



# 40 YEARS

of Asian travel & tourism

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Best Independent Hotel**  
7 consecutive years since 2007  
by TTG Travel Awards

**Best Employer 2013**  
by Aon Hewitt

**Best Buffet Restaurant**

Hall of Fame

5 consecutive years since 2009

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ON SCOTTS  
— turns —  
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## SHOWING OFF A NEW LOOK AT 40

*Forty years is just about the age when one can start thinking about having a facelift. That is exactly what Royal Plaza on Scotts (RP) did as it turns forty this year. After a nip and tuck, RP is ready to welcome guests with its new façade and with renewed vigour. The hotel, sitting in Orchard area, one of the most vibrant belts in Singapore, has been through a whirlwind of rapid transformation of the hospitality industry, witnessing the boom from just 9000 hotel rooms when it first opened in 1974, to the current inventory of over 56,000 hotel rooms.*

Bold moves were made when the hotel underwent a major rebranding exercise in 2006. Singapore's first 100% smoke-free business hotel that comes with free in-room minibars, free gourmet coffee from the in-room Nespresso machines and free broadband access in all 511 rooms was born. Today, these have become signature selling points of the hotel which are emulated by the rest.

RP's service DNA was also defined. The hotel recognises that its people are its best assets and continues to build on the organisation's culture to establish a stronger emotional connection with its employees. The needs of hotel associates come first and they are treated like guests. The hotel also got rid of robotic scripts and appearances. Instead, they embraced associates with individuality, personality and life. Associates here are clearly not made out of cookie cutters. They are allowed to be themselves at work as they wear their hair and nails in whichever style and colour they fancy. Easy flowing conversations from the heart can often be heard as one walks through the lobby and corridors.

The free spirit of an independent hotel extends to the management style where no clock-in and clock-out is required for associates across all levels, which is unheard of in any industry. Associates can call in sick without presenting medical certificates as hard evidence.

The achievements of RP can be attributed to the participative leadership style of Mr Patrick Fiat, RP's General Manager and Chief Experience Officer (CEO). Under his leadership, the hotel has seen successes in various areas, beating international hotel brands to claim some of the most prestigious awards such as Best Employer 2013 by Aon Hewitt and Best Buffet Restaurant for five years in a row, placing renowned restaurant, Carousel, in SPH AsiaOne People's Choice's Hall of Fame. Living up to its name as crème de la crème, RP was also awarded Asia Pacific's Best Independent Hotel by TTG Travel Awards for 7 years in a row since 2007.

RP also strongly believes that success could not have happened without team spirit, not just from the associates, but with all its business partners, from clients to suppliers, who have all played essential roles in supporting the organisation. Celebrating milestones together with associates and business partners is a quick way to build bonds and increase the happiness index in the hotel. Celebrations have been officially inducted into the organisation's culture as part of its employee value propositions based on what matters most to the associates across multiple generations.

For all the occasions and accomplishments that were celebrated and rejoiced at RP, shared over weddings, reunions, graduations and birthdays, let's take a moment to celebrate its big 40.



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**DARREN NG**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
TTG ASIA MEDIA



## WE TURN 40

Dear readers,

We invite you to journey with us through 40 years of Asian travel and tourism with this special edition that marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *TTG Asia*, our flagship publication.

When I joined the company in 1984, travel was rather dominated by Western travellers looking east. Tour operators and travel agencies ruled travel sales. Alliances among national carriers were unthinkable, so was the notion that flying could be a low-cost affair. And who then would dare bet a wager that competing hotel brands, like Le Méridien, Sheraton and Westin, would one day be part of the same family?

There have been many changes. But if you ask me to pick two of the most profound changes, they would have to be the rise of the Asian travel market and the advent of technology, as both have cut the deepest impact on your business, and on ours (inextricably linked that we are). Till today, we are still benefiting and challenged at the same time by these two forces, as you have read in every issue of *TTG Asia* in the past 10 to 15 years.

This is why we chose the theme, 40tude, for our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. It brings to mind two key words, 'fortitude' and 'attitude', which we think encapsulate the state of the industry and hint at the qualities needed for survival: courage in adversity, bravery, endurance, moral fibre, individuality and self-confidence, just to name a few aspects of these two words.

Since the advent of the Internet and technology, people have said that travel agencies are dying, publishing is dying, the meetings business is dying, and on and on they go. Yes and no.

Sure, many travel agencies have closed, but many are also thriving like never before. Video-conferencing has not replaced meetings. And in the four decades since the first *TTG Asia* was issued, we have had our fair share of competitors and today these include the new media. But we are still standing – constantly revamping our print titles, launching new ones, embracing new media and going into new businesses such as the launch of Roomonger.com recently.

Why hasn't technology displaced everything? I believe that whenever 'people' are involved in a business, technology cannot completely replace that business. I believe completely in the word 'trust' and that people trust other people and not machines. And of course it is also because there are always players in the industry with enormous 40tude capacity to change and adapt in order to survive.

On that note, I wish you lots of 40tude. Enjoy this 40<sup>th</sup> special edition, which was conceptualised by our senior editor, Raini Hamdi, and deputy group editor and *TTG Asia* editor, Gracia Chiang. On behalf of the entire *TTG Asia* Media team, thank you for your loyalty and support all these years.

## TTG ASIA EDITORS PAST AND PRESENT



"I joined *TTG Asia* in 1992 as senior reporter and was its editor for many years. In my time, we didn't have acronyms like BFF or ICYMI, and cloud really was something to do with the skies, not that which enables us to work from anywhere today. We also did not have the ability to fact check or research the way we do today with the Internet, or hound our contacts through more ways than just the phone. Technology is a blessing for us journalists!"

**RAINI HAMDI**, Senior Editor, *TTG Asia* Media



"Before I entered the tourism industry, my mindset was similar to many of my Millennial peers: Why use a travel agency when you can plan your holidays using the Internet? After four years of getting to know the trade and covering its latest developments, I am convinced that there is definitely a market for travel consultants – but only if they keep innovating and making themselves valuable. I am happy that *TTG Asia* is able to play a role in championing this."

**GRACIA CHIANG**, Deputy Group Editor & *TTG Asia* Editor

# Trade tales

**40**tude  
Forty Years, As Strong As Ever



Clockwise from top: Richard Willis doing his signature number, *My Way*; Singapore Tourism Industry Ball at the Singapore Zoo; all ready to sell travel – Lotus Tour Hong Kong reception desk

# BLAST FROM THE PAST

Interviews by *Raini Hamdi, Prudence Lui, Rosa Ocampo, Greg Lowe and S Puvaneswary*

**How was travel sold? Why was it fun? What made it memorable?** Tourism and hospitality veterans reminisce the good old days with anecdotes that will make you gasp in disbelief and ponder whether the industry has changed for the better

In the late '70s/early '80s, the Far East was still new. There was a real sense of discovery, not just in sourcing new products but also in explaining the appeal to clients. In many areas, you were just looking at a handful of hotels whereas now you have over 100.

At most hotels, you were dealing with a director of sales who could make instant decisions and had the full trust of the owners. This was way before rigid automation/yield controllers came into fashion! It was fun as you could be creative and innovative, it was not just sold on the lowest price.

There was more unity and cooperation between the operators, hotels and airlines. We all wanted the business, but the hotels felt the best way to sell their product was through the tour operator. Hardly any clients booked direct with hotels.

Obviously the introduction of the web changed much of this, and now hotels almost seem to be

working in competition to operators, doing their utmost to attract direct customers.

On client habits, the biggest change is, in the past there was an appreciation of your time and knowledge – and almost a guilt factor should the booking not proceed. It is vastly different now. Clients now seem to think of the trade as a free consultation service, to verify what they might have heard or read. There is no embarrassment about taking an hour of your time without the 'reward' of a booking. Ironically this is coming from clients who in their own professions charge by the hour (e.g. lawyers, doctors, etc). Due to the Internet, everyone seems to be an 'expert', but with extremely selective vision and hearing! – *David Kevan, director, Chic Locations UK on how the overall business of selling travel has changed. Read on for more personal reflections by Kevan and others.*



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PARK HOTEL GROUP

# Trade tales

**40tude**  
Forty Years, As Strong As Ever

## COMPETITIVE INDUSTRY BUT FULL OF HUMANITY

**Robin Yap**

PRESIDENT,  
TRAVEL CORPORATION ASIA,  
SINGAPORE



Yap in 1978 at SIA Engineering

One of my first introductions to the travel trade was a copy of *TTG Asia* 36 years ago, on May 23, 1978, when I was with Singapore Airlines (SIA). Since then, it has been my source of trade information and news. Through the news revolution from print to digital, *TTG Asia* has kept its focus on providing the most relevant news yet keeping up with the times to meet the needs of the new online readers.

As a young tour planning officer of Singapore Airlines (SIA) Tourism Development Department, I was assigned to man the SIA Holiday booth at the first NATAS Travel Fair held at the Hyatt Hotel in 1987. It was then dominated by NTOs showcasing their destinations. Consumers came to learn about the destination before they book. It was fun working at these destinations-

focused fairs. But soon the entrepreneurial minds of some of the bigger agencies made them hold their own fairs. Quickly, everyone jumped onto the bandwagon to get direct sales and price became a fierce competitive tool. With the advent of OTAs, price competition became more intense.

Technology should be a tool that makes the sales process more efficient, thus improving profitability, but somehow it does not work out that way. Software keeps changing fast; the need to keep up means more investments which do not necessarily result in better returns. So this endless pursuit of technology at times takes the focus off the core business of travel agencies. Many tried to go high-tech but lost the high-touch.

The recent change of employment policy (in Singapore) and its blind application across the board makes it even harder for service to be efficient. The ever-increasing demand of consumers today with decreasing tolerance levels, coupled with high costs and lack of manpower, makes it impossible to achieve the optimal equilibrium of price and service.

But one thing hasn't changed, for which I'm glad, and that is the humanity of the travel agency workforce. While fiercely competitive, we are probably one of the few industries where competitors can enjoy a game of golf, meal and party with no boundaries drawn.

The Travel Corporation brands Insight Vacations, Trafalgar Tours and Contiki Holidays have benefited immensely by working closely with all our travel agency partners for more than 30 years in Singapore. Many mentors who helped me in the early '80s to establish Insight Vacations in Singapore are now close friends.

Today, we do brisk walking regularly.

## AND THE OPERATORS ASKED IF WE LIVED ON TREES



**Anthony Wong**

GROUP MANAGING  
DIRECTOR, ASIAN OVERLAND  
SERVICES TOURS & TRAVEL,  
MALAYSIA

My first trip to ITB Berlin was in 1978. It was so difficult then to market Malaysia and South-east Asia as the Europeans had not heard of this region. So I took out a huge map of South-east Asia and showed them where Malaysia, Thailand, Burma (now Myanmar), Singapore and Indonesia were. And the operators asked if we lived on trees. In jest, I replied: "Yes, to run from the crocodiles and tigers!"

Today, thanks to the good work of Tourism Malaysia and the other NTOs in this region, it is so much easier to market South-east Asia.

## MY VERY FORWARD-THINKING IDEA

Back in the 1970s, I worked with P&O Travel and we were one of the very first longhaul wholesalers operating from Hong Kong to Europe under Singapore Airlines (SIA) Europe Holidays. I proposed a system of three levels of ticket fares based on group size. I needed a very good fare for a smaller group so if

there were only 10-15 people travelling, I could still make the tour happen. If it was a bigger group with 30 people, we could make more money and even share the earnings with SIA. Cathay Pacific was worried as it operated only to London and Frankfurt. The idea was very forward-thinking at that time and business jumped 100 per cent while transactions grew from nothing to thousands.

## CONTIKI DANCED ITS WAY THROUGH

When we launched the Contiki brand, we had only 500 brochures. We held the kick-off (party) at a disco in Causeway Bay. Using a disco was way beyond the thinking (then) and eventually we got 300 bookings, which was amazing.

## I WAS YOUNG AND MORALLY ADHERED TO THIS RULE



**HP Kong**

FOUNDER AND  
CHAIRMAN, LOTUS TOURS,  
HONG KONG

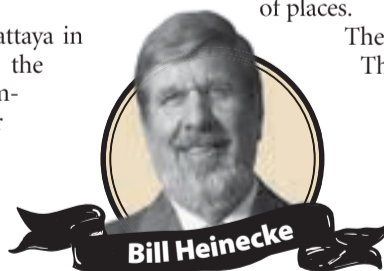
When we were appointed an IATA agency in 1959, there was a stipulation stressing no rebate for clients. I was young and morally adhered to this rule. That's why for the first six years, my company hardly made any profit. IATA later sent me a letter and said that with no growth of my ticketing business, it might not renew my appointment. I later had a meeting with my staff and found that it was common practice for agencies to rebate customers and no one got caught. So I started doing this in January 1965 and the monthly turnover rose from HK\$150,000 to over HK\$1 million that summer. Today, the figures have mushroomed to HK\$500 million per month. IATA forced me to earn money!

## LUCKY IF WE GOT US\$15 FOR A ROOM

We opened our first property in Pattaya in 1978. We never planned to be in the hotel business. The only other company was Italthai, which also never planned to be in the hotel business. They had Nipa Lodge and we had the Royal Garden. They went from the Nipa Lodge to doing The Oriental and then the whole Amari chain came along.

We started in Pattaya with the Royal Garden Resort. We really knew nothing about the hotel trade apart from the fact that we had a property we wanted to sell, but we couldn't get anyone to buy it. Next thing we knew we were in the hotel business.

When I look back to those days in Pattaya it was a really tough market. We were lucky if we got US\$15-20 a room; to get US\$25 was really lucky. When we opened our riverside hotel in Bangkok a couple of years later there was another crisis - martial law was announced the day we opened. So we opened the hotel even though there were no guests. That was another tough period for Thailand. Rates were terrible in Bangkok but at least we were able to make



**Bill Heinecke**

CHAIRMAN,  
MINOR INTERNATIONAL,  
THAILAND

money from our property in Hua Hin that had much better rates back then. We were lucky we started in those sorts of places.

These days it's pretty tough and competitive. There aren't the same opportunities and I haven't seen any uncompetitive markets in the country. The good thing is the country is still growing.

I smile every time people write off Thailand. I remember when people said no one would ever go back to Phuket after the 2004 tsunami. I've lived through six of the 12 coups in Thailand.

Now, again, we seem to be at one of those times when people think Thailand is in a dire situation. There's nothing wrong with Thailand; what's wrong is the perspective from abroad.

We're fortunate to have a world-class tourism industry. We're never going to be world-class at making tennis shoes or mining coal; how many other countries in the world are better than Thailand at hospitality?



The opening of Lotus office in 1959 as requested by IATA

MY MAGNIFIQUE VOYAGES

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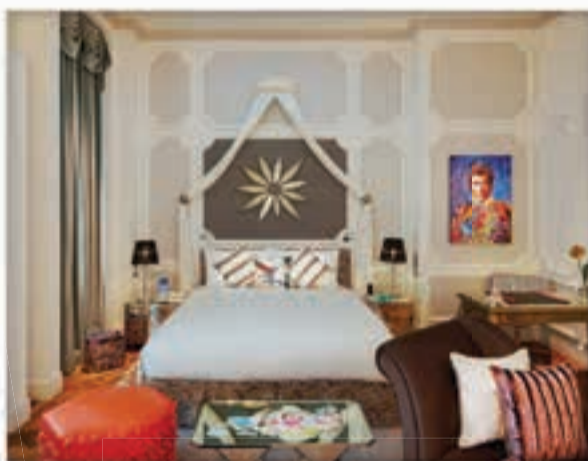


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# Trade tales

**40tude**  
Forty Years, As Strong As Ever

## YOU WANT TO BE DEPORTED OR WHAT?

It was during martial law in the 1970s under Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos when, as the banquet manager of the then Manila Hilton (now Waterfront Manila Pavilion Hotel), I was asked by a Malacanang Palace officer to cater to the grand inauguration of San Juanico Bridge connecting Samar to Leyte in Visayas.

My expatriate colleagues advised me to turn down the business, fearing that the government would not pay. But I said: "I can't. Otherwise all of you will be deported."

The hotel's kitchen brigade, including ice carvers, was brought on site and we set up the kitchen and service facilities including marquees, ice carvers and flowing fountains a week in advance.

The palace officer even commandeered the army, navy and air force at my disposal. What a high and mighty feeling to be the skipper in charge! When I saw the helicopters whirling in an open field and men in fatigue uniforms loading our china and other catering accoutrements, I was strutting like a peacock to see our hotel's logo on display.

Everything went like clockwork, a complete success.

But the following morning, the cooks were furiously banging on my door. "Wake up, quick! Everything is gone,

everyone disappeared!" they wailed. We were left stranded on the island and all the hotel's equipment had disappeared.

When I tried to collect payment from the palace officer, he suddenly vanished! My head was spinning. I was on the chopping block. I guaranteed this catering, waiving the required deposit to the great apprehension of my banquet colleagues.

Luckily, I had another hotline to the palace. He raised the money and we got paid.

The catering cost one million pesos – which in today's value is about 15 million pesos (US\$342,234) – a record in the history of any catering contract for the hotel.

## WHAT A GIFT!

The entire Sheraton Auckland Hotel and Towers, of which I was manager, was abuzz because the emir of a Middle Eastern kingdom was visiting New Zealand for the first time.

Since the local staff was not familiar with the Middle East, I called someone from the foreign affairs department to brief them on the specific nuances and habits peculiar to the Arab culture.

The visit proved to be fruitful with trade and investment agreements exchanged between the host and visiting governments. On the day of their departure, the chief minister came to see me, expressing the emir's delight over the superb service, delicious food and warm reception. And he gave a few dozen boxes as token gifts.

I called the department heads, asking them to distribute the gifts to the staff who attended to the emir. That day, the air was thick with excitement. "Mr Lopez, do you know what was in those boxes?" shrieked the F&B manager.

"Rolex watches!"

– Lopez is also president, Philippine Hotel Federation



Agency professionals just love to perform

## GUNG-HO TRAVEL TRADE PARTNERS

**Terruce Wang**

VICE PRESIDENT,  
SALES AND DISTRIBUTION  
MARKETING,  
HONG KONG DISNEYLAND  
RESORT

When I made my Disney debut in 2010, at our travel trade summit marking the resort's fifth anniversary, travel agencies were content to be entertained. Increasingly, however, we have been introducing interactive formats in trade education, and travel consultants have become active participants in our edutainment and webinars, such as in the launch of Toy Story Land, Grizzly Gulch and Mystic Point.

