bus tours, it is a popular means of visitor transport around the Macau Peninsula. In March, the operator, Goldspark Macau Tours, launched a new route to Taipa Island.

Two new buses were also added to the fleet, bringing the total to four buses. Prices remain unchanged with free Wi-Fi on board, and the company rolled out a new audio system to provide route information in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

WHAT I boarded the bus at 13.15 on a weekday afternoon. Since there was a thunderstorm warning that morning, the bus was not packed and there was a slight 10-minute delay. Shortly before depar-

ture, passengers were offered a poncho for use on the open upper deck.

I opted to hop off at Rua Do Cunha in Taipa, a hotspot for snacks and sightseeing. Based on the bus schedule, I had an hour before the next arrival. Unfortunately, the bus was punctual and I was not, so I had to wait for the next one. (A tip: it's important to remember where you hop off the bus as there are no signs.)

Two hours later, I was back on board to continue the remaining part of my bus trip. The Cotai Strip was pretty exciting given the scale of operations and their glitzy designs. I passed the soon-to-open Macau Studio City and was impressed by the extravagant steel exterior and big statues.

HOW The bus route covers 120 attractions, with 16 hop-on and hop-off points from where visitors can explore the local area or visit nearby attractions. Trips start

and end at the Macau Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal.

Routes cover iconic spots like Macau Fisherman's Wharf, Macao Science Center, Sofitel Macau At Ponte 16, A-Ma Temple, Rua Do Cunha, City of Dreams, Sands Cotai Central, The Venetian Macao and Galaxy Macau.

Departures are every 45 minutes and there are 10 daily departures, with the first bus leaving at 09.20 and the last one at 16.05. It takes 90 minutes to finish the entire journey.

Bookings are accepted only if made within 60 days. Chartered services are also available.

VERDICT This tour is ideal for first-timers to Macau or FITs seeking flexibility and convenience, as they are able to hop off at their favourite spots to check out the surrounding area. The price is reasonable but it's advisable to check the weather forecast before boarding.



Name Macau Open Top Bus Tour
Rate One- and two-day passes are available. Adult tickets start from HK\$150 (US\$19); child tickets start from HK\$100
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Destination **Indonesia**

Peace has descended and Toraja is luring tourists back with agro-tourism and cultural experiences, reports **Mimi Hudoyo**



Tongkonan traditional houses in Toraja, South Sulawesi

Destination in numbers

2.3 per cent

The growth in international arrivals to Indonesia in 1H2015 to 4.7 million, up from 4.6 million in the same period last year

2,292

The number of rooms opening across 12 hotel projects in Sulawesi area in 2015-2016, according to STR Global

56.2 per cent

The average hotel occupancy across Indonesia in 1H2015, a 12.6 per cent fall year-on-year, according to STR Global

Viewpoints

What's the best way to sell Toraja and South Sulawesi as a tourist destination?



Ng Sebastian,
managing director,
Incito Tour,
Makassar

Many travellers, even those from neighbouring countries, do not know where we are and what we have to offer. Before we participate in travel marts and sell the destination, we need to create awareness. This is something that the regional government and private sector cannot do alone. We need the central government to conduct fam trips for tour operators and the media from different countries to visit.

Ilsa Sopamena, general manager, Caraka Travelindo Tour & Travel Services, Makassar

In the past, we used to rely on (longhaul) inbound tourism alone. We should develop new products beyond Toraja. Around Makassar, we can promote the TransStudio theme park, water parks, Samalona Island where you can snorkel and dive, and the Karst Maros, the second biggest karst area in the world.



WAKING UP FROM HIBERNATION

Toraja in South Sulawesi is striving to put itself back on the international tourist map after lying dormant for some 15 years.

Death is celebrated with much excitement and festivities for the Torajans, who practise elaborate funeral rites and carve burial sites into rocky cliffs. This unique culture and tradition had been a major draw for Western tourists who dominated arrivals to Indonesia in the 1990s.

However, following the race riots in Indonesia and the Poso riots in Central Sulawesi in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the European market dipped and Toraja was scrapped off from tour operators' itineraries, wiping the destination off the tourism map.

Toraja also subsequently failed to attract the rising domestic and regional markets, partly because of the sensitivity of some markets towards death-related attractions.

In 2012, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy established the Toraja DMO, a destination revitalisation programme, with the assistance of Swisscontact. Toraja DMO is now leading the developments taking place in Tana Toraja

Regency, the southern part of Toraja.

Tri Laksono Juliharto, project officer for destination development at Swisscontact, said: "Currently, only 30 per cent of tourist attractions in Toraja is in Tana Toraja, while the rest are in North Toraja. This gives a chance for Tana Toraja to develop nature-based tourism products. While culture is its major attraction, our survey showed that nature is also a strong attraction of the destination."

Luther Barrung, chairman of Toraja DMO, said: "The southern part of Toraja, which has large plateaus surrounded by mountains, has great potential to develop agro-tourism.

"Pango-Pango, for example, is developed for agro-tourism around tamarillos, passion fruits and vegetables while Sarambu Assing is known for its waterfalls and coffee plantations. Toraja arabica coffee is internationally known and we want to develop an attraction around there," he added.

In the North Toraja Regency, where most attractions are located, upgrading of the infrastructure and facilities such as food and drink stalls, and public toilets will be rolled out over the next five years.

Juliharto said Swisscontact was assisting the destination in creating a campaign that will change its image, highlighting not only "the other side of Toraja" like Tongkonan – a Torajan traditional house – but also the philosophy behind it.

"Today, there needs to be more interaction between travellers and the local people. (By) experiencing their daily lives, (visitors can better) understand the culture," Juliharto said.

Barrung agreed: "We are developing homestays, so that travellers can stay and experience the local culture and way of life, while the local people will benefit directly.

"Torajans produce palm wine called *ballo*. The Ministry of Tourism has started providing technical assistance for the locals to produce *ballo* in a more hygienic way. Visitors will be able to visit the plantation, learn about the winemaking process and enjoy the drink," he added.

Meanwhile, Yohan Tangke Salu, chairman of Indonesia Hotel and Restaurant Association North Toraja Chapter, is encouraging hotels to relaunch in Toraja.

"A lot of people have left tourism business since the industry declined...With

Destination Indonesia

How to sell

DO Embark on a rafting adventure along **Ma'iting River**, navigating through grade two and three rapids accompanied by stunning views of the tropical rainforest in the heart of Toraja. Some of the rapid highlights include Jeram Latihan (Exercise Rapids), Tabrakan (Crash), and Mulut Iguana (Iguana Mouth).



Ma'iting River

SEE **Batutumonga** is located on the slope of Sesean Mountain, the highest peak in Toraja. It is famous for the panoramic views of North Toraja area and Rantepao town.

The scenic landscape is dominated by bamboo forest, rice paddy fields and traditional Tongkonan houses. In the early mornings, when Batutumonga is blanketed by mist, visitors will feel as if they are walking among the clouds.

EAT **Mentirotik Restaurant** serves not only local cuisine but also panoramic views of the surroundings. Part of the Mentirotik Homestay, the restaurant also serves groups and walk-in guests for lunch. Travellers are also recommended to stop by for tea at **Tinimbayo Coffee Shop** on the way from Rantepao to Batutumonga. This place also offers an abundance of beautiful views.



Mentirotik Homestay

STAY Get a feel of the Torajan hospitality at homestays managed by local villagers. These homestays are typically housed in traditional Tongkonan houses, which are built on stilts and feature boat-shaped rooftops. **Mentirotik**, **Mama Siska's**, **Mama Rina's** and **Betania** offer simple but clean accommodation.

MY WAY

How do you spend a weekend in Semarang?

I usually go to a place where I can just relax. I will visit Pantai Marina, a recreational beach in the north of Semarang. This former mangrove area is now reclaimed and turned into a housing estate with a recreational beach area.

What is your hobby and where do you go to do it?

I like cycling to places with cool air, a lot of greenery and around rice fields. This can be anywhere, as there are many places in Indonesia where I can do this. In Semarang, I like to cycle in the green area of Gunung Pati.

What are your recommendations for local Semarang or Central Java cuisine?

Semarang offers a variety of local delights. *Loenpia* or spring roll is the famous snack here. Some sellers offer packing and courier services, so travellers can also bring the snack home.

For a local culinary experience,



Traditional food from Semarang

go to Simpang Lima area in the evening and sample local delights like *mangut manyung* (spicy fish-head dish), mut-ton satay and fried chicken.

For seafood lovers, I would recommend Kampung Laut, a floating seafood restaurant. For upmarket, traditional Semarang cuisine, visit Pesta Kebun Restaurant.

What should first-time visitors to Semarang do?

Semarang has a number of historic and heritage sites such as the Lawang Sewu (a thousand doors), which is a distinctive landmark with many large windows and doors.

The Old City or Kota Lama is a must-visit too. This area has many old European-style buildings built during the Dutch colonial period.

When is the best time to visit Semarang and Central Java?