In March this year, my team and I had our top travel trade partners put on costumes and join the cast of the Adventure Behind the Scenes show, staged for the Celebration of Sales Excellence 2013 where 26 awards were presented to our top performers.

Our trade partners didn't need much persuasion! They were keen to go on stage, and the experience gave them a more intimate understanding of the behind-the-scenes work that makes Disney entertainment appears effortless. Ultimately, such involvement brings them closer to our brand and contributes to more mutually rewarding partnerships in the long run.

## HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED

**Anju Shah**

MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
AMBIKA TOUR AGENCY,  
THAILAND

Back then, it was much easier to operate an agency. The rise of OTAs and direct selling by airlines changed everything. Airlines don't pay commission to agencies anymore. That started in the US and took longer to take a hold in Asia. Our clients have access to a lot of the information we in the trade have, so we have to make ourselves relevant.

When we realised that, we started focusing on higher-end clients and people who still want to be looked after. Clients expect you to be contactable 24/7 and that has taken some getting used to. Getting to grips with social media can be quite difficult for old fogies like me, so we make sure we have lots of bright young people working on that!

## WHISKY AND RAW CHILLI

**David Kevan**

DIRECTOR,  
CHIC LOCATIONS UK

Looking through my old passports, my first visit to Thailand was in 1977, 37 years ago. It was my trip to Asia and I stayed at Montien Patpong – never seen such a busy coffeeshop at 02:00! Then down to Pattaya and met with a young, fresh-faced Henry Widler who was then a resident manager. Kurt Ruffli was general manager of the Nipa Lodge.

Hardly anyone went to Asia at the time from the UK, then Kuoni bought Houlders Holidays, a big player in the UK and Asia took off in the mid-70s.

In Thailand my first points of call were Amari, Dusit and Diethelm Travel under Luzi Matzig at the time, as that covered 60 per cent of your product needs. Dusit at the time had Rayavadee and Santiburi as well. Then it was to Akorn Hoontrakul of the Imperial Group – he introduced me to the delights of whisky and raw chilli, which made for an interesting lunch! I recall Akorn telling me about his dream to build a hotel on a totally undeveloped little island called Samui. So the next day, we went to have a look. The flight to Surat Thani (this was way before Samui had an airport), then the ferry and we're there, ending the day on the beach at what was to become Tong Sai Bay.

It used to be incredibly difficult to get a room in Bangkok, as demand totally exceeded supply so frequently that we used airport hotels as base. Traffic was horrible even in those days, and most taxis considerably carried a plastic bottle in case of contingencies.

In Malaysia, Penang was the only resort on the radar. Rasa Sayang, Golden Sands, Casuarina, Lone Pine and a delightful little place called Palm Beach which Shangri-La knocked down to build the entertainment complex now



A wai from Kevan, who was recently awarded 'Friend of Thailand' by the Tourism Authority of Thailand

residing between Rasa Sayang and Golden Sands. Langkawi was not even a consideration.

In Bali, the focal point was Sanur, with Bali Hyatt and Segara Village as the two most popular hotels followed by Sanur Beach. Nusa Dua was still being developed and Kuta was the preserve of young surfers. Upcountry, there were just a few hotels in Ubud, with the Amanpuri and Kupu Kupu as the forerunners.

Singapore, like Bangkok, had more demand than beds, with most of the hotels located off Orchard Road/Tanglin Road. Popular hotels at the time were Century Park Sheraton, Marco Polo and Goodwood Park. Clarke/Boat Quay were still a twinkle in a developer's eye.

Depending on the year, Hong Kong seemed to go from feast to famine. There were times when you had to beg for a room, literally, then six months later you could negotiate a stay three/pay two deal with trimmings. Popular hotels at the time were Lee Gardens at Causeway Bay and New World Harbour View at Wan Chai.

It was an exciting time, as everything was new and fresh. You were applauded for innovation and creativity, and tourist boards/airlines and operators all worked hand in hand to build awareness. It was at a time when airline sales managers could be instrumental in building up routes and could really influence what was on offer, rather than just reacting to a head office directive. They had the autonomy to make decisions without having to refer everything to a yield controller. It was much less controlled, and probably more fun.

In many cases, tourism contacts I made in the region became good personal friends, although commercially I am now probably dealing with their grandchildren!

After all these years, I still have a great love for the region. I am privileged to have seen many destinations in their infancy and, in my own way, helped in their development. By the same token I am also saddened by the commercialisation of certain destinations, such as Bali or Phuket, but in reality that was always going to happen.





## Join the expanded fun at the happiest place on earth

Come now to enjoy endless fun that you will treasure for a lifetime with our expanded park at Hong Kong Disneyland this summer!

You are invited to partake in a truly mysterious adventure to engage all your senses at Mystic Point, developed exclusively for Hong Kong Disneyland. Mystic Point takes you through the stately Victorian mansion, Mystic Manor, on search of the private treasures by its owner, the eccentric explorer Lord Henry Mystic.

You may hop on the "Mystic Magneto-Electric Carriage" to view the collection and have some extraordinary encounters triggered by the wonders of Music Dust. To continue with your journey, you can take wonderful photos in the Garden of Wonders or explore the globetrotting exploits of Lord Henry in the Explorer's Club Restaurant.

Then, headover to Asia's only Toy Story Land where it's always playtime! It has something for everyone - whether you're brave enough to experience the hair-raising speed of the RC Racer or prefer the slightly gentler pleasures of the Slinky Dog Spin. There's also the fun of Toy Soldier Parachute Drop with Andy's troops.

Feeling even more adventurous? Be a Wild West pioneer and explore the one-of-a-kind Grizzly Gulch! It offers you one of the most exciting rides of your life - the Big Grizzly Mountain Runaway Mine Cars that takes you through the gold mines. You can also enjoy some spirited water play at Geyser Gulch!

The journey doesn't end here, there's still so much more to explore at the all-time favorites - Main Street, U.S.A., Fantasyland, Tomorrowland and Adventureland! Enjoy the expanded fun with advantages of the Hong Kong Disneyland 2-Day Ticket to visit the Park twice within a 7-day period!

And as you'd expect from Hong Kong Disneyland, all the lands are home to exciting and innovative eateries. Savor the superb variety of dining opportunities in the Park. Whether you would like to choose Halal\* Vegetarian or Dim Sum, there are delicious food options at every turn, as well as cosmopolitan selections of Chinese, Western, South Asian and Japanese cuisine available to suit every taste.

Join in the expanded fun at Hong Kong Disneyland as the Happiest Place on Earth now gets even happier! For more details on creating the most magical experience for your guests, please visit [www.hkdtravelagents.com](http://www.hkdtravelagents.com).



\* All meat items served at Tahitian Terrace in Adventureland and Explorer's Club Restaurant in Mystic Point are certified by The Incorporated Trustees of The Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong.

# PEEK INTO THE FUTURE

In this section, [Raini Hamdi](#) asks industry leaders to pen their thoughts on what the future will bring

- Brett Tollman** on the future of traditional distribution **Page 10**
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- Taleb Rifai** rounds off with harnessing the power of tourism **Page 22**



Top row from left: Brett Tollman, Adam M Goldstein, Francesco Violante; mid-row from left: Desirée Bollier, Tony Tyler, Ho Kwon Ping; above from left: Loh Lik Peng, Frits van Paasschen, Taleb Rifai

## TRADITIONAL DISTRIBUTION WILL STILL THRIVE

By **Brett Tollman**, CEO, The Travel Corporation

We are often asked and challenged about The Travel Corporation's long standing, dedicated engagement and reliance on the traditional travel agency distribution model. We consistently repeat our belief, as follows:

**“A QUALIFIED, ENGAGING, VALUE-ADDING, GOOD RETAIL TRAVEL AGENCY IS STILL ESSENTIAL TO MOST TRAVELLERS’ HOLIDAY TRAVEL PLANS AND BOOKINGS.”**

Leisure travel has certainly evolved and changed significantly over the past 40 years, everywhere. However, when a customer is looking to buy a great holiday which has added value, is an enriching experience and matches their expectations, a very good travel agency is still the best way to ensure these objectives are met or even exceeded in many cases. This is as valid today as it was in the past. So many potential customers today are time poor despite their excellent multi-tasking skills, have overloaded work schedules, are connected almost 24/7 yet are still trying to lead a relatively good work-life balance. I can personally validate this and I use a great travel agency in Los Angeles for ALL of my personal and family travel plans.

The Travel Corporation today is relatively complex and diverse, operating 30 brands in over 60 countries, with 38 offices globally. In each of our 'selling' markets,

we work closely to support and engage our travel trade partners. We have evolved our traditional, original 'tour operating' model to immersive, curated life-changing experiences, be they guided holidays on Trafalgar and Insight, luxury river cruises with Uniworld, or independent soft

adventure travel with Adventure World, to name a few. All of our brands and products still need great travel agency professionals to promote, explain and book via our call centres around the world. In fact, we are now moving to a 24/7 'follow the sun' policy to provide our agency partners with an 'always open' call centre solution, recognising that many of them work at home today, and early or late.

The future is very bright too: WTTC, UNWTO and Oxford Economics predict massive growth in travel over the next 10 years, especially out of and around Asia. So this is an industry that will enjoy continued success in the future. Technology will keep evolving, to both benefit and challenge our industry. Google Glass and other mobile device adoption creating new connected travellers to online predictive search, and dynamic packaging by the OTAs, will continue to challenge the traditional agency model.

Attracting, hiring, training and retaining a new generation of agency staff is critical – we as an industry still have to do more to ensure this happens. That for me is the biggest challenge we face together, something WTTC is working hard on with its global members through its Tourism for Tomorrow working group focusing on our industry's future human resource scarcity issues.

Those who will succeed and endure in the future are those companies that get this, and are also able to master the opportunities of Big Data and other such tools to better understand, engage and communicate one-on-one with their customer database. One has to be agile, adapt and change as needed while still providing the same fundamentals of any successful business: giving great customer service, working hard and being a good employer.

I was impressed when I recently saw the Dynasty Travel Singapore's tablet developed for its consultants to go to time-poor customers' offices and homes, engage them and book their travel where they want to be. This highly competitive, dynamic, fast-changing landscape is every-

### TRAVEL PLANNING SOURCES IN WHICH US ADULTS HAVE THE MOST CONFIDENCE OF ACCURACY (AIDED)

Travel Planning Sources	% of US Adults Most Confident ("Top Box") n=1,006
Family and friends	39%
Providers of professional ratings such as AAA	33%
Travel agency	26%
Online travel agency such as Expedia, Priceline or Hotwire	21%
Company websites for hotels, cruiselines or airlines	18%
Online consumer review sites such as TripAdvisor	14%
Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter	12%

Source: American Automobile Association (AAA)

where – whether in Asia, North America, or Southern Africa, where we ourselves operate a growing retail agency business, Pen Travel. We have to keep sharing, learning from each other and helping each other to succeed, to ensure our businesses are sustainable.

Recent research in the US validates the importance and future of the traditional retail agency. The 2014 American Automobile Association (AAA) survey (see above) confirms that while most people are comfortable with and reliant on their own online research, when it comes to booking their holiday, especially those other than a basic airline booking, car rental or standalone hotel booking, they place their highest confidence in a professional travel agency to book (59 per cent for AAA-branded travel agencies and non-AAA branded travel agencies combined). It is also exciting to see our next generation of travellers validating the importance of a professional travel agency for booking, after friends and family, with the older generation highly recommending an agency in many cases.



Brett Tollman (second from right), his parents Bea and Stanley Tollman (centre), with Robin Yap (right) and team in the Singapore office

**“RECENT RESEARCH IN THE US VALIDATES THE IMPORTANCE AND FUTURE OF THE TRADITIONAL RETAIL AGENCY...SO OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE REMAINS BRIGHT.”**

US adults place the most confidence in the accuracy of travel planning information from ‘family and friends’ (39%). Respondents who are 18-34 years of age place more confidence in the accuracy of travel planning information from ‘family and friends’ than respondents who are 65+ years of age (42% vs 32%).

The travel information services US adults have most confidence in after ‘family and friends’ are ‘providers of professional ratings such as AAA’ (33%) and ‘travel agen-

cy’ (26%).

Women are more likely than men to place confidence in the accuracy of ‘providers of professional ratings such as AAA’ (41% vs 25%), ‘travel agency’ (30% vs 22%) and ‘social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter’ (16% vs 9%).

Households with less than US\$35,000 annual income place more confidence in the accuracy of ‘online travel agency such as Expedia, Priceline or Hotwire’ and ‘social

media sites such as Facebook and Twitter’ than households with income of US\$75,000 or more.

So our collective future remains bright and we remain very dedicated and focused on the traditional travel distribution model. We will continue to work hard to ensure as many travel agencies as possible are highly profitable. With a strong price integrity model, when agencies book our brands, they make great money in working closely with us.



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# CEO views

**40tude**  
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Goldstein: Ships will just get bigger and better

**“IN LESS THAN 20 YEARS WE HAVE TRANSITIONED FROM MARKETING THE BENEFITS OF DISCONNECTING FROM DAILY LIFE TO CALLING OUT IMPROVEMENTS TO ONLINE CONNECTIVITY.”**

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## SHIP SHAPE

By **Adam M Goldstein**,  
president & chief operating  
officer, Royal Caribbean  
Cruises

People sometimes ask me if there will ever be a cruise ship larger than our Oasis-class ships. My answer is yes. It's clear from history that ships get larger over time. There may be a longer-than-usual hiatus as Oasis-class represents a significant increase in guest occupancy (5,400) and GRT (225,282), but it is highly unlikely that there will never be a bigger ship.

The only certainty is that cruise ship size and design will respond to consumer preferences. Over the last 15 years the average size of cruise ships has expanded rapidly. While economies of scale result from increases in size, at least to a point, this efficiency goal has not been our focus. The primary driver has been the desire of customers for ever more options, choices and variety. The proliferation of specialty restaurants, entertainment venues, themed bars and action-oriented experiences is the visible manifestation of this insistent pressure.

I'm comfortable forecasting that this consumer-led desire for diversity of experiences will continue. I'm considerably less comfortable predicting what these experiences will be. After all, when Royal Caribbean began in 1970 with the first purpose-built ships for warm weather cruising, no one could have imagined rock climbing walls, ice skating rinks, surfing, sky diving, digital signage or pervasive Wi-Fi, not to mention the elimination of the main dining room as on the forthcoming *Quantum of the Seas* with its

Dynamic Dining concept.

I'm also comfortable forecasting that four critical elements of ship design and construction will continue to play a crucial role in the cruise industry's development.


First, technology will be ubiquitous. In less than 20 years we have transitioned from marketing the benefits of disconnecting from daily life to calling out improvements to online connectivity. This is the beginning of a revolution in the guest and crew experience with unforeseeable developments ahead.

Second, safety and environmental sensitivity will continue to be front and centre. We take responsibility for our guests and crew every time a cruise ship leaves port and this will not change. Nor will our need to protect the oceans on which we sail. Continuous improvement in this domain must be unceasing.

Third, fuel efficiency will only grow in importance but how this quest will manifest itself in terms of types of fuels, propulsion and power generation is unpredictable.

Finally, destinations will continue to emerge around the world, especially in Asia, over the upcoming decades. These new ports-of-call will often lack the ability to handle the largest cruise ships early in a port's maturity curve. So it's highly likely there will continue to be a variety of ship sizes and a need for appropriate tendering services as well as permanent docks, regardless of the size of the source markets that produce the customers.

Taking all of the above into account, it's clear Royal Caribbean and the cruise industry will continue to push the boundaries of cruising as we have known them. It will be exciting to see the innovations unfold.



ALTERING PERSPECTIVES

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BEST WESTERN Suites and Sweet Resort Angkor  
CAMBODIA

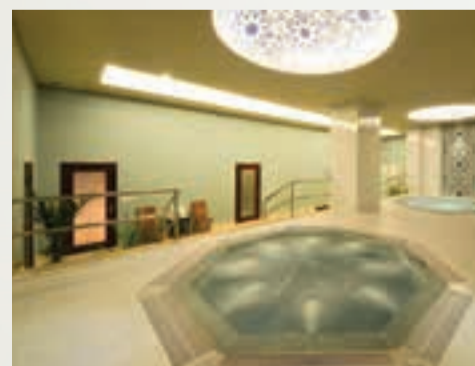
### **CAPTIVATING CAMBODIA**

Once the heart of the ancient Khmer Empire, Cambodia has become one of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's most exciting destinations. And nowhere is this new-found prosperity more evident than in the capital, Phnom Penh, where Best Western recently unveiled its newest hotel, BEST WESTERN River Palace.

Best Western is also present on the doorstep of the spectacular Angkor Wat, offering a perfect two-center experience in this captivating country.

### **BEST WESTERN River Palace Hotel**

Set on the banks of the Tonle Sap River, BEST WESTERN River Palace Hotel offers a delightful escape from the hustle and bustle of Phnom Penh. With rooms overlooking the city or river, this modern hotel is the perfect base from which to explore the sights. Sample exquisite Khmer cuisine at the Palace Seafood Restaurant or relax with a cooling drink at the Riviera Lounge Bar. And after a day discovering the city, guests can unwind in the hotel's excellent spa, which features hot and cold jacuzzis, a steam bath and the only Turkish hammam in Cambodia.



*Wherever life takes you, Best Western is there.®*



**LAID-BACK LAOS**

Serene, spiritual and visually stunning, Laos is Indochina’s hidden gem. And no matter which part of this seductive country you visit, the warmth of the welcome and laid-back ambience always captivates travelers. Nestled on the banks of the Mekong River, Vientiane is one of Asia’s most charming capitals, and BEST WESTERN Vientiane Hotel provides a convenient and comfortable accommodation option in the heart of this elegant city.

**MAGICAL MYANMAR**

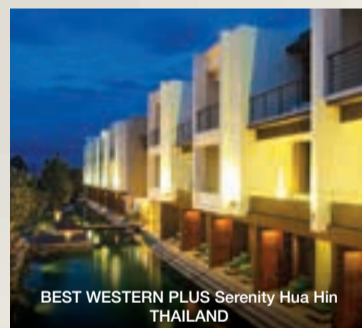
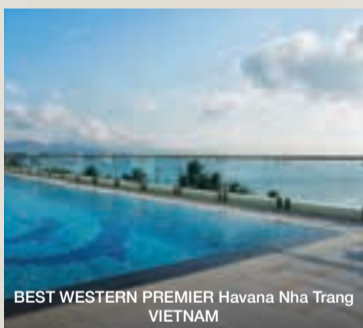
Hidden from view for so long, Myanmar is now emerging as one of the 21st Century’s brightest stars. The largest city, Yangon provides a wonderful mix of old colonial buildings and gleaming, golden temples, including the glorious Shwedagon Pagoda. Overlooking this breath-taking national landmark, the new BEST WESTERN Green Hill Hotel is an excellent city center option for the growing number of visitors to this true Asian icon.

**VIBRANT VIETNAM**

Vietnam offers a glorious array of attractions for travelers. In the rolling hills of the Central Highlands, BEST WESTERN PREMIER Indochine Palace provides a luxurious way to discover Vietnam’s UNESCO-listed former capital. BEST WESTERN Dalat Plaza Hotel is the ideal base from which to explore this exotic region, while in the historic central coast region

**TANTALIZING THAILAND**

The ‘Land of Smiles’ is one of the world’s most sought-after tourism destinations, offering the full spectrum of attractions and activities for travelers. Approximately 20 million people flock to the capital Bangkok each year, and they now have a choice of six Best Westerns to stay at, including the flagship luxury hotel, BEST WESTERN PREMIER Sukhumvit. And if the heat of the city gets too much, guests can take a trip to Thailand’s resorts and islands, where Best Western is present in some of the world’s most idyllic beach destinations, such as Phuket and Koh Samui.



With 19 hotels currently operating across Indochina’s five countries, and a further 10 coming soon, Best Western International offers the perfect accommodation choice, wherever your next adventure in Indochina takes you.

- THAILAND**  
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 BEST WESTERN PREMIER Sukhumvit, Bangkok  
 BEST WESTERN PLUS At 20 Sukhumvit, Bangkok  
 BEST WESTERN PLUS Grand Howard, Bangkok  
 BEST WESTERN Mayfair Suites, Bangkok  
 BEST WESTERN Klassique Sukhumvit, Bangkok  
 BEST WESTERN PREMIER Bangtao Beach Resort & Spa, Phuket  
 BEST WESTERN Phuket Ocean Resort, Phuket  
 BEST WESTERN Samui Bayview Resort, Koh Samui  
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- MYANMAR**  
 BEST WESTERN Green Hill Hotel, Yangon

- VIETNAM**  
 BEST WESTERN Dalat Plaza Hotel, Dalat  
 BEST WESTERN PREMIER Indochine Palace, Hue  
 BEST WESTERN PREMIER Havana Nha Trang, Nha Trang

# CEO views



More self service in future. Left, SITA's self bag-drop in Melbourne; above, express passport control

## HIGH-TECH PASSENGER JOURNEYS

By **Francesco Violante**, CEO, SITA

As technology becomes a normal part of people's travel experience, it is continuing to uproot the traditional passenger journey.

One major area is the rise of the connected aircraft. By 2016, more than three-quarters of airlines will deploy tablets, onto which information such as passenger name lists, passenger bag load status and connecting flight information is loaded, thereby improving the passenger experience.

Passengers are beginning to expect to use their mobile devices onboard for calls, Internet, emails and entertainment, with those signing up for inflight connectivity through SITA's subsidiary OnAir increasing year on year.

Most airlines and airports are also investing in business

intelligence, which will furnish passengers with information they say they want – flight times and bag status, for instance, or waiting times at check-in, security and checkpoints.

A third trend is m-commerce, enabling passengers to purchase travel services on the move. According to our surveys, once passengers have bought their tickets, nearly 40 per cent would purchase ancillary services while en route – such as paying for parking or buying a lounge pass. Most airports plan to offer m-commerce in the next two years, while airlines see it as a new frontier in retailing.

SITA is also involved in some exciting collaborative innovations and developments at airports that promise significant change. At check-in, SITA's trial with Virgin Atlantic of wearable technology, including Google Glass and Sony Smart watches, demonstrates great potential to enhance passengers' travel experiences.

The trial enabled concierge staff to meet and greet VIP passengers with a personalised check-in service. But we are only at the beginning of a learning curve that could see wearable technology impacting other areas across the airport and aircraft maintenance.

Also at the airport, we are starting to pilot beacon technology that could open up a range of low-cost possibilities for interacting with passengers, such as determining passenger location, navigating the airport and much more. Developments in passenger flow monitoring are

another great example of IT benefiting the passenger experience and increasing airport efficiency.

The next major technology-led trend at airports is self bag-drop. We are seeing the rise of bag-drop areas at airports, although our surveys find that passengers are still cautious. Our work includes self bag-drop at Melbourne and Brisbane airports in Australia.

With IATA's and Airports Council International (ACI)'s SmartSecurity, the industry is working on the next generation of checkpoint. IT is the enabler, helping to optimise processes. New biometrics kiosks are a prime example of change to come, as they fast track international arrivals, enabling a 'land, touch and go' procedure.

Our work involves the introduction of Automated Passport Control self-service kiosks at Orlando Airport as well as new self-service passport control kiosks at Miami International Airport.

If we are going to create this new journey then continued investment in IT is essential, along with infrastructure based on global standards and interoperability between technologies, sharing data securely and using common processes and approaches. That means backing IATA's and ACI's programmes to deliver a better passenger experience.

We see common-use technologies as vital to the new journey. Passengers do not want to learn how to use different technologies every time they use a different airline or go to a different airport.

Finally, we need to decide who owns the passenger, and work together to share the benefits of business intelligence and analytics because these have great potential to improve our industry's processes and the passenger experience.



## SHOPPING TOURISM JUST GOT SERIOUS

By **Desirée Bollier**, CEO, Value Retail Management

Shopping has always been viewed as incidental, a last-minute grab for the odd souvenir to take to folks back home. The truth is quite different. Shopping tourism just got serious, and the travel and tourism industry is finally sitting up and taking notice.

The facts speak for themselves. Our nine Chic Outlet Shopping Villages in Europe drew more than 31 million visits a year, with most visitors spending a major part of their time enjoying a leisurely day and a good meal with friends. Thus, when the UNWTO declared that shopping

tourism was at the heart of every holiday, was I the only one not surprised?

The rapidly growing Asian middle class is a huge bag of opportunity for retailers and tourist operators. Multi-shopping destination packages are particularly popular with Asian holidaymakers. We have found that increasingly fashion-conscious Chinese consumers are tired of counterfeits: they want the real thing and a lifestyle to match. This is why we launched the Suzhou Village in May while another, Shanghai Village, is due to open in autumn 2015.

But as the market gets more competitive, with online shopping a player to contend with, there is a need to constantly innovate to engage our astute global voyagers.

In China, for example, the customer relies on the online community for support in making purchasing decisions. We thus invest heavily in digital marketing to reach out to them and are taking key learnings from China and applying them across our business in Europe. We have also launched an app to enable guests to book their travel, access exclusive offers and plan their visit to our villages using interactive maps. This serves to make their overall experience smoother and simpler, from before they arrive to the moment they leave.

It is more important than ever that travel and tourism companies consider the customer experience from 360 degrees. With social media at the fingertips of every tourist, complaints can enter the public domain and go global quickly. Although technology can be perceived as a threat in this respect, when used cleverly it can serve to enhance the customer experience. But it needs to be targeted: many companies invest large amounts in technology that is over-complicated and irrelevant; it doesn't aid the customer's experience. Technology should never be the starting point. We need to listen to the customer's wants and needs, and develop a complementary digital strategy accordingly.

The tourist is more sophisticated and well-informed than ever before, and it's a constant challenge to anticipate and exceed their expectations, but an exhilarating one.



## EVEN SAFER SKIES

By **Tony Tyler**,  
director general and  
CEO, IATA

**C**ongratulations to *TTG Asia* on its 40th anniversary. *TTG Asia* is a valued partner, reporting on the industry's development since 1974 on a wide variety of topics: the travel trade, hospitality and air travel. Similar to *TTG Asia*, IATA's involvement in the industry's development has been multifaceted.

Many of *TTG Asia's* readers know IATA for the Bill-

ing and Settlement Plan (BSP) that we operate around the world, including in 28 countries in Asia-Pacific, and the New Distribution Capability (NDC) initiative that will modernise the shopping experience for airline products. BSP and NDC are examples of IATA's role in setting global standards to improve the industry's processes and efficiency.

It is also through global standards that we have made flying the safest way to travel. In 2013 there were 29 million flights with Western-built jet aircraft and only 12 hull losses. This translates into one accident (after which the aircraft could not be repaired) for every 2.4 million flights. In Asia-Pacific, the region's carriers experienced one hull loss for every 1.4 million flights last year.

Despite the tragedy of MH370, aviation accidents are rare. Nonetheless the aviation industry is determined to improve on our safety performance.

The IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA), with its 900-plus standards, is at the core of our efforts to improve safety. Almost 400 airlines are on the IOSA registry. As a group, their safety performance is more than two times better than the average for airlines that have not completed IOSA. We are making IOSA an even more effective standard with Enhanced-IOSA, changing the audit from a snapshot of an airline's safety management into a system for constant monitoring. Enhanced-IOSA becomes a requirement for all IATA airlines from 2015.

The loss of MH370 points us to an immediate need

– we must not allow another commercial airline to go missing without a trace for so long. IATA has established an Aircraft Tracking Task Force (ATTF) to develop recommendations to improve global flight tracking. ATTF includes the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and experts from around the world. A draft of recommendations will be given to ICAO in September.

Ultimately, our goal is to predict the potential for accidents, and prevent them from happening. Data has a key role to achieving this. IATA has created the Global Aviation Data Management (GADM) project, which is the world's largest resource of operational information. It contains data collected from partners, including ICAO, the US Federal Aviation Administration and the European Aviation Safety Agency. Each new data contributed to GADM and every improvement in our analytical capabilities move us closer to this reality of preventing accidents.

2014 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of commercial aviation. Scheduled commercial aviation began with a 23-minute journey across Tampa Bay, Florida on January 1, 1914. Since then, it has changed our world immeasurably for the better. As we embark on the second century, we look forward to even safer skies, and a long future of working together with *TTG Asia* to meet the industry's future needs.

**“WE MUST NOT ALLOW ANOTHER COMMERCIAL AIRLINE TO GO MISSING WITHOUT A TRACE.”**

Tyler: Enhanced safety audit will be a requirement from 2015

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# THE STATE'S HAND IN INTEGRATED RESORTS

By **Ho Kwon Ping**, executive chairman, Banyan Tree Holdings, shares his thoughts in an interview with **Raini Hamdi**

**T**he biggest innovation in integrated resorts (IRs) since we opened Laguna Phuket 20 years ago is one that is government-led rather than private sector-driven. Singapore has demonstrated that a casino licence can be structured in such a way it fulfils a socially useful function and a tourism infrastructure development role.

The Singapore government essentially allowed two casino developers to enter, but negotiated the terms such that they also invest in other substantial enterprises they would not normally make. Thus, Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) had to cross-subsidise a Universal Studios theme park, which would otherwise not enter as it could not achieve high returns with such small scale. Marina Bay Sands (MBS) had to have a MICE facility and was used as the anchor for the redevelopment of the whole Marina Bay area.

The innovation thus is in the IR model than in the product. From a product/hospitality perspective MBS, while a fantastic architectural masterpiece, is a casino, 2,500-room hotel and convention centre – nothing too innovative there. Similarly RWS with its casino, theme park and hotels.

Developed country governments – top of mind being Australia and Japan – appear to be learning from the Singapore example. Australia previously issued only pure casino licences for small facilities, say Star in Darling Harbour Sydney or Jupiters in Queensland's Gold Coast. But probably after seeing what Singapore has done, Queensland's Gold Coast is issuing a casino licence to a China-backed developer – but with the condition it must develop a cruise centre (although there has been opposition from some quarters that massive



**“SINGAPORE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT A CASINO LICENCE CAN BE STRUCTURED IN SUCH A WAY IT FULFILLS A SOCIALLY USEFUL FUNCTION AND A TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ROLE.”**

dredging would destroy the biodiversity of the area). As well, Queensland is redeveloping a state-owned land into an IR development, Queen's Wharf Brisbane, but again stipulating a few other requirements for a casino licence.

This model would work in high income, high population areas, not in places that are remote. Singapore too is an integrated city, has a coherent masterplan for the next 20 years and, when it takes on a game-changing development, pulls all its best brains on it and takes a hands-on approach. Another country may insist on a cruise centre of a casino developer, but what point is that if it is hands-off afterwards? The developer might build a sub-standard terminal. Even if it builds a fantastic cruise centre, no cruise ships would call if the government does not build the roads and other infrastructure needed to accommodate cruise passengers.

Newly developing countries such as Cambodia, Vietnam and Sri Lanka which are said to be mulling casinos may be better off doing the classic IR. But buying power for property sales is a precondition, since infrastructure services such as security, landscaping, golf and recreation are all paid for by the residents who value the community they live in. And when these services are integrated, for example, when there is inter-hotel billing, inter-hotel transport and integrated destination marketing, only then is there a 'real' integrated resort.

Laguna Phuket, for instance, offers free use of inter-resort transportation via shuttle buses and lagoon boats, a choice of over 30 restaurants and bars, one centralised billing system allowing signing privileges at all hotels, and access to a wide spectrum of sports and recreation facilities through a day pass. It also focuses on environmental conservation through shared ancillary services such as laundry, water treatment and maintenance.

I have not seen any others like it besides our own projects in Bintan and now, Vietnam. I don't consider upcoming developments in Lombok or Johor to be integrated resorts – they are basically a masterplan of land sale sites. There is no integration in the way I define it. Even Nusa Dua in Bali is not an integrated resort because other than selling plots of land to different investors to build hotels, there is no integration of any services.

Thus, nothing much has changed apart from the innovation in forcing casinos to play a more socially useful role.

That – and the loose use of the term 'IR'.



Two-bedroom Double Pool Villa at Banyan Tree Phuket, part of the Laguna Phuket integrated resort

# BIG DATA WILL CHANGE HOTEL MANAGEMENT

By **Frits van Paasschen**, president & CEO, Starwood Hotels & Resorts

**T**oday, technology is evolving faster than companies and consumers can think of ways to use it. This is having a profound impact on how we live our lives, and in the hospitality industry, how global brands cater to the evolving needs of their guests.

If you go back in history, you will see that brands were actually born from technology and change. In our industry, about 50 years ago in the newly arrived jet age, travellers began to look for reliability from hotel brands – a consistent, quiet, clean room from one market to the next. Brands like Sheraton and Le Méridien rode this wave and hotels planted flags in new and exotic locations, creating outposts for Western travellers. Yesterday's luxury became today's necessity and, over time, reliability became boring.

Then, as television, sports, music and modern advertising turned the world of brands from black and white to living colour, companies began to create brands with personality and dimension that tapped into people's imaginations and self-definition. Brands like Nike, BMW and Gucci spoke to people's attitudes and aspirations, and a new way of living. In our industry this phenomenon led to the creation of W Hotels, bringing global scale to a burgeoning boutique segment focused on lifestyle and design.

As change marched forward, the '90s ushered in the Internet age, changing consumer expectations yet again. With new abilities to access a wealth of information, people learned more about the companies behind their favourite brands and wanted those companies to share their personal values, such as sustainability. A cool image was no longer enough. This is why we launched a brand like Element and set goals to reduce our energy and water consumption by 30 per cent and 20 per cent respectively over 10 years. Those actions say a lot about who we are.



Today, technology and social media are accelerating the evolution of brands. People are connected real-time, all of the time, with each other, with their interests and with their brands. They no longer want a one-size-fits-all option, they want a dialogue and they want brands to know what's on their mind right now. For us, technology is not only changing the way people search and book their stays, it's changing the way we connect with our guests.

While it is far from simple, we must keep pace because companies that can deliver personalisation consistently and globally will be set up to win. Global hospitality companies, like Starwood, have the scale to build and connect digital capabilities, pulling together revenue management, Big Data offer engines, reservation systems and information about individual guests – and then tie it all to brand loyalty, a global network of hotels, and thousands of associates to give guests personalised experiences.

Our oldest hotel, the Goldener Hirsch in Salzburg, was built in 1407 with a tunnel from the general manager's office overlooking the front desk so he could see and hear guests arriving, come down the stairs and warmly greet each once like an old friend. Big Data is a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of this tunnel, allowing us to recognise our guests and provide personal hospitality on a global scale across 1,200 hotels in 100 countries. Really knowing our guests allows us to send people offers that matter to them, customise their visit, do more that they actually want, and avoid doing things they don't, which makes us more efficient operators while providing our guests superior experiences.



Left, an old Sheraton ad

**"...COMPANIES THAT CAN DELIVER PERSONALISATION CONSISTENTLY AND GLOBALLY WILL BE SET UP TO WIN."**



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- What your key businesses are and goals for the company
- What problems you encountered
- How you used IT to overcome them and reach objectives
- How these solutions benefited your customers
- How these solutions benefited your staff, bottom line

**Contest Closes on 29 August 2014**

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## CEO views



# COST-LIGHT AND LOCAL BOUTIQUE HOTELS

By **Loh Lik Peng**, director,  
Unlisted Collection

Singapore's hospitality scene has changed dramatically since I opened Hotel 1929 in 2002. When we opened 1929, the industry was moribund and dominated by older hotels, most of which were managed by the big hotel brands. In that environment 1929 was seen as a breath of fresh air; for such a tiny property in the 'wrong' part of Chinatown, it opened people's minds to new concepts and redefined what was considered suitable locations for hotels.

Fast forward to today, there is a huge range of new boutique hotels spread around all corners of Singapore, especially in its distinctive heritage and conservation neighbourhoods. Is the market getting saturated? I do think we need a new paradigm for Singapore's boutique hotel scene going forward.

Land and building costs in Singapore have accelerated beyond what is sustainable for boutique hotels. This means that hotel yields are now so compressed, and it is hard to justify the investment at a time when interest rates look to be rising and competition increasing. Singapore is getting a massive increase in new hotel room inven-

tory while manpower is increasingly difficult to come by and visitor arrivals are starting to slow from record highs. How will existing boutique hotels cope with this?

Boutique hotels have always had less economies of scale than the large branded hotels, and the new business environment means cost pressures will increase while competition for guests will be much fiercer. To thrive in this new environment the incumbents and the new entrants must look beyond the traditional ways of operating. Singapore will be a much tougher environment in the next decade, and boutique hotels will need radical solutions to survive.

I believe the way forward is to embrace change and look at the traditional strengths in marketing and public relations, agility and flexibility that boutique hotels have always been good at. Building something bigger, better and fancier than your competitive set is going to be much harder to justify because those types of hotels are much harder to run in today's environment. The new premium branded hotels that have recently come into the market will always have a massive advantage in facilities and service offerings compared to boutique hotels.