Semarang and Central Java is basically good to visit year-round, but April and May are best months to capture the many events taking place during the period. This includes Semarang great sale; Banjir Kanal Festival, with plenty of decorated boats, entertainment and competitions; and Semarang Night Carnival.

Andhy Irawan
Managing director,
Dafam Hotels

NEWS IN A MINUTE

1 Four Seasons Resort Jimbaran Bay

Both Four Seasons Resort Jimbaran Bay and TropicSurf have launched luxury surfing holidays in Bali.

With a strategic location at Four Seasons' Coconut Grove on Jimbaran Beach, TropicSurf's Ticket to Ride programme caters for all levels and provides convenient access to the island's breaks.

For beginners, the gentle beach break directly off Coconut Grove is the perfect learning ground, and TropicSurf's provides personalised guidance for a maximum of four people per class. Experienced surfers can take advantage of TropicSurf's boat to surf at Airports, the Uluwatu peninsula, Nusa Dua and Sanur.

2 Benoa flyboard

Benoa Flyboard is a new attraction at Bali's Whacko Beach Club.

Flyboarding is where a rider stands on a board connected by a long hose to a jet ski. Jet nozzles underneath a pair of boots thrust the rider 15m into the air or dive headlong in the water down to 2.5m.

The package is available for a 15- or 30-minute ride, and includes transfers from hotels in the Nusa Dua and Kuta areas.

3 Alila Solo

In October, Alila Hotels & Resorts will open Alila Solo, the first luxury property of international standard in the city. All 255 rooms and suites showcase an exclusively commis-

sioned batik design, and have city views.

The hotel is home to rooftop bar Agra, a lifestyle venue to wine, dine and socialise over tapas and cocktails. Public facilities includes a relaxing space on level six called Largo, where the swimming pool, Spa Alila, two-storey Gym Alila, and children's pool and club are located. The hotel has two ballrooms that can accommodate up to 3,500 people and 15 meeting rooms.

4 Surf & Turf

Tjendana Corporation, Bali has launched a new beach club and amusement water park, Surf & Turf, at Nusa Dua Beach.

This park offers the first surf rider in Bali along a thrilling space bowl and 6m-tall water slides. The park also has a two-storey fusion restaurant and bar that serves European and Asian cuisines.

5 Aston Anyer Beach Hotel

In April, Archipelago International marked its 100th property in Indonesia with the opening of the 101-room Aston Anyer Beach Hotel near Anyer, a small town situated on the edge of the Sunda Strait.

For business travellers, the hotel provides MICE facilities such as a conference centre with three auxiliary meeting rooms with ocean views. The smallest room can hold up to 85 people while the largest has a maximum of 400 pax.



TRIED & TESTED

Q Grand Dafam Syariah Banjarbaru

In South Kalimantan, **Mimi Hudoyo** checks into a new property developed around the Syariah concept

LOCATION Set in the centre of Banjarbaru City adjacent to the Q Shopping Mall, the hotel is about 20 minutes away from Syamsudin Noor Airport and less than an hour away from major tourist attractions such as diamond panning, floating market and golf course.

ROOMS My Deluxe Room on the top seventh floor offers a pleasant view of the city. The room features a warm colour scheme and a wooden floor accentuated with a Persian carpet. A picture of the local floating market on the wall as well as the bed runner and cushions depicting Sasirangan traditional motifs further add a sense of place to the room decor.

Wi-fi and bottled juices in the mini-

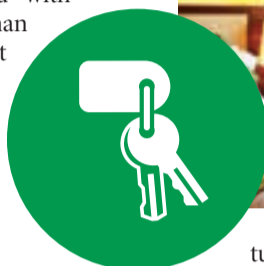
bar are available free of charge. There are also tea and coffee making facilities in the room, while the hair dryer is available upon request for deluxe rooms; higher room categories have it ready for use.

The room is equipped with praying attires for man and woman, praying mat and the Holy Quran. The bathroom has a standing shower with a separate tap for washing up before praying. The toilet is also equipped with spray hose on the side.

Praying schedules are listed on the TV screen and Adzan praying calls are channelled through a loudspeaker in every room.

F&B As a Syariah property, the hotel's Junjung Buih Restaurant, Kasturi Lounge and Tanuhi Pool Terrace boast halal certified kitchens and do not serve alcoholic beverages.

Breakfast at Junjung Buih is a sump-



tuous affair with local dishes like *ketupat kandangan* (rice cake with vegetable curry and grilled fish) and herbal drinks.

The outdoor Tanuhi Pool Terrace is popular with guests chilling out over refreshments in the evening.