The large expansion of the hotel market leaves niches that I believe boutique hotels are much better at occupying. Cultural relevance and distinctive marketing cam-



Loh: Challenges ahead for boutique hotels

paings built around local neighbourhoods and key cultural events, and a strong emphasis on interesting stories relevant to today's global traveller, will allow boutique hotels to continue to be interesting and relevant. We will also need to strip ourselves as much as possible of the heavy fixed costs that large hotels are capable of absorbing and start giving today's guests only the things that are truly important to them. This means less fancy check-in desks and less traditional manpower-intensive luxuries, and more local tie-ups up with interesting businesses and events so that guests can enjoy the true experience of being in Singapore without the hotel carrying such costs.

We need to move to a model that caters to the modern traveller's real needs without bearing the costs of Singapore's increasingly expensive business environment. This will require agility and flexibility like never before. I hope we as an industry are up to the challenge!

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# CEO views



## THE POWER OF TOURISM

By **Taleb Rifai**, secretary-general, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

On a riverboat sailing along a quiet stretch of the Trang An river in rural Vietnam, I had the privilege of speaking with the lady who was paddling our group through the winding waters. She told us that she was part of a group of women who had created a local community business of taking tourists on river tours.

“Before, when I did not row the boat for tourists, my income was mainly from rice paddies,” she said. “This work gave my family a more prosperous life than before. I saved money to build my house.”

That was just one of the many profound experiences I have had travelling around the world while witnessing how tourism can change people’s lives.

Many times when we think of tourism, we think of the pretty veneer of tropical beaches and famous landmarks. What we don’t usually see are the millions of people behind tourism, whose lives depend on this global sector that moves over a billion people around the world each year.

In just six decades, tourism has seen a dramatic rise in breadth and scope. Back in the ‘50s, a mere 25 million

**“THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM ARE COUNTLESS, YET THEY DO NOT COME FREE OF CHALLENGES AND COMPLEXITIES.”**



people travelled the globe, mainly to and from the traditional destinations of Europe and North America. In 2013, the number of international tourists surged ahead and hit 1,087 million, with emerging economies increasingly capturing the imaginations of travellers.

Today, tourism is one of the biggest and fastest-growing economic sectors in both emerging and developed countries, accounting for nine per cent of the global GDP, 30 per cent of total services exports and employing one in 11 people across the globe.

But this is only the tip of the iceberg. The deeper significance of tourism’s continued expansion is its extraordinary ability to propel inclusive socio-economic development, create millions of jobs, empower communities, raise awareness of environmental preservation and spark global interactions that foster multicultural respect and understanding.

The transformative impacts of tourism are countless, yet they do not come free of challenges and complexities. For such positive benefits to be realised, we must ask ourselves: How can we ensure the continued growth of the tourism sector while safeguarding our precious resources? How do we guarantee that tourism’s benefits trickle down to the host communities in a fair and equitable way? And how do we make tourism accessible to all?

Answering these questions and ensuring that sustainability is at the core of tourism development is central and requires a concerted and cohesive effort of all tourism stakeholders – embracing the public and private sectors, civil society and, of course, tourists themselves, as transforming tourism’s growth into the global phenomenon that it is today challenges us to answer our higher call as global citizens.



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# Cotai Strip Resorts Macao

# IT'S A BLOCKBUSTER SUMMER!

Discover family fun and all-inclusive convenience at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao this summer. Meet beloved characters from DreamWorks Experience, join in the action at the TRANSFORMERS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Expo, shop, eat, or just relax. This is the getaway that will put a smile on everybody's face.

The integrated resort at Cotai Strip, Macao – collectively known as Cotai Strip Resorts Macao – has emerged as one of the most exciting all-in-one family holiday destinations in Asia. Discover exceptional accommodation from some of the best hotel brands in the world, top-notch shopping, superb dining, delightful entertainment and more. With Cotai Strip Resorts Macao just a 10-minute shuttle bus ride from Macao International Airport, the fun starts almost immediately.

This summer, the spotlight is on family fun. Expect lots of laughter, music and dance as the famous DreamWorks Gang put on one rollicking good show after another throughout the day. Also not to be missed is the one-of-a-kind TRANSFORMERS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Expo, which features 10 interactive zones, giant TRANSFORMERS statues and thousands of toys and collectibles.

## DreamWorks Experience at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao

There is never a dull moment with the DreamWorks Gang – Shrek & Fiona (Shrek), Po and Tigress (Kung Fu Panda), Alex and the penguins (Madagascar), Toothless and Hiccup from How to Train Your Dragon, Mr Peabody and Sherman and other well-loved DreamWorks characters. Four major DreamWorks activities have been scheduled for this summer (See box).

The highlights are the daily special theme buffet breakfast (“**Shrekfast character breakfast with the DreamWorks Gang**”) and buffet dinner (“**Dragons Viking Feast with the DreamWorks Gang**”). A ballroom has been transformed into a colourful event



Cotai Strip Resorts Macao is only a ten-minute ride on the free shuttle bus (right) from Macao International Airport.



DreamWorks characters perform everyday at Shrekfast character breakfast with the DreamWorks Gang.



Say hi to Puss in Boots and other characters at the DreamWorks All Star Parade.



Get up close with Mr Peabody and Sherman.

## DreamWorks Experience at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao

### Shrekfast character breakfast with the DreamWorks Gang

Time: 10am-11:30am (Sat-Mon)  
9am-10:30am (Tue-Fri)

\* Reservation required.

### DreamWorks Meet and Greet (Free)

Time: Daily 12pm and 4pm

### DreamWorks All Star Parade (Free)

Time: Daily 3pm

### Dragons Viking Feast with the DreamWorks Gang

Time: Daily 7pm-9pm

\* Reservation required.

THIS SUMMER ONLY



## SUMMER HOLIDAY SPECIAL

At the TRANSFORMERS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Expo: Bumblebee and Ironhide (Zone 6).



space lined with buffet stations featuring a tantalising spread of popular dishes, including some familiar items inspired by DreamWorks characters. The programme kicks off with an energetic song-and-dance performance by each of the DreamWorks characters on stage, who will then visit each table and freely mingle with guests. It's great fun for everyone, including adults!

But that's not all. Everyday, guests can also catch the 3pm **DreamWorks All Star Parade** at Shoppes Cotai Central where a cast of up to 32 performers — including DreamWorks characters, dancers, puppeteers and stilt walkers — entertain and interact with the crowd. Then at 4pm, the **DreamWorks Meet and Greet** takes place at Sands Cotai Central's Paradise Gardens, where guests have another chance to strike a pose with DreamWorks characters from *Shrek*, *Madagascar*, *Kung Fu Panda* and *How to Train Your Dragon*. On weekends, there are free screenings of DreamWorks animations too.

### TRANSFORMERS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Expo

The TRANSFORMERS have landed at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao! The TRANSFORMERS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Expo is the largest TRANSFORMERS Expo ever held in Asia with 10 interactive zones. It features the first ever 2-metre tall TRANSFORMERS 3D hologram, 7-metre tall statues of Optimus Prime and Bumblebee, amazing collections by two loyal fans, game booths, film screenings, and exclusive merchandise. See the development of the Autobots and Decepticons through the past three decades. It's on daily 11am – 8 pm (last entry at 7pm) until October 5, 2014 at Exhibition Hall F, The Venetian Macao.

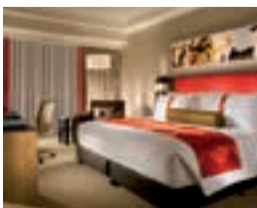
## STAY

### A hotel for every budget

There are more than 9,000 guestrooms and suites to suit all budgets and tastes at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao. The hotels are: The Venetian Macao (3,000 suites); Conrad Macao, Cotai Central (636 rooms and suites); Holiday Inn Macao Cotai Central (1,224 rooms and suites); Sheraton Macao Hotel, Cotai Central (3,896 guestrooms and suites); and Four Seasons Hotel Macao, Cotai Strip (360 rooms). All hotels are linked by the Bridge of Stars and within walking distance of each other and all shopping, entertainment and dining facilities.

### Extraordinary luxury Holiday Inn Macao Cotai Central

This is the largest Holiday Inn in the world and is best known for its luxurious rooms and services. The hassle-free check-in and check-out, high-speed in-room internet and choice of firm or soft pillows are all part of the four-star hotel's "five-star" service.



3D-mapping of Optimus Prime (Zone 4).



## SHOP

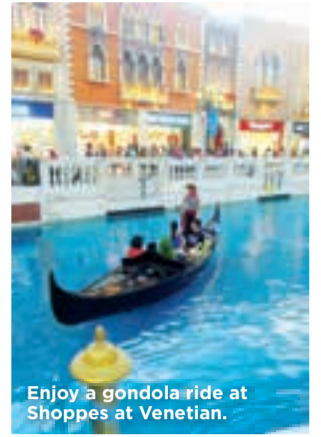
### A duty-free shopping paradise

Cotai Strip Resorts Macao is home to some 600 international brand outlets, ranging from prestigious high-end boutiques to popular lifestyle stores. Shopping areas are concentrated within Shoppes at Venetian, Shoppes at Four Seasons and Shoppes at Cotai Central and are open from 10am until 11pm (12midnight on Friday and Saturday). Be it fashion, jewellery, watches, electrical and IT accessories, toys, cosmetics, leather goods, sporting goods, confectionery or local specialties, there is always beautiful presentation, great variety and friendly services.

St. Mark's Square, Shoppes at Venetian.



At Shoppes at Venetian, which features a "nightless sky" and the distinctive architectural streetscapes of Venice, look out for live musical performances at St. Mark's Square. Listen out too for the sweet serenades by gondoliers as they sail by along any of the three indoor canals with their guests. It's a lovely and uniquely Venetian experience.



Enjoy a gondola ride at Shoppes at Venetian.

### Classic local treats

#### Macao's most delicious snacks

Pick up delicious local snacks such as egg tarts, almond cookies, pineapple cakes or sesame biscuits from some of Macao's most reputable brands such as Koi Kei Bakery and Lord Stow's located at Shoppes at Venetian.



## EAT



Seafood platter at Portofino.

### More than 100 restaurants

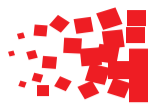
At Cotai Strip Resorts Macao, there are more than 100 restaurants, including the Michelin-starred Indian restaurant The Golden Peacock. Guests will never need to venture far regardless of their tastebuds or dietary requirements. Restaurants can be found in hotels and

North Indian Vegetarian feast at The Golden Peacock.



all shopping areas and their menus span all the world's great culinary cultures. From Mediterranean to Vietnamese, Indian to Cantonese, there is something for everyone. There are also two food courts offering additional variety and numerous cafés for quick bites or time-outs between activities.

Please visit [www.cotaistrip.com](http://www.cotaistrip.com) for more information and hotel packages at Cotai Strip Resorts Macao.



## GAME CHANGERS

# AIRLINES

From regulation to deregulation, protectionism to open skies, legacy to low cost – all this and more have shaped Asian carriers to what they are today



Above, AirAsia; below, Cathay Pacific's regional business class

## CHINA

### CAAC separation from Air Force

A major development that shaped aviation in China into what it is today goes back to 1980 when the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) separated from the Air Force. CAAC was formed in 1949 to manage non-military aviation in China. It operated scheduled domestic flights to cities in the mainland. The People's Liberation Army Air Force initially managed it.

### Six airlines became three

CAAC began international flights in the '60s to other Communist bloc countries and to the US, Europe, the Middle East and Australia in the mid-1980s. In the late '80s, it separated its roles as a government agency, airline and airport authority. Its airline operations comprised six airlines: Air China, China Southwest Airlines (which merged with Air China in 2002), China Eastern Airlines, China Northwest Airlines (which merged with China Eastern in 2002), China Southern Airlines and China Northern Airlines (which merged with China Southern in 2003).

### Spring's dominance

Spring Airlines, a subsidiary of Shanghai Spring International Travel Service, is China's most established

low-cost carrier. It started domestic operations in mid-2005 and gradually added Hong Kong and Macau to its network. It launched its first international flights to Ibaraki, north of Tokyo. Spring Airlines now serves a number of cities in North Asia such as Osaka, Taipei and Jeju, and South-east Asia including Bangkok, Danang, Singapore and Siem Reap.

### China became ICAO member

China joined the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in 2004 and passenger traffic that year reached 120 million. In 2004, there were 1,200 scheduled flight routes, comprising 975 domestic and 225 international, linking 127 cities in China to 38 cities in 80 countries. China's civil aviation fleet also expanded to 754 by end-2004, including 680 large and medium-capacity aircraft, compared with merely 140 small-capacity aircraft for up to 100 passengers back in 1980. – *Caroline Boey*

## HONG KONG

### Open skies between Hong Kong and London

In 1980, the entry of Cathay Pacific Airways and British Caledonian Airways on the Hong Kong-London route ended British Airways' long



Cathay Pacific

monopoly of the route. The keen competition that followed stimulated tremendous growth of UK traffic to Hong Kong. Passenger traffic on the route soared to about 444,000 in 1981, from 190,000 in 1979.

### Liberalisation of traffic rights

In 1997, the return of Hong Kong to China opened traffic rights to many countries which had previously been denied entry by the British Hong Kong Government. The HKSAR Government negotiated with foreign aviation partners on air service and transit agreements. In 1998, 14 rounds of air service consultations were held with 12 aviation partners; 12 agreements were signed with countries like Israel, Pakistan, Bahrain and Papua New Guinea.

### Cathay Pacific's acquisition of Dragonair

Cathay Pacific Airways acquired Dragonair in 2006, but allowed Dragonair to continue operating under its own brand, only managed by Cathay. This enabled the synergy of Cathay's international network with Dragonair's shorthaul services to China and secondary regional destinations.

### Failure of Oasis

Oasis Hong Kong Airlines took off as the city's first low-cost, longhaul carrier connecting Hong Kong to London in 2006. However, it went bust in 2008, becoming the first Hong Kong airline to be liquidated in history. Its failure also dampened the city's confidence of having a homegrown low-cost carrier. – *Prudence Lui*

## INDIA

### Growth of low-cost carriers

The budget airline sector in India started in August 2003 with Air Deccan. Said Vishal Bhadola, associate manager of CAPA India: "The initial success of Deccan made everyone realise that it (low-cost) could be done in India as well. There was genuine deregulation in the domestic markets from 2004 to 2008/09, which resulted in new airlines and growth of low-cost carriers."

### International operations for Indian airlines

In 2004, India's scheduled carriers with a minimum of five years of continuous operations and a minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft were permitted to operate scheduled services to international destinations. "It had a very positive impact on tourism and trade as access was available across markets," said Bhadola.

### Industry consolidation

With many new entrants in the market like Deccan, SpiceJet, GoAir, Paramount Airways and IndiGo, consolidation was the way ahead for India's aviation sector. In 2007, India's skies

saw Jet Airways' acquisition of Sahara Airlines, Kingfisher Airlines' acquisition of Deccan and the merger of Indian Airlines and Air India.

### Easing of FDI norms

In 2012, the Indian Government

liberalised foreign direct investment in the aviation sector. The move allowed foreign airlines to invest up to 49 per cent of paid-up capital in Indian companies operating scheduled and non-scheduled air transport services.

Said Amber Dubey, partner and head of aerospace and defence, KPMG: "The move resulted in the creation of two start-ups, Tata-Air Asia and Tata-SIA joint ventures, as well as Etihad's equity investment in Jet Airways." – **Rohit Kaul**

## INDONESIA

### Commercial operation of CN-235 aircraft

Merpati Nusantara Airlines bought 15 Indonesia-built CN-235 aircraft, and started operating them commercially in March 1988. The CN-235s were the second generation of Indonesia-built aircraft Merpati operated after the NC-212. The airline used the CN-235 as a commuter aircraft serving short routes such as Bandung-Jakarta and Bali-Lombok-Bima.

The 1997 economic crisis affected the aerospace company, which restructured and downsized, affecting production and aircraft maintenance.

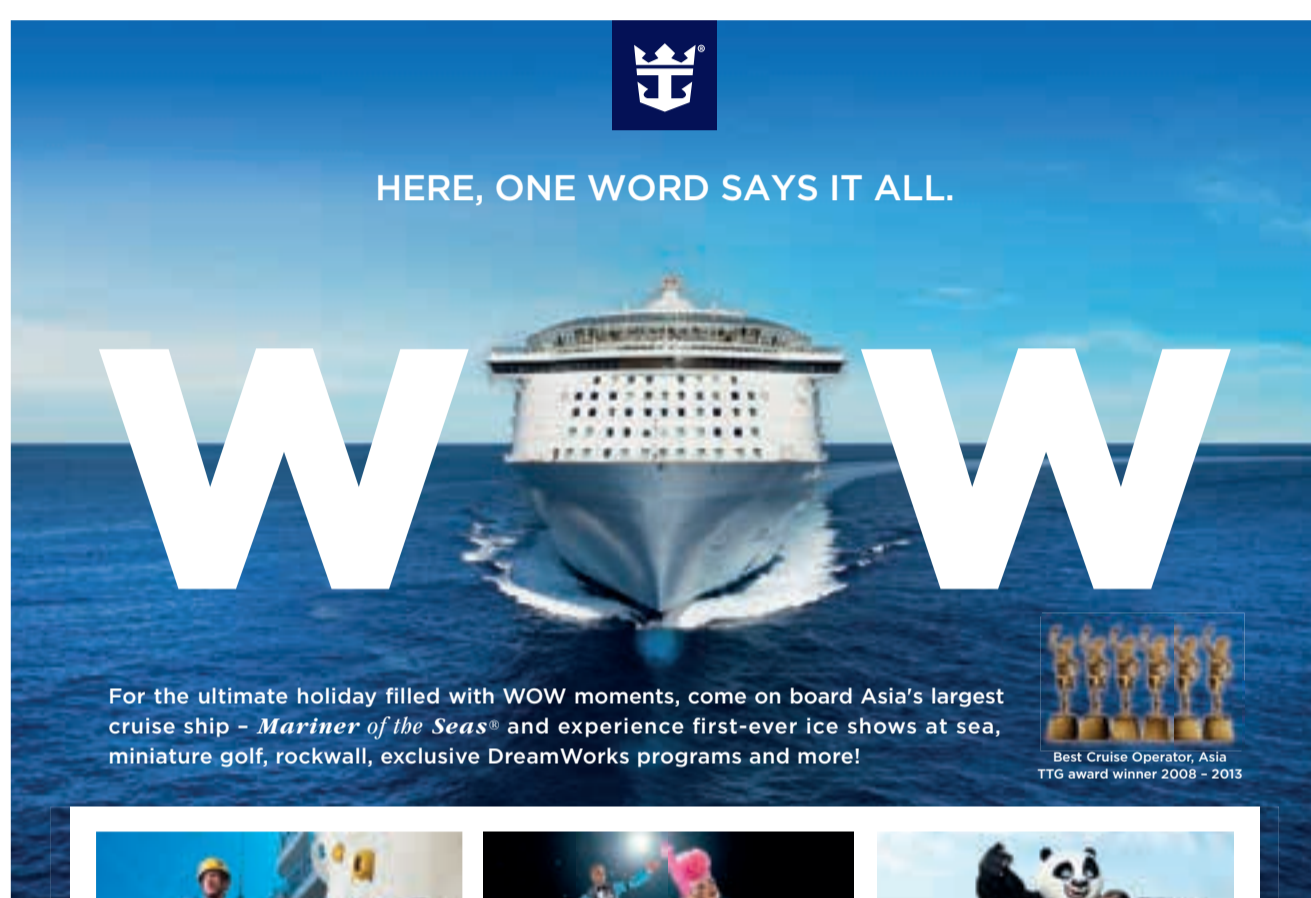
### Deregulation of airline industry

The Ministry of Transportation deregulated the airline industry in 1999 to encourage the private sector to enter the airline business. The requirement that companies must own a minimum of two aircraft to operate saw more than 15 Indonesian airline companies set up within a few years, mostly serving domestic routes.

Unfortunately, the lack of flight safety control and frequent air crashes led to the European Union's ban on all Indonesian airlines in 2007. The situation improved only after new, stricter transportation regulations were introduced in 2009. Currently, Garuda Indonesia, Mandala and Indonesia AirAsia have been removed from the ban.

### Short-lived Air Paradise International


The Bali-based scheduled charter airline was set up to lure back travellers from Australia following the first Bali bombing in October 2002. The airline offered affordable flight and stay



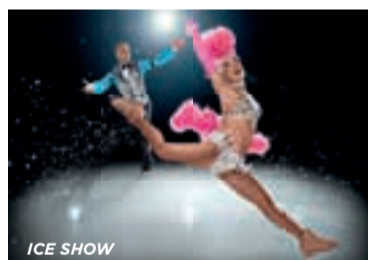
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Singapore Departures:  
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2015 Jan 8, Feb 2

**Ports-of-call:** Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang)/  
Penang, Langkawi

#### 4-NIGHT ISLES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA CRUISE

Singapore Departures:  
2014 Nov 24, Dec 11, 22  
2015 Jan 12, Feb 18\*

**Ports-of-call:** Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang), Phuket

#### 5-NIGHT SPICE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA CRUISE

Singapore Departures:  
2014 Nov 12, Dec 1, 6, 29\*  
2015 Jan 3, Feb 6, 22\*, 27

**Ports-of-call:** Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang)/Penang/  
Langkawi, Phuket

#### 7-NIGHT MALAYSIA AND THAILAND CRUISE

Singapore Departures:  
2015 Jan 19, 26, Feb 11\*

**Ports-of-call:** Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang),  
Penang, Langkawi, Phuket

\*Similar 7-N itinerary to Thailand and Vietnam is available.

#### 8-NIGHT EXOTIC ASIA CRUISE

Shanghai/Singapore Departures:  
2014 Nov 4, 2015 Mar 7

**Ports-of-call:** Xiamen, Hong Kong,  
Ho Chi Minh City (Phu My), Singapore,  
Shanghai (Baoshan)

\*Festive sailing    Ports-of-call differ by sailing dates.    Kung Fu Panda and all related characters properties TM and ©2014. Dreamworks Animation L.L.C.



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# Game changers | airlines

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packages and restored local tourism stakeholders' confidence. It even expanded services to South Korea and Taiwan a year later.

Unfortunately, the second Bali bombing took place in October 2005. The resulting drop in traffic to Bali forced the airline to cease operation a month later and it never made it to the skies again, even though travellers' confidence in the island returned a year or so after.

## Garuda's Quantum Leap

The economic crisis in 1997 and political instability in Indonesia in 1998 affected Garuda Indonesia's business. By the late '90s, the national carrier had incurred a US\$1.8 billion debt. By December 2004, 85 per cent of the airline's 19 domestic and 22 international routes were making losses. The airline managed to restructure and cut bleeding routes under the leadership of president and CEO Emirsyah Satar, who took office in 2005. In 2009, it announced a transformation plan, Quantum Leap 2011-2015, aiming to increase fleet size from 89 in 2010 to 154 by 2015, number of passengers from 12.5 million to 35.2 million, and weekly frequencies from 765 to 2,316 flights. – *Mimi Hudoyo*



Left, Garuda stewardess' uniforms from 1970 to 1985; below, Malaysia Airlines' cabin crew

## MACAU

### Air Macau

The airline was established in September 1994 and took off in November 1995. Its current fleet of seven Airbus aircraft flies to major Chinese cities, Hanoi, Seoul, Bangkok, Danang, Tokyo, Osaka, Kaohsiung and Taipei. – *Caroline Boey*

## MALAYSIA

### Kuala Lumpur to Los Angeles and Mexico City

Malaysia Airlines (MAS) launched twice-weekly flights from Kuala Lumpur to Los Angeles in July 1986 using its B747 Combi aircraft.

Anthony Wong, group managing director of Asian Overland Services Tourism & Hospitality Group, recalled that the direct flights helped his company to promote Malaysia to the US market and increased awareness of the destination, adding: "In the '80s, you could market a destination extensively, but without direct flights, marketing efforts would come to near nothing."

MAS also started twice-weekly flights from Kuala Lumpur to Mexico City in November 1992, its first Latin American destination. The airline was able to pick up passengers from Los Angeles onwards to Mexico City, and from Mexico City to Los Angeles, as it had the fifth freedom rights to do so. At the time, MAS was the first Asian airline to obtain these rights, which allowed a foreign carrier to disembark or pick up passengers from a point outside its country to a third destination.

### Liberalisation of Kuala

### Lumpur-Singapore route

The route between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore was liberalised in 2008, putting an end to the duopoly held by MAS and Singapore Airlines, and enabling the entry of five new carriers: AirAsia Malaysia, Firefly, Jetstar Asia, SilkAir and Tigerair. The competitive airfares offered by the low-cost carriers and the increase in seat capacity stimulated greater air travel between the two cities.

### MAS joined Oneworld

MAS joined Oneworld in February 2013. Although the membership helped the airline increase load factor by 4.3 per cent last year to 81.6 per cent, the carrier still posted a net loss of RM343.4 million (US\$106.7

million) in 4Q13 due to higher operating expenditure. – *S Puvaneswary*

## THAILAND

### Bangkok Airways' boutique branding

Bangkok Airways was officially launched in 1989, though its origins date back to Sahakol Air launched some 21 years, and was Thailand's first privately owned domestic airline. Owner Prasert Prasarttong-Osoth made a number of shrewd moves, including expanding its network to 20 major domestic and international routes, establishing three private airports and rebranding itself

as 'Asia's Boutique Airline' in 2004 to get higher ticket prices in the face of competition from low-cost carriers.

### Entry of budget airlines

Thai AirAsia revolutionised the local aviation industry when its maiden flight took off in February 2004. Until then, Thai Airways International (THAI) and Bangkok Airways had dominated the market and kept domestic air tickets beyond the reach of many travellers, especially locals. The low-cost carrier not only eroded the profits of the industry's mainstays, it led to the creation of a new aviation sector with other affordable Thai brands following suit, namely Nok Air, the now defunct One-Two-Go and Thai Lion Air.



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# Game changers | airlines

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## Phuket Air down and out

Having started commercial services in 2001, Phuket Air rapidly expanded internationally in 2003 and 2004 by adding scheduled flights to London, Amsterdam, Bali, Dubai and Yangon. Promotions, including some of the cheapest returns to the UK at just £275 (US\$467), saw hundreds of Thais queuing for visas at the British Embassy in Bangkok from as early as 04.00 in late 2004. Plagued by maintenance and safety issues, the airline was blacklisted by the EU from 2005-07, and the carrier terminated all domestic and international flights soon after.

## Cessation of two of the world's longest direct flights

The global financial crisis which dampened global business and leisure travel, along with THAI's disastrous fuel-hedging policy, signalled the death knell for two of the world's longest direct flights. The flag carrier's daily direct service to New York was first to fall by the wayside in 2009. Shortly after, economic reality forced the airline to cancel its direct flights to Los Angeles, which industry insiders said was financially unviable from its inception. – **Greg Lowe**



Singapore Airlines

## THE PHILIPPINES

### Philippine Airlines' Cebu-Tokyo link

In 1988, Philippine Airlines (PAL) launched its first direct Cebu-Tokyo flights, also the first scheduled international service from a point outside Manila. The new connection brought Japanese visitors directly to Cebu and helped turn the resort island into a major hub for international visitors and a tourist destination in its own right.

### Launch of Cebu Pacific

In 1988, soon after the abolition of the country's one airline policy, Filipino-Chinese tycoon John Gokongwei set up Cebu Air Inc, a low-cost airline that would allow "every Filipino to fly". The airline, now known as Cebu Pacific, began operating in 1996, with 24 daily flights linking Manila, Cebu and Davao. International flight operations began in 2001, with twice-daily flights to Hong Kong. Today, it flies to premium destinations such as Bali, Siem Reap and Phuket.



Cebu Pacific

### Loss of Category One rating and the EU ban

US Flight Aviation Administration (FAA) handed down a Category Two rating to Philippine aviation in 2008 because of inadequate adherence to international safety standards, while



in 2010, the European Union (EU) banned Philippine carriers from flying into EU soil. PAL was forced to fold its European operations and prevented from mounting additional US flights. However, after extensive safety reviews, the EU lifted the ban on PAL in July 2013, and on Cebu Pacific on April 14 – incidentally, the same day the US FAA announced the country had earned back its Category One rating.

### Entry of Tigerair and AirAsia

AirAsia and Tigerair Philippines began operating in 2012 and 2013 respectively, although stiff competition caused both airlines to quickly shift strategies: Philippines AirAsia bought into Zest Air, paving for a transfer of operations from Clark to Manila, while Cebu Pacific acquired Tigerair Philippines' operations and retained a marketing partnership with Tigerair Singapore. The upshot of this is travellers now have seamless access to AirAsia's and Tigerair's wide regional networks that reach as far as China, India and Australia.

### Revised air services agreement with Japan

In September 2013, the Philippines scored a landmark air services agreement with Japan, the country's third-largest source market, raising weekly flights between Manila and Tokyo-Narita from 119 to an

unprecedented 400, and adding 14 weekly flights between Manila and Tokyo-Haneda, effective March 30, 2014. New flights from ANA, Philippines Airlines and Cebu Pacific followed suit. The agreement also applies the Philippines' 'pocket open skies agreement' allowing unlimited flights from Japan to points outside Manila, and unlimited flights from the Philippines to all Japanese points except Tokyo-Haneda. – **Marianne Carandang**

## SINGAPORE

### Debut of Singapore Airlines' KrisWorld

In April 1995, Singapore Airlines unveiled the world's most advanced inflight entertainment system, KrisWorld, becoming the first airline to offer customers a choice of personalised entertainment during their flight, ranging from movies and television programmes to games and music channels.

Prior to this, passengers could only look forward to a movie projected on screen at the front of a cabin, which could be heard via a headphone socket at his or her seat.

### Open skies with the US

Singapore became the first Asian country to conclude an Open Skies Agreement with the US in Janu-



Clockwise from top: KrisWorld, Singapore Airlines' inflight entertainment system; Thai Airways International and Tigerair

ary 1997, allowing Singapore-based airlines unlimited access to the US market and the right to fly to all intermediate points and beyond. This provided airlines with maximum operational flexibility and opened new routes between the two countries.

### Entry of low-cost carriers

Singapore-based low-cost airlines first started operations when Valuair launched its maiden flight in May 2004. Following swiftly, Tigerair and Jetstar Asia began commercial flights in September and November the same year respectively. Singapore Changi Airport now serves 13 budget carriers from at least six countries. Growth of the budget segment has greatly expanded the range of products available to travellers. One in four passengers passing through Changi currently travels on a low-cost carrier, compared to around one in five in 2010.

### Qantas' choice of Dubai over Singapore

Qantas terminated its 17-year-old agreement with fellow Oneworld member British Airways in March 2013 for a decade-long alliance with Emirates. This saw Dubai replacing Singapore as the stopover for Qantas' European services, as part of an overhaul of the Australian carrier's loss-making international business. – **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

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## GAME CHANGERS

# AIRPORTS

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Above, Hong Kong International Airport; below, Kai Tak International Airport

## CHINA

### Beijing Capital International Airport

Beijing Capital International Airport, established in 1988, rapidly rose in rankings of the world's busiest airports in the past decade. It became the busiest airport in Asia in terms of passenger traffic and total traffic movements by 2009, and is said to be the busiest airport in the world in terms of passenger throughput as of this year. Its third terminal opened in 2008 – the year the city hosted the Olympic Games – following large-scale construction. – *Caroline Boey*

#### Statistics

##### China passenger traffic

1980: 3.4 million  
2002: 85.9 million

##### Number of airports in China

1980: 79  
2010: 101  
2015: 183 (projected)

Source: IATA

## HONG KONG

### Kai Tak International Airport

A US\$34.8 million extension of Kai Tak International Airport's terminal was completed end-1988, with additional facilities such as check-in desks, cafeteria, commercially important passenger rooms and baggage reclaim loops. The extension expanded passenger-handling capacity to 18 million per year or 5,300 inbound or outbound passengers per hour.

### Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA)

HKIA commenced operation in July 1998 after an overnight relocation from Kai Tak to Chek Lap Kok. The first flight to land there was Cathay Pacific's CX889 from New York. The first departing flight was CX907, for Manila. The addition of a second runway in May 1999 at HKIA enhanced Hong Kong's services to airlines and passengers.

In June 2007, HKIA's 140,000m<sup>2</sup> Terminal 2 opened, providing room for new carriers to operate and for

airlines to meet growing passenger volume. It is a multi-modal hub where air, land and sea transport converge seamlessly. Passengers are conveniently connected to local hotels and 110 Chinese cities and towns by coaches and limos at this terminal. Moreover, the automated people-mover connects to the Sky-pier.

### Sky-pier and North Satellite Concourse at HKIA

Since 2003, a temporary cross-boundary ferry terminal within HKIA had provided a speedy ferry service for transfer passengers. The permanent Sky-pier opened in 2010, making HKIA a transport hub for convenient air and sea travel. About 87 trips in two directions operate every day between HKIA and eight ports in the Pearl River Delta.

In the same year, the 20,000m<sup>2</sup> North Satellite Concourse was launched, with 10 extra bridge-served parking stands, to serve the rising number of narrow-bodied aircraft using HKIA. – *Prudence Lui*



#### Statistics

##### Total passenger traffic

Kai Tak (1997): 29.7 million pax  
HKIA (2013): 59.9 million pax

##### Runway dimensions

Kai Tak (1974): 3,373m by 61m  
HKIA (2013) north-south runway:  
3,800m by 60m

Source: Civil Aviation Department; Hong Kong Government; Airport Authority Hong Kong



Statistics	
<b>Total passenger traffic</b>	
2006/07:	86.6 million
2013/14:	169 million
<b>Indira Gandhi International Airport Delhi passenger traffic</b>	
2003/04:	10.3 million
2012/13:	34.5 million
<b>Number of Indian aircraft</b>	
FY2002:	130
FY2012:	410

Sources: Airports Authority of India; KPMG

**Buddha hands welcome arrivals at Terminal 3, Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi**

**INDIA**

**Airports Authority of India**

India's Civil Aviation Department used to manage Indian airports until the creation of International Airports Authority of India (IAAI) in 1972 and National Airports Authority (NAA) in 1986. In 1995, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) was established with the merger of IAAI and NAA for efficient management of all airports in India by a single authority.

**Cochin International Airport**

Cochin International Airport, which opened in 1999, was the first greenfield airport in India to be developed through a public-private partnership. Thereafter, two more greenfield airports were approved for Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

**Modernisation of Indian airports**

Though mooted in as early as 1996,

it was not until June 2003 that AAI approved a modernisation proposal costing about Rs30 billion (US\$502.2 million) for Delhi and Mumbai airports through a public-private partnership. According to a survey conducted by the IATA, Delhi and Mumbai airports – the country's two busiest airports – ranked among the three least-favoured airports in Asia-Pacific in 1999.

Following modernisation, as per AAI's FY2013 report, Delhi handled

the highest number of passengers in India (21 per cent), followed by Mumbai.

In 2006, the government also decided to modernise 35 non-metro airports in cities including Chandigarh, Bagdogra, Imphal, Viskhapattam, Agartala, Madurai, Bhopal, Raipur and Aurangabad. New terminal buildings were constructed in some airports and citywide development undertaken at around 24 such airports. – **Rohit Kaul**



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# Game changers | airports



## INDONESIA

### Soekarno-Hatta International Airport

In response to growing traffic demand and in line with the national plan to develop tourism as a top revenue earner for the country, Soekarno-Hatta International Airport opened in April 1985 after completing its Phase 1 construction. With one terminal and two runways, it took over the operation of domestic airlines and international airlines from Kemayoran Airport and Halim Perdanakusumah Airport respectively. The airport reached its capacity for nine million passengers within seven years of operation.

### Abolition of exit permit

Continuing a regulation introduced during the Dutch colonial period, Indonesians had to apply for an exit permit before making an international trip. In 1992, the Indonesian government abolished this permit for outbound travel. Although a high exit tax known as fiscal tax was later imposed for outbound travel, the removal of the exit permit opened opportunities for outbound travel agencies to promote international travel. In 2011, the fiscal tax was also removed. This, along with the growth of the middle class and improved air connectivity, drove the Indonesian outbound market to surge.

### Lombok International Airport

Lombok International Airport (BIL) opened in October 2011 with a 2,750m runway and a capacity for three million passengers per year, effectively replacing the overcrowded Selaparang Airport. It also plays an important role in the development of West Nusa Tenggara as a tourism gateway together with neighbouring Bali and East Nusa Tenggara, as stipulated in the Indonesia Economic Master Plan 2011-2025. As a result, Lombok has seen the growth of direct air links, from only a single link

with Singapore by SilkAir prior to BIL, to new links with Kuala Lumpur by AirAsia and Perth by Jetstar today. Based on latest available data, arrivals to Lombok totalled 15,945 in January-March compared with 5,069 in the same period in 2013.