FACILITIES As part of the requirements of a Syariah property, the hotel provides a place for praying, one for men and one for women.

It also has a gym and a swimming pool. To fully comply with the Syariah requirement, there should be segregated facilities or, in the case of only one facility, different opening hours for males and females. However, as the swimming pool faces the lounge without any partition, even different opening hours will not work.

The hotel has a ballroom that can fit up to 2,500 people and three meeting rooms with capacity ranging from 30-150 seats in theatre style.

SERVICE To comply with Syariah standards, couples need to show evidence that they are married. Decent dressing is also required.

The hotel staff were friendly, graceful and helpful. My request for housekeeping services were met promptly too.

VERDICT A mid-scale hotel that offers basic Syariah services as well as comfort.

Name Q Grand Dafam Syariah Banjarbaru

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Connect

ICYMI: Tune in to what's been going on at ttgasia.com and the social media space

WHO'S SAYING WHAT

Instagram



Spotted a beautiful copy of TTG Asia Luxury lying invitingly on the bed at The South Beach. Loving this place already! [#TheSouthBeachSG](#)



It's massively crowded here at Chijmes this Friday night thanks to the Heineken Cities Festival. Great place to unwind after a long walk browsing through the Singapore Night Fest. Singapore is becoming so lively both day and night! [#HeinekenSG](#)



Our beloved intern Sam trying his best to pose for the camera while decked out in Lego's Ninjago gear delivered to the office to announce the opening of a new live-action show at Legoland Malaysia – Ninjago and the Realm of Shadows. [#bullytheintern](#) [#legoland](#)

Most commented



DIGITAL STRATEGIES KEY TO WINNING INDONESIAN MILLENNIAL TRAVELLERS

The reason many of these OTAs claim to do well is due to the discounts they offer: Rp50,000, Rp100,000 or special percentage discounts with credit cards. Without these incentives, I am sure their business would not be so good and I wonder how many customers are loyal. I suspect many simply find the best discount at the moment. – Adrian M

IN MEMORIAM



Courtesy of Hattia Teo

TTG ASIA IN MOURNING: GOODBYE PATRICK TAN, RIP
TTG Asia mourns the loss of our beloved photographer Patrick Tan, who died on August 27, 2015, after a year-long battle with cancer. He was 53 years old.

Patrick was no stranger to many industry members, many of whom he had captured through his lens at travel tradeshow. He often brought life to the stands, not just to the pictorial pages of TTG Asia daily newspapers, but even during business negotiations.

Meetings could stop in mid-air and serious faces would turn to huge smiles as he cajoled, teased and ribbed industry members to laughter and action.

A sad Darren Ng, managing director of TTG Asia, said: "Patrick's dedication to TTG and to the industry was unique and touching. He did not work for the money and he would give it his all at every tradeshow – that kind of consistency just showed how much he loved what he was doing. TTG has lost an exceptional employee and I have lost a great friend."

Our heartfelt condolences go to Patrick's wife, Irene, and his two daughters. He will not be forgotten by us. – Raini Hamdi

TRAVEL PURSUITS

Compiled by The Fox

LETALITE

A light-hearted section where we take a name of some industry leader, alter it by adding, cutting, or changing just one letter – and giving him/her a new description:

Frites Paasschen Are the chips down for this ex-head of a US hotel company?

Sony Fernandes This airline chief has a favoured electrical supplier

Fony Tyler This airline association chief prefers to speak by phone

Aireen Oman Head of no-frills airline in Asia who will not reveal planned Gulf destination rooms

QUIZ

1. Which airline has just abandoned its plans to offer no-frills service in China?
2. True or False: For passenger numbers, Tokyo's Haneda airport is now bigger than Tokyo Narita?
3. Which is the odd one out – Bali, Hainan, Pattaya or Penang?
4. History: What was the previous name of Hong Kong-based Rosewood Hotel Group?
5. Outside Asia: Which big international hotel company is up for sale?

Answer: (1) Jetstar Hong Kong, a venture owned by China Eastern, Shun Tak, and its original backer, Qantas. **(2)** True and False. Haneda has twice Narita's passenger numbers, but for international passengers, Haneda is half of Narita's size. **(3)** The others are island resorts: Pattaya is on Thailand's mainland in Chonburi province. **(4)** New World Hospitality, which bought Rosewood in 2011 and then changed its own name to Rosewood in 2013. Other brands in the group include New World and Penta Hotels. **(5)** Starwood, owner of brands such as Meridian, Sheraton and St Regis.

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