### I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport

Bali saw an extensive expansion and renovation of I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport last year. A new 120,000m<sup>2</sup> international terminal, double the size of the previous one, was built and opened in September 2013 to welcome APEC Summit delegates. The domestic terminal was moved to the former and renovated international terminal, increasing capacity five times from 13,300m<sup>2</sup> to 65,800m<sup>2</sup>. Total passenger handling capacity has expanded from eight million to 25 million a year as a result, meeting the needs of international and domestic traffic growth as well as new hotels and MICE facilities in the last few years. – *Mimi Hudoyo*

#### Statistics

##### Soekarno-Hatta International Airport capacity

1985: 9 million (with only one terminal)  
2014: 23 million (with three terminals)  
2015: 62 million (projected, after completion of expansion)

##### I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport tax

1987: Rp9,000 (US\$6.40), international; Rp2,000, domestic  
2014: Rp200,000, international; Rp75,000, domestic

##### I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport passenger traffic

1991: 2.7 million  
2013: 14 million

Source: Travel Indonesia Magazine; Angkasa Pura Airport Authority



Top, KLIA; above, arrival hall waiting area of KLIA2

## MACAU

### Macau International Airport

Unlike other destinations in Asia, Macau did not have an airport until 1995, when the Macau International Airport started operating in November. Today, the airport is a vital air link in the Pearl River Delta. Air Macau and 21 other regional and low-cost carriers operate to and from the airport. – *Caroline Boey*

## MALAYSIA

### Langkawi International Airport

Prior to 1987, Langkawi International Airport was only a small landing strip that was able to handle Skyvans. Malaysia Airports Holdings upgraded the airport so it could accommodate bigger aircraft and more passengers during peak hours. This included expanding the runway and foyer as well as creating more comfortable arrival and departure halls. With the upgrading completed in July 1987, the airport could cater to international Boeing 757 flights and up to 1,000 passengers per hour compared with just 400 previously.

### Total Airport Management System

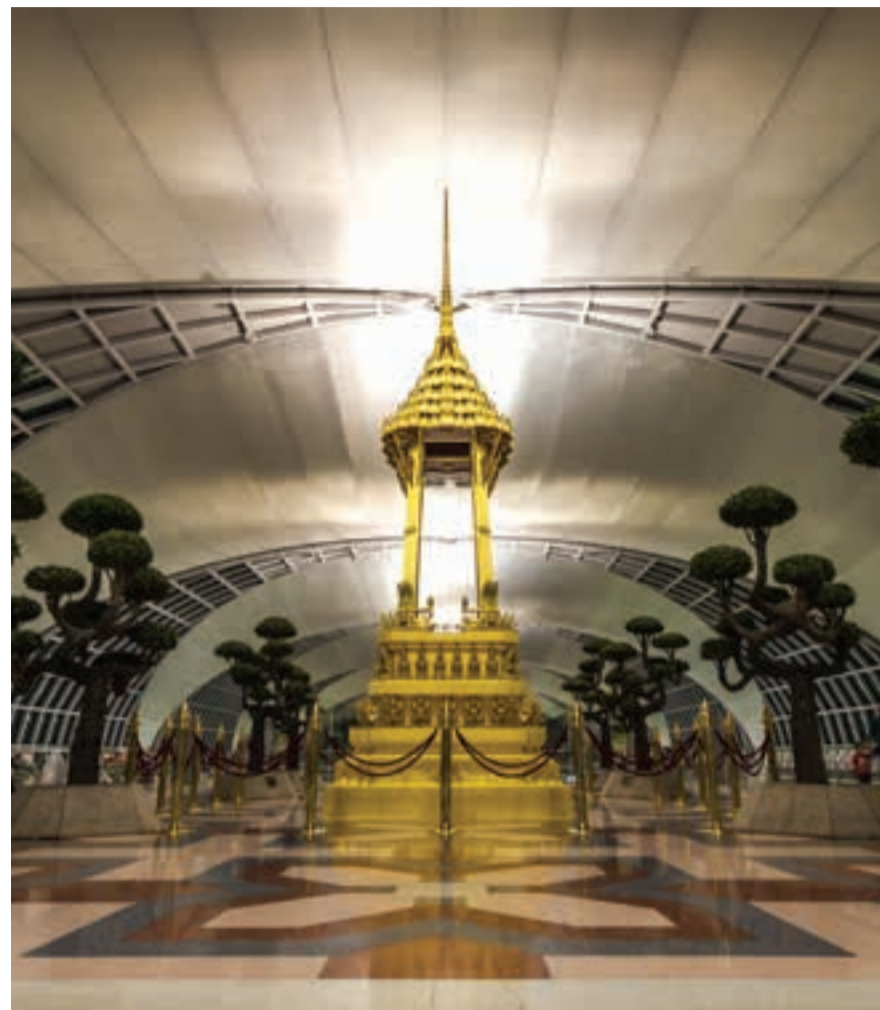
Introduced in 1998 at a cost of RM700 million (US\$217.5 million), Total Airport Management System (TAMS) provides the infrastructure for the integration, interconnection and distribution of information across Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) via thousands of kilometres of fibre optic cables. Through TAMS, Malaysia Airports Holdings, which manages KLIA, succeeded in linking more than 40 operational and passenger convenience systems, including air traffic management, runway/ taxiway lighting control, baggage handling, passenger check-in and flight information display, making KLIA the first fully integrated airport in the world.

### LCCT-KLIA airport

The temporary LCCT-KLIA airport opened in March 2006 to handle an increasing number of low-cost carriers arriving and departing from Kuala Lumpur. It provided only basic facilities, without any aerobridges, and had a maximum capacity for 15 million passengers annually. In 2013, it handled 21.8 million passengers, way over its maximum capacity of 15 million. Its last day of operations



Above and right: Suvarnabhumi International Airport



was May 8, after which all low-cost airlines were moved to operate out of Klia2 (see below).

### Klia2

Klia2 opened in May 2014 and was designed to cater for up to 45 million passengers a year, thrice more than the temporary LCCT-KLIA that it replaced. Klia2 is located just 1.5 km from the main KLIA terminal and is the largest low-cost carrier terminal in the region, spanning 360,000m<sup>2</sup> and offering 80 aerobridges. There are over 200 F&B and retail outlets at Gateway@KLIA2. – *S Puvaneswary*

#### Statistics

##### Airport tax

1992: RM5, domestic; RM20, international  
2014: RM9, domestic; RM65 international

##### KLIA annual passenger handling capacity

2001: 25 million  
2014: 100 million

##### LCCT-KLIA passenger traffic

2006: 4.7 million  
2013: 21.8 million

Source: Malaysia Airports Holdings

## THE PHILIPPINES

### Kalibo International Airport

Although 1.5 hours' drive from Boracay, for some years now Kalibo International Airport has been a direct gateway for international flights from regional destinations such as Incheon, Busan, Taipei, Shanghai and Hong Kong. Low-cost carriers have since joined the fray, currently offering direct flights to and from Singapore (Tigerair) and Kuala Lumpur (AirAsia).

### Godofredo P Ramos Airport (Caticlan Airport)

In 1995, South East Asian Airlines (now Tigerair Philippines) began flying short runway aircraft to Godofredo P Ramos Airport in Caticlan, leading to a huge surge in popularity for Boracay, only a 15-minute ferry ride from the airport. This also prompted competing services from Cebu Pacific and Airphil Express (now PAL Express). In 2011, Transaire, a subsidiary of San Miguel Corporation, upgraded the passenger terminal, while work to extend the runway to accommodate A320s and A321s is expected to be completed by 2016.

### Puerto Princesa International Airport

Puerto Princesa International Airport in Palawan gained importance when Puerto Princesa Underground River became recognised as one of the New7Wonders of Nature in 2012, doubling flights from Manila practically overnight. In May 2014, Korean firm Kumho-GS won the bid to expand the airport, a US\$82.9 million project that is expected to be completed in 1Q17. – *Marianne Carandang*

#### Statistics

##### Total number of registered airports

	National	Private
1983	86	141
1993	87	162
2003	85	78
2013	86	NA

##### Scheduled flight services (in millions)

	Domestic	International
1993	4.3m	5.6m
2003	6.1m	7.4m
2013	20.3m	17.3m

Source: Source: Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines; Civil Aeronautics Board

## THAILAND

### Samui International Airport

Bangkok Airways opened its privately owned Samui International Airport in 1989, transforming the dreamy Gulf of Thailand island from a backpackers' haven into a cluster of five-star spas and luxury getaway resorts. The carrier's monopoly on air access to the island means

nine out of 10 flights to Samui originate within Thailand, though regional hubs Singapore and Hong Kong still account for about 70 per cent of passengers landing on the tarmac.

### Suvarnabhumi International Airport

When Suvarnabhumi International Airport opened in September 1996, four decades of planning and 28 years of construction made it one of the longest-lived airport projects in the world. Heralded as Southeast Asia's hub and promising to be Bangkok's only airport, the facility was warmly welcomed by the international aviation industry. Passenger throughput hit 38 million within a year, surging to 66.5 million in fiscal 2013 (October to September) well beyond the official capacity of 45 million. A new terminal is expected to open in 2016, elevating capacity to 60 million.

### Don Mueang International Airport

Don Mueang International Airport was supposed to die a dignified and quiet death once its big sister Suvarnabhumi opened her gates. Imagine the industry's surprise then when the Thai government threw the old dog a chunky bone to chew on in March 2012, relocating LCCs, chartered and non-connecting flights to the facility. While easing congestion at Suvarnabhumi by removing six million passengers a year, the reopening effectively cancelled the single airport policy, a move slammed by Star Alliance and Oneworld. There are plans now to more than double capacity to 30 million a year.

# Game changers | airports

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## Phuket International Airport Terminal X

Terminal X opened at Phuket International Airport in February, instantly easing horrendous check-in queues at the overcrowded and ageing airfield. The new terminal services check-ins for international charter flights, a key source of visitors especially from China and Russia, and is the first phase of a US\$180 million expansion which will also see new international and cargo terminals and a five-storey parking next year.

– *Greg Lowe*

### Statistics

#### Airports with paved runways

1984: 56  
2014: 63

#### Airports with runways longer than 2,440m

1984: 13  
2014: 20

#### International airports with scheduled flights

1984: 1  
2014: 9

Source: CIA World Factbook; Lonely Planet



Changi Airport Group

## SINGAPORE

### Skytrain service at Singapore Changi Airport

Opened in 1990, the Skytrain was the first auto-guided system in Asia. It now interlinks all three terminals at Singapore Changi Airport, and operates at both transit and public areas. This service is free and travels approximately one to four minutes between terminals, with an average waiting time of one to three minutes.

### First A380 in Singapore

Singapore Changi Airport was the first airport outside Europe to welcome the A380 on November 11, 2005 when the super jumbo double-decker aircraft arrived for airport compatibility verification tests. The world's first A380 passenger flight took off from the airport as Singapore Airlines flight SQ380 departing from Terminal 2 for Sydney, Australia on October 25, 2007.

### Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 4

Taking over the grounds of the short-lived Budget Terminal which opened in 2006 and closed in 2012, Terminal 4 is expected to finish construction by 2017. It will be able to facilitate faster passenger processing and quicker turnarounds. It will also feature a larger terminal building, with the capacity for 16 million passengers a year. In comparison, the budget terminal catered to 4.6 million passengers in 2011.

### Changi Airport Growth Initiative

The Changi Airport Growth Initiative (CAGi) was launched in November 2009 to address challenges



stakeholders face by offering a customised mix of performance-based incentives. These include encouraging airlines to enhance the airport's connectivity by starting new routes; helping new airlines to start operations at the airport; rewarding passenger and cargo traffic growth; and supporting airlines and groundhandlers to enhance their product and service offerings.

Singapore Changi Airport signed its first CAGi partnership with Jetstar Asia in January 2010, which saw Jetstar making the airport its largest hub in Asia for both short- and long-haul operations. – *Paige Lee Pei Qi*

### Statistics

#### Total number of air passenger arrivals

2000: 13.5 million  
2013: 26.5 million

#### Total number of aircraft arrivals

2000: 86,853  
2013: 171,850

#### Number of airlines serving Changi Airport

1990: 52  
2014: 106

Source: Changi Airport Group

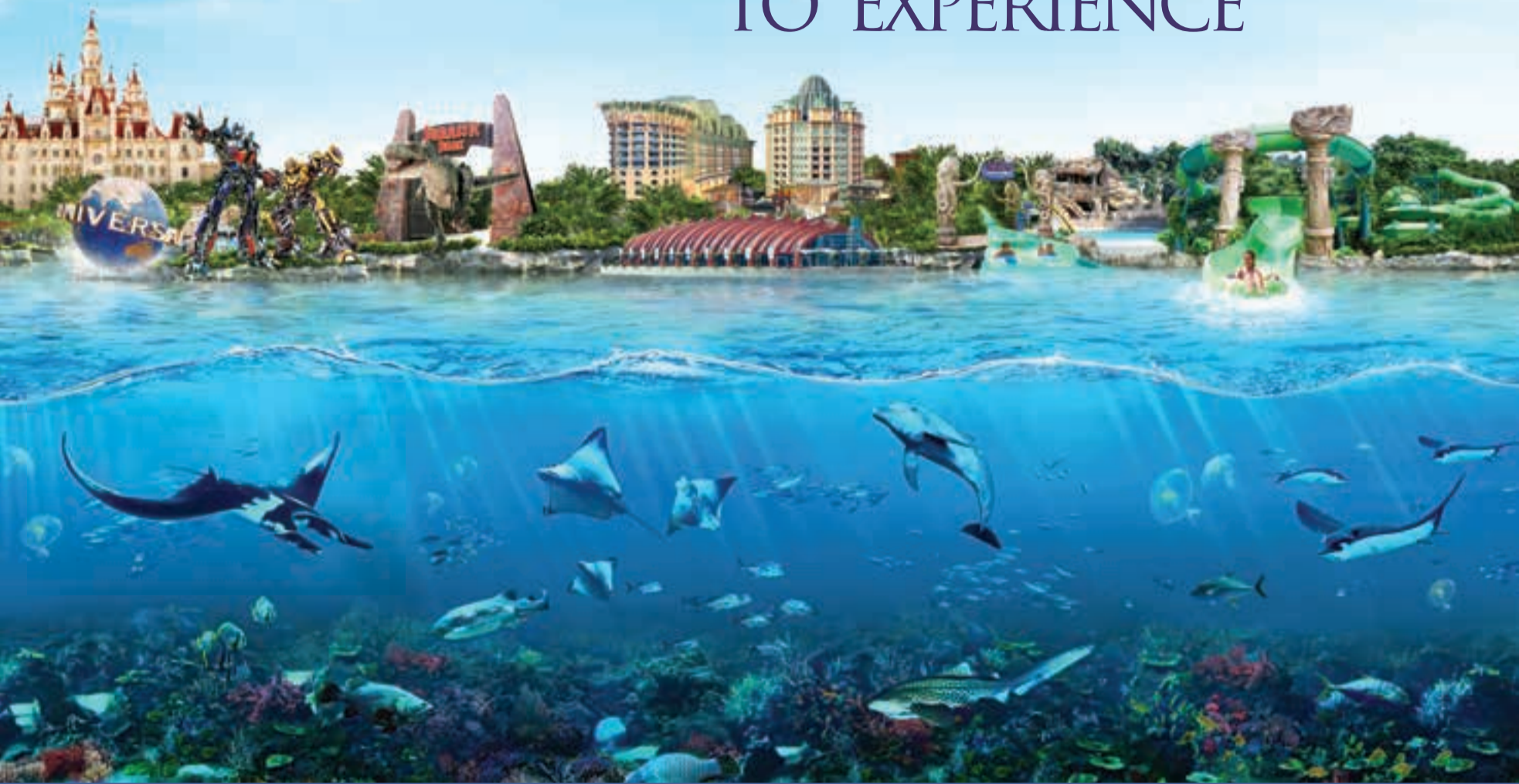
Top, Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 3; above Skytrain; below, Airbus A380 in Singapore



Singapore Airlines



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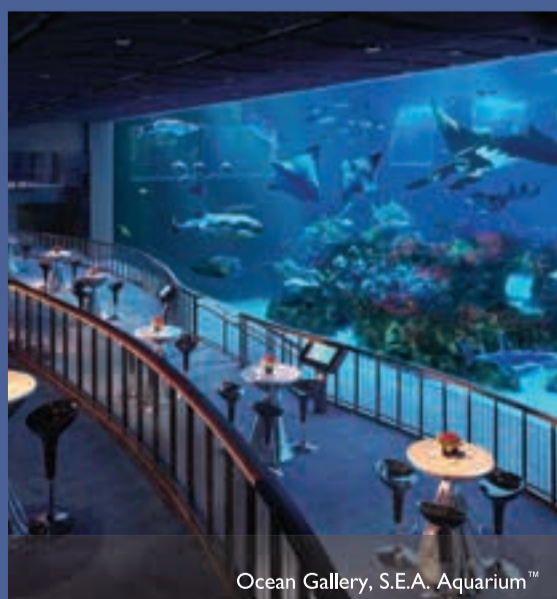
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## GAME CHANGERS

# PRODUCTS

Over the decades, Asian destinations transformed their tourism fortunes through massive investments in product. Here are among the key attractions that helped change the game for them



Above, the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai; below, Hong Kong Disneyland

## CHINA

### Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

The hosting of the Summer Olympic Games in the capital created an improved environment, increased opportunities for the development and growth of tourism in China, and raised service quality.

The games also helped to internationalise the city and benchmarked hospitality and service guidelines and standards across the city.

### World Expo 2010 Shanghai

The May to October event attracted more than 73 million visitors and boosted Shanghai's status as a popular tourist destination, burgeoning international financial centre and the next great world city.

To support the hosting of the event, six new metro lines were opened, roads were widened and 4,000 taxis were added. A new section of the main Middle Ring Road was constructed, cutting travel time to and from Shanghai Pudong International Airport by 20 minutes.

### High-speed rail in East China

China invested heavily to upgrade



the country's transport infrastructure, notably the high-speed rail, which has boosted tourism across East China.

Tourists can now make easy roundtrips and have the opportunity to see more of the country. Rail travel time between Shanghai and Hangzhou has been cut to 45 minutes, while travel from Shanghai to Beijing only takes five hours.

## HONG KONG

### Ocean Park

Opened in 1977, this attraction was originally intended as another outdoor activity option for local families. Now an iconic landmark drawing over five million visitors each year, its highlights include the popular pandas, a marine park, a fabulous oceanarium, an animal theme park

and an amusement park with high-end thrill rides.

### Lantau Link

The Lantau Link officially opened in 1997, a vital connection in the transport network comprising Tsing Ma Bridge, Kap Shui Mun Bridge and Ma Wan Viaduct, and serving Hong Kong International Airport. This unprecedented new infrastructure linked Lantau to the rest of Hong Kong by road and rail, ending the island's years of isolation. It also opened up new tourism opportunities for the island, with the subsequent opening of attractions like Hong Kong Disneyland (see below) and Ngong Ping 360.

### Hong Kong Disneyland

Though known as the world's smallest Disneyland, when it opened in 2005, this theme park helped enhance the overall appeal of the destination. Located on Lantau Island, it is equipped with the purpose-built Disneyland Resort Line connecting Sunny Bay Station along the existing MTR Tung Chung Line. Its entry prompted dormant rival Ocean Park to reinvent itself in response to the competition.

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# Game changers | products



The Parthenon Pool on SuperStar Virgo

## Kai Tak Cruise Terminal

A lack of modern berthing facilities for large cruise ships had hindered the city's dream to be a regional cruise hub. The birth of Kai Tak Cruise Terminal finally unleashed the potential. Located at the former Kai Tak airport runway, the first berth of the terminal started to receive cruise ships in June 2013. Construction of the second berth is expected to be completed later this year. When fully opened, the terminal will be able to accommodate the largest cruise ships in the world and draw more international cruise lines to homeport at Hong Kong.

## Star Cruises sails into Asia

A pioneer in its own right, Genting Hong Kong was incorporated in September 1993 operating its fleet under Star Cruises and taking on the bold initiative to grow the Asia-Pacific region as an international cruise destination. The novel experience of cruising as an all-inclusive vacation on a 'floating five-star resort' appealed to Asians, defying skeptics who thought otherwise. Today, Star Cruises together with its Norwegian Cruise Line is the third largest cruise operator in the world, with a combined fleet of 19 ships cruising to over 200 destinations. Passengers in Asia can embark on the ships in Hong Kong, Malaysia, China, Taiwan or Singapore. – *Prudence Lui*

## INDIA

### Appu Ghar

India's first amusement park, Appu Ghar in New Delhi, was inaugurated in 1984. Hugely popular among youngsters, it housed 20 rides and a water park on its premises. It received an average of 1.4 million visitors annually and operated for over two decades before ceasing operations.

### Palace on Wheels

Opened in 1982, Palace on Wheels

is a luxury tourist train showcasing the aesthetics of the royal past. Its 14 coaches are named after former Rajput states and offer modern amenities. There are two restaurants, Maharaja and Maharani, which serve Indian, Chinese and Continental delicacies.

### Chokhi Dhani

Located in the pink city of Jaipur, Chokhi Dhani came into existence in 1989 replicating an ethnic Rajasthani village. It includes the Chokhi Dhani Village where one can indulge in local dance, music, shopping and cuisine, as well as Dhani Resort, which is a blend of modern and ethnic property.

### Adlabs Imagica

Adlabs Imagica opened in 2013 around 75km away from Mumbai. A major investment built using world-class technology, the theme park is divided into six zones, namely Viva Europa, Arabia, Asiana, Americana, India and Zambo Africa, each having its own attractions and restaurants. There are a total of 26 attractions and five themed restaurants. – *Rohit Kaul*

## INDONESIA

### Nusa Dua Tourism Resort

Nusa Dua Tourism Resort, a self-contained tourism enclave in the southern part of Bali, kicked off with the opening of Nusa Dua Beach Hotel & Spa in 1983. The development was designed to meet increasing visitor numbers and demand for high-quality rooms. The resort is close to the airport and offers beautiful white sand beaches. Today, Nusa Dua is Bali's top venue for important international conventions with two major convention centres within the area – Bali International Convention Centre and Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center – and major international hotel brands such as Grand Hyatt, Westin, Novotel, Melia and St Regis.



Nusa Dua Beach Hotel & Spa

### Senggigi Beach Hotel

Senggigi Beach Hotel Lombok, recently rebranded as Kila Senggigi Beach Lombok, was the first international-standard hotel on the island when it opened in 1987. The 57-room hotel (now 148 rooms) opened with the attendance of high-ranking dignitaries, marking the first step towards developing Lombok as a tourist destination. Merely 20 minutes' flight from Bali, Lombok was at the time promoted in tandem with its famous neighbour and received spillover traffic from it. Today, with the Lombok International Airport, it plays a bigger role as the tourism gateway to east Indonesia. A massive integrated resort is being built while several other developments are opening their doors to domestic and international investments.

### Jakarta's MICE developments

In 1992, the 32,000m<sup>2</sup> Jakarta Fairgrounds Kemayoran Centre (now rebranded Jakarta International Expo) opened as the biggest international-standard venue in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the existing Jakarta Hilton Convention Center

expanded its plenary hall capacity from 4,000 to 5,000 seats, and added two new exhibition halls, breakout rooms and a tunnel connecting the centre to the Jakarta Hilton Hotel (now The Sultan Hotel). The expansion was completed in time for the Non-Alignment Movement Summit, one of the biggest if not highest-profile events Jakarta has ever hosted.

### Bali Mandara Toll Road

The 12.7km Bali Mandara Toll Road connecting Nusa Dua, I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport and Benoa Harbour opened in September 2013, marking Indonesia's first toll causeway bridge. The road was built over the Benoa Bay, and the mangrove forests provide a panoramic view of the surroundings. A major investment, it connects the airport, Nusa Dua and Benoa, whose main port is undergoing development to accommodate big cruise ships. The toll road has reduced congestion on the Ngurah Rai bypass, which connects the north and south of the airport. – *Mimi Hudoyo*

## MACAU

### Gaming industry liberalised

The gaming industry in the former Portuguese enclave was liberalised in 2002/03. This was followed by the opening of the China market through the Individual Visit Scheme.

### World Heritage status earned

In 2005, Macau was awarded the UNESCO World Heritage status, changing the perception of the destination as only a gaming centre.

### The Venetian Macao and Cotai Strip Resorts Macao

Macao welcomed the entry of major international hotel brands, including the 3,000-room The Venetian Macao which opened in August 2007. The largest hotel in Macao today is Sheraton Macao Hotel, Cotai Central, which opened in September 2012 with 3,896 rooms. Both are part of the Cotai Strip Resorts Macao, which opened in 2011, boasting collectively 9,000 rooms, 600 duty-free retail shops, over 100 dining options, 120,000m<sup>2</sup> of meeting space and international live entertainment.

### The House of Dancing Water

Costing US\$250 million to produce, the world's largest and most spectacular water-based show premiered in September 2010 in the city. The world-class show is inspired by Chinese culture and tells an epic love story. – *As told to Caroline Boey by Sheraton Macao Hotel, Cotai Central – general manager of sales and marketing, Ruth Boston*

## MALAYSIA

### Sarawak Cultural Village

Sarawak Cultural Village, located at the foot of Santubong Mountain, about 35km from capital Kuching, opened in 1989. It offers visitors a better understanding of the cultures and lifestyles of the major racial groups in Sarawak. There are displays of costumes, handicraft and traditional dwellings of the state's major ethnic communities, with a twice-daily cultural performance. This is also the venue for the renowned annual Rainforest World Music Festival organised by Sarawak Tourism Board.

### Sunway Resort City

An old tin mine and quarry in Selangor was developed into a major tour-



Above, the lagoon at The Venetian Macao; below, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre

ist area, Sunway Resort City. Within it, theme park Sunway Lagoon opened in 1993 and till today is still the largest in Selangor with more than 80 rides and attractions. It also houses the world's largest man-made surf beach and one of the world's longest pedestrian suspension bridges. By 1Q15, it will welcome Nickelodeon Explorers' Oasis, the first Nickelodeon themed-based attraction in Asia.

Within walking distance from the park is Sunway Pyramid shopping mall, which opened in 1997 with 890 outlets, as well as the Sunway Pyramid Hotel and Sunway Resort Hotel and Spa, offering a total of 1,234 guestrooms.

### Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre is Malaysia's first purpose-built and most technologically advanced MICE facility in the heart of Kuala Lumpur city. The centre opened with the 1,537-delegate 10<sup>th</sup> Asia Oil and Gas Conference in June 2005. To date, it has hosted over 8,590 events and 15.9 million delegates and visitors. Its suc-



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\*TTG Travel Awards "Best Cruise Operator in the Asia Pacific" Winner (1997 – 2008)

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# Game changers | products

cess can be attributed to the continued delivery of innovative, flexible and value-added solutions for international, regional and local business tourism, banqueting and entertainment events.

## Johor Premium Outlets

The first premium outlet centre in South-east Asia, Johor Premium Outlets (JPO), has been a shoppers' haven since it opened in December 2011. Featuring a collection of 130 brand outlets, JPO claims to offer savings of 25 to 65 per cent. On the list of leading brands are Armani, Burberry, Canali, Coach, Esprit, Ermenegildo Zegna, Gap, Guess, Lacoste, Michael Kors, Nike, Orotton, Royal Selangor, Salvatore Ferragamo, and many others. Since its opening, JPO has played a role in attracting both domestic and regional shoppers, including from India, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, to Johor. – *S Puvaneswary*

## THAILAND

### Damnoen Saduak floating market

Anyone who has seen the 1974 James Bond classic, *The Man with the Golden Gun*, will find it impossible to forget the hair-raising boat race through Damnoen Saduak floating market. Tourism Association of Thailand certainly didn't and the NTO was quick to promote the destination as an essential element on bucket-list tours of Bangkok and its environs. Today, the market is for tourists only, with goods costing more than almost anywhere else, and few Thai people are to be seen, save for the scores of tour guides, taxi drivers and vendors.

### Skytrain and MRT

Bangkok continues to lead numerous polls as the favourite urban destination for globetrotters with its diverse array of cultural sites, awesome restaurants and decadent nightspots. But it has always suffered from horrendous traffic, something which the Skytrain, launched in 1999, literally rises above. The network now covers much more of the city and has been augmented by the MRT metro system which opened in 2004.

### Chiang Mai Zoo

When Chiang Mai Zoo was renovated and reopened in the ancient Lanna capital in 2004, it gave the local tourism industry a shot in the arm by being one of the few modern attractions in a city made famous by its plethora of wooden temples and gilded wats. The zoo is home to some 400 species of exotic animals. The 2009 birth of Lin Bing, a captive-bred panda cub, parented by Lin Hui and Chiang Chiang, further added to the attraction's appeal.

### Siam Paragon

Siam Paragon opened in 2005, adding some 400,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail space to Bangkok. While it has since been joined by other high-end malls in



From top: Damnoen Saduak floating market; Siam Paragon and the Banaue rice terraces

the city, it remains the most popular and best connected to the transport system. Beyond myriad luxury boutiques, supercar outlets, which include Rolls-Royce's first-ever sales space in a shopping centre, the retail mecca includes Siam Ocean World, one of the region's largest aquariums. It is especially popular with monied fashion junkies from Hong Kong, Singapore, India, China and the Middle East. In 2013, it was named the most Instagrammed place in the world. – *Greg Lowe*

## THE PHILIPPINES

### Banaue rice terraces

The Banaue rice terraces in the Cordillera regions of northern Luzon, sculpted into the mountainous terrain by Ifugao tribespeople over 2,000 years ago, are a well-documented, highly photographed destination since the '70s, which for some time gave the attraction the title of 'Eighth Wonder of the World'. To this day, it is included in most long-stay itineraries for visitors seeking a unique highlands experience.

### Boracay

Boracay, a tiny undisturbed islet on the northern tip of Aklan in western Visayas, was a virgin beach destination known only to locals and backpackers in the '70s and '80s. By the early '90s, it became world-famous for its powdery white sand, the vibrant nightlife on its well-known White Beach and a wide range of resorts just steps away from the ocean.

### Donsol, Sorsogon

From November to June, the placid waters of Donsol in Sorsogon,



Resorts World Sentosa; below, Kai Kai, the male panda at the Singapore River Safari

southern Luzon, are home to the butanding, an endangered species of whale shark (*Rhincodon Typus*) measuring between 4m and 12m long, and in fact is the world's largest fish. For about 10 years now, visitors usually fly into Naga or Legazpi City and drive south two to three hours to interact with this gentle species.

**Puerto Princesa Underground River**

In 2012, a global poll from the *New7Wonders of Nature* campaign named the 8.2km underground river cave and habitat of unique biodiversity, Puerto Princesa Underground River, as one of the new seven wonders. The recognition coincided with the launch of the Department of Tourism's brand campaign, *It's More Fun in the Philippines*, which went viral on Twitter and Facebook, and cemented tourism recall for the country and Puerto Princesa. – *Marianne Carandang*

New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival, while Little India showcases the colourful Deepavali and Pongal.

**Mandai nature cluster**

Outstanding nature-themed attractions Jurong Bird Park, Singapore Zoo, Night Safari and the latest River Safari in the city's western area offer visitors a different experience and reinforces Singapore's 'City in A Garden' appeal. Singapore Zoo opened in 1971 and is the first zoo in the world to create free-ranging areas for animals, while the Night Safari, which opened in 1994, is the world's first safari for nocturnal animals.

**Formula One**

Since its debut in 2008, the Formula One (F1) race has generated significant visitor arrivals and tourism receipts for Singapore. The broadcast coverage reaching more than 43 million international viewers over the last five races has also cast the

global spotlight on the city. The first night and street F1 race in Asia showcases the dazzling downtown cityscape and profiles the city-state as a beautiful, vibrant and attractive destination. Complementing the race are premium lifestyle events, dance parties and music performances which has included international artistes such as Beyonce, Katy Perry and Rihanna.

**Integrated resorts**

Singapore joined the ranks of other cities such as Macau and Las Vegas when Resorts World Sentosa officially opened the nation's first casino in 2010. Shortly after, Marina Bay Sands opened with the city's second casino. Apart from gaming facilities, both resorts have also added a wide array of attractions to the local tourism landscape, such as the Skypark, Universal Studios Singapore, celebrity chef restaurants and museums, as well as 33,500m<sup>2</sup> of MICE space and over 4,000 hotel rooms. – *Paige Lee Pei Qi*



**SINGAPORE**

**Chinatown and Little India cultural precincts**

As Singapore developed, there was a need to balance urban development with heritage preservation. The Singapore Tourism Board, together with other government agencies, embarked on various initiatives to conserve ethnic enclaves including Chinatown and Little India. Today, these two precincts are among the top free-access attractions visited by tourists, and serve as important nodes to experience and celebrate Singapore's unique multicultural heritage. Chinatown plays host to key Chinese festivals such as Chinese



**Best Western Brings Cambodia's first Hammam to Phnom Penh**

*By Glenn de Souza*  
Best Western International's  
Vice President International  
Operations - Asia & the Middle East

Best Western International is inviting guests to relax and unwind in its spa, which has opened as part of the new BEST WESTERN River Palace Hotel in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The new wellness facility features a range of amenities to soothe the body and soul, including hot and cold jacuzzis, a steam bath, fitness center and the only Turkish hammam in Cambodia. Dating back thousands of years, the Turkish hammam is an integral part of Middle Eastern and North African culture, offering a serene cleansing experience. Best Western is now inviting our guests in Phnom Penh to experience this age-old tradition, which is the perfect way to relax after a busy day exploring this bustling, exciting city. Guests have a variety of options to revitalize their bodies, including traditional Asian massages, full-body treatments, scrubs, facials and water therapies.

We are confident that the exquisite and extensive spa at BEST WESTERN River Palace Hotel will provide a welcome addition for our guests, and set us apart as a unique proposition on the Phnom Penh hotel scene.



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# Infographics



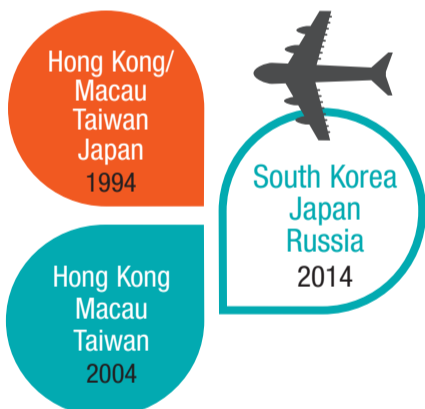
## CHINA

By Caroline Boey

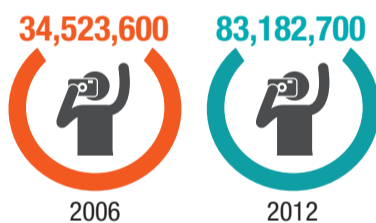


Source: All from College of Innovation, Thammasat University, Thailand c/o John Koldowski unless otherwise stated

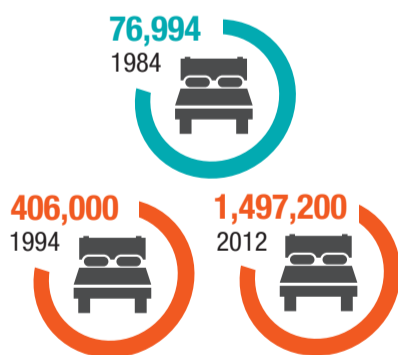
### TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



### NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS



### NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS



Source: Horwath International

### NTO CHIEFS

**2004:** He Guangwei  
**2014:** Shao Qiwei



### AOR

Source: Horwath International



### ADR

Source: Horwath International



### LEST WE FORGET

#### 1989 – TIANANMEN PROTESTS

On June 4, Chinese troops opened fire on unarmed civilians in the heart of Beijing, shocking the world.

#### 2002/2003 – SARS OUTBREAK

The outbreak in southern China resulted in thousands afflicted. The majority of cases were reported in Hong Kong, but the disease spread to infect people in 37 countries.

#### 2008 – SICHUAN EARTHQUAKE

The epicentre was in Wenchuan County, 80km northwest of Chengdu. The catastrophe killed 69,195 people and left 18,392 missing.





# Uzbekistan - Another Asia

**In 2011 the National Company “Uzbektourism” has initiated wide-ranging project “Mega-Info-Tour” for Representatives of Travel sphere and Mass Media. The project is held till 2015 and for the specialists in tourism it’s a great opportunity to assess service level and tourist potential of the country.**



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We offer you to visit Samarkand and Bukhara, the pearls of Central Asia, places of pilgrimage, culture and history of the ancient East within the scope of Mega-Info-Tour.

**Bukhara** is a historical, cultural and tourist center. According to the 10th century historian Narshakhi it is 3000 years old. During times of Alexander the Great, Bukhara had been already a great town with developed town building.

Bukhara is known as a stronghold of Islam, after the spread of the religion construction of Madrasah and mosques began in the town, grandeur and beauty of which amaze up to date. It is the place where sacred kubba of Hazrat Bahauddin Nakshbandi situated; the place of pilgrims from many countries, and around the city formed a circle of Seven Sacred Sufis of Bukhara-mausoleum of outstanding Sufis of the Naqshbandi order.

In ancient times **Samarkand** was known as Marakanda – the capital of Sogdiana. The official age of the city is more than 2700 years but by the times of Alexander the Great conquests, the city had already been a well reinforced and rich settlement, thus, the city is much older.

One of the most important geographical key points on the Great Silk Road is Samarkand which has taken in many cultures, customs and arts, brought together the most outstanding masters of the middle ages, and all these have been transformed into amazing beauty sights of Samarkand, which still have been being kept admiring by the descendants.

Fam-trip program is interesting and various; you'll travel with a guide, who will acquaint you with the historical heritage of the country; visit master classes, which are very popular among guests, such as silk factory, ceramics making in the homes of hereditary ceramists, Bukhara Pilaff cooking; rate the real national cuisine; make a large map of interesting places for tour-itinerary; personally acquainted with craftsmen and artists, many of these names are widely known in the world.



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# Infographics



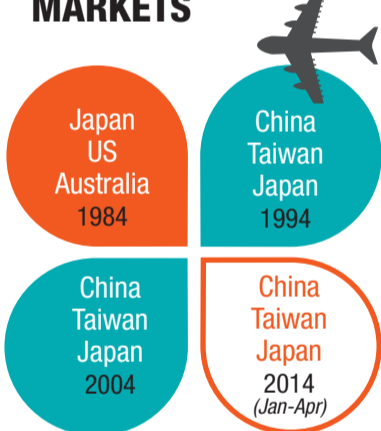
## HONG KONG

By Prudence Lui

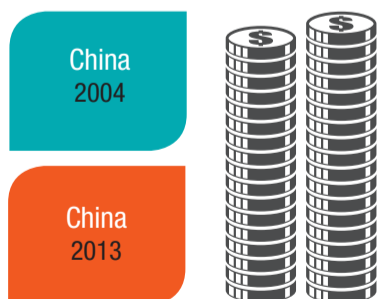


Source: All Hong Kong Tourism Board unless otherwise stated

### TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



### BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)

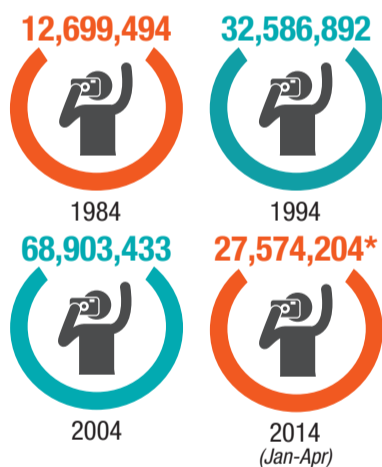


### DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN

1995: Wonders Never Cease  
2004: Live it, Love it!  
2014: Asia's World City



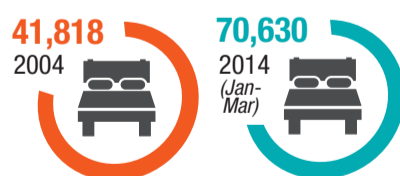
### NO. OF HONG KONG RESIDENT DEPARTURES



\*By control points. Previous calculations were done based on the destinations Hong Kongers travelled to.

Source: Census and Statistics Department

### NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS



### NTO CHIEFS

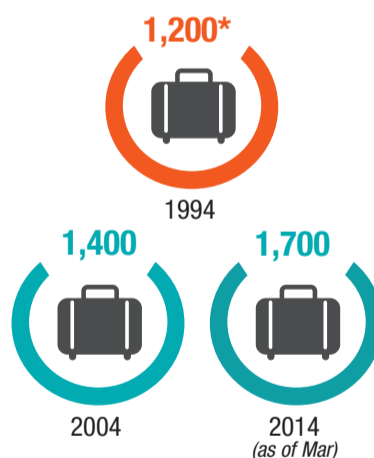
1984: HMP Miles  
1994: Martin Gilbert Barrow  
2004: Selina Chow  
2014: Peter Lam

### TOURISM MINISTERS

2004: Eva Cheng  
2014: Yung Wai-hung, Philip



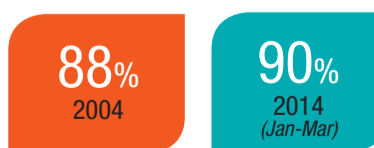
### NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



\*The 1994 figure includes only licensed outbound travel agencies. Inbound agencies have only been licensed since November 2002, so are included in the 2004 and 2014 figures.

Source: Tourism Commission

### AOR



### ARR



### LEST WE FORGET

#### 1997/1998 – ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS

This crisis dealt a long-term economic blow, causing property prices to collapse and dampening inbound and outbound travel.

#### 1998 – CHAOTIC TRANSITION TO NEW AIRPORT LOCATION

The hasty overnight move from Kai Tak to Hong Kong International Airport at Chek Lap Kok on July 6 resulted in computer system failure on the first day of operation, stalling flight information and affecting baggage and cargo handling.

#### 2002/2003 – SARS OUTBREAK

The pandemic prompted the World Health Organization to issue a travel advisory in April against Hong Kong and Guangdong.

#### 2010 – TOUR GUIDE 'AH ZHEN' SAGA

The infamous guide tarnished the city's image when she verbally abused and forced Chinese groups to shop. This led Travel Industry Council (TIC) to unveil 10 measures against such malpractice. TIC will be replaced by an independent statutory body, Travel Industry Authority, come 2015/2016.

# TRAVELRAVE 2014



Tourism in Asia is booming with opportunities and challenges. In anticipation of TravelRave 2014, discussions on the future of the industry have already started. During a recent media roundtable organised by the Singapore Tourism Board, tourism leaders provided insight into “Developing Human Capital & Talent Management” in Asia.

“As key players of the travel and tourism industry, we need to focus on professionalising the industry as a whole. At the end of the day, we need to have a hard think about how we are appealing to the millennial generation.”

*- Ms. Neeta Lachmandas, Assistant Chief Executive, Singapore Tourism Board*

“Let the young people come in and decide where they can make the change. Eight million jobs are waiting for them in the industry.”

*- Janet Tan Collis, President, Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers & Chief Executive Officer, East West Planners*

“The strongest link within the organisation to retain talent is the middle management. Middle managers play an important role in creating an environment to encourage retention.”

*- Margaret Heng, Executive Director, Singapore Hotel Association & Chief Executive, SHATEC*

“Veteran industry leaders need to change their current mindsets by rethinking the way they operate to attract younger employees. They need to place themselves in the younger generation’s shoes and “break” the old system that has been in place for many years.”

*- Marc Dardenne, Chief Executive Officer, Patina Hotels and Resorts*

The best travel minds will convene and collaborate at TravelRave 2014, held in Singapore between 27 to 31 October. Through conferences such as AIPC Asia Summit and Hotel Management Singapore Summit, issues on human capital will be discussed extensively, while The Future Leaders programme will focus on cultivating tomorrow’s industry leaders.

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Find out more at [TravelRave.sg](http://TravelRave.sg)  
Scan for more insights into the Asian travel & tourism industry.

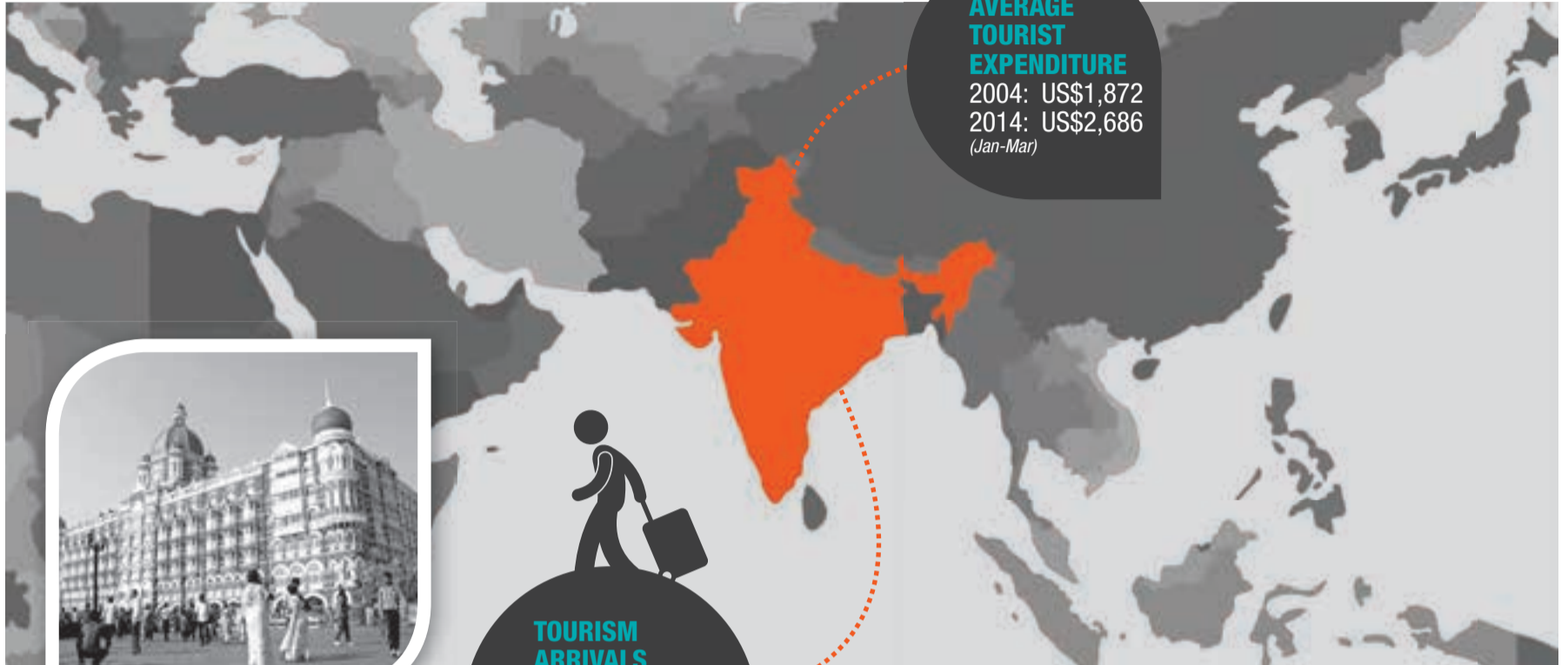
Events partners



# Infographics

## INDIA

By Shekhar Niyogi

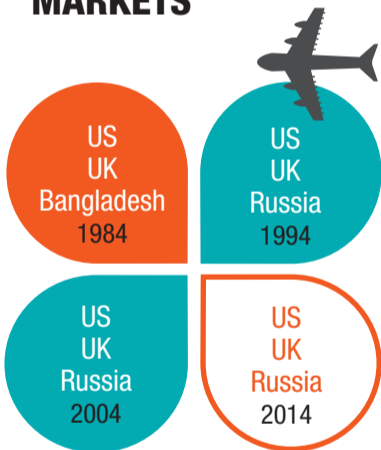


**AVERAGE TOURIST EXPENDITURE**  
 2004: US\$1,872  
 2014: US\$2,686  
 (Jan-Mar)

**TOURISM ARRIVALS**  
 1984: 1,193,752  
 1994: 1,886,433  
 2004: 3,457,477  
 2014: 1,761,848  
 (Jan-Mar)

Source: All Ministry of Tourism unless otherwise stated. Arrival and departure figures are with help from WTTC, UNWTO and World Bank

### TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



### BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)



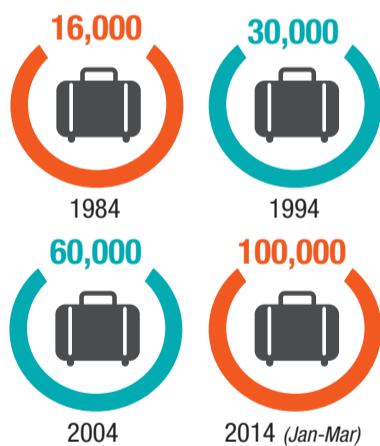
### NTO CHIEFS

1994: GR Kathpalia  
 2004: AK Misra  
 2014: Parvez Dewan

### TOURISM MINISTERS

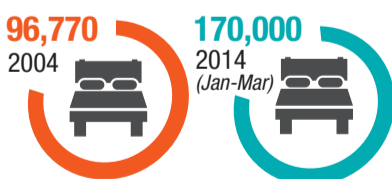
1984: Ashok Gehlot  
 1994: J Geeta Reddy  
 2004: Kurupassery Varkey  
 Thomas  
 2014: Sripad Yesso Naik

### NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



Source: Travel Agents Association of India and IATA Agents Association of India

### NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS



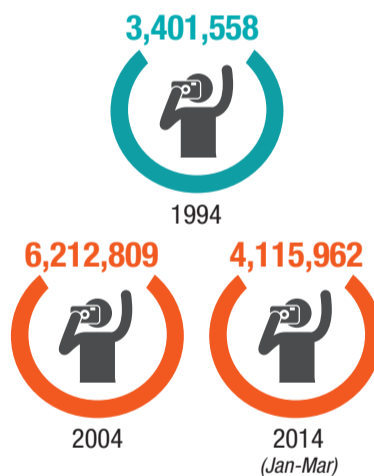
Source: Hotels and Restaurants Association of India (HRAI)

### DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN

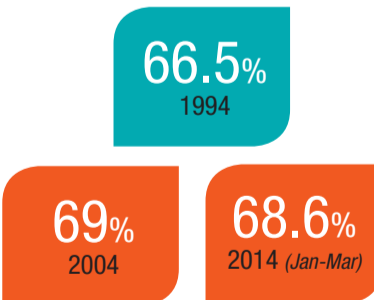
2004/2014: Incredible India!

**Incredible India**

### NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS

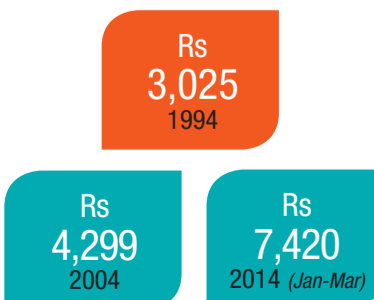


### AOR



Source: HRAI

### ARR



Source: HRAI

### LEST WE FORGET

#### 2004 – INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI

On December 26, the tsunami wreaked unprecedented devastation in many coastal areas of mainland India and Andaman and Nicobar islands, killing 10,776 and resulting in 5,640 missing.

#### 2008 – MUMBAI TERRORIST ATTACK

On November 26, terrorist attack and bomb blasts in Mumbai on Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, Trident Hotel and the Victoria Terminus Rail station killed 166 people, of which 38 were foreigners, and wounded 293.

#### 2008/2009 – EUROPE DEBT CRISIS

The economic meltdown reduced buying power, affecting tourism from prime source markets in western and southern Europe.

#### 2012 – NEW DELHI RAPE CASE

In December, the highly publicised gang rape and resulting death of a young woman shocked the world. This as well as other instances of rape involving tourists brought security concerns to the forefront, discouraging solo women travellers to India in the last year and a half.

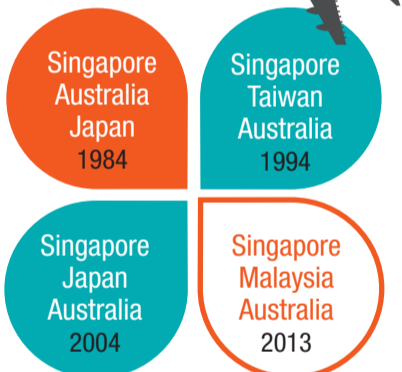
# INDONESIA

By Mimi Hudoyo

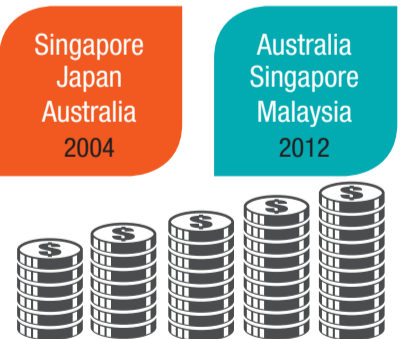


Source: All Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy unless otherwise stated

## TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



## BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)

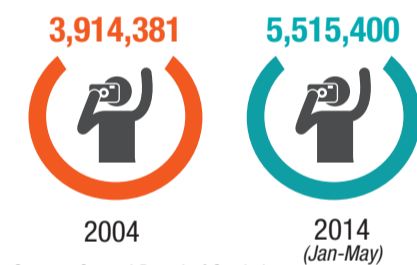


## DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN

- 1994: Indonesia, A World All Its Own
- 2004: Indonesia Ultimate in Diversity
- 2014: Wonderful Indonesia

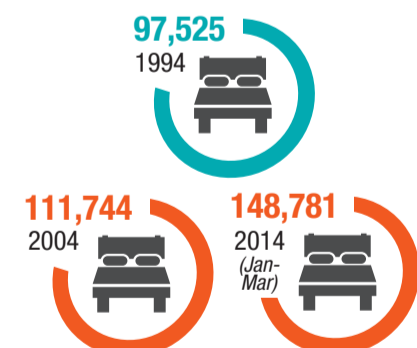


## NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS



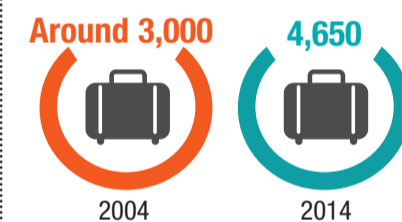
Source: Central Board of Statistics

## NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS (STAR-RATED)



Source: STR Global

## NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES (ASITA\* MEMBERS)



Source: Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA)

## AOR



Source: STR Global

## ARR



Source: STR Global

## LEST WE FORGET

### 1997 – THE ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS 1998 – THE INDONESIAN SOCIAL CRISIS

The economic crisis caused the exchange rate to plunge from Rp2,600 per US dollar mid-1997 to Rp14,000 in January 1998. Subsequently, it led to widespread social unrest and the fall of Soeharto's 33-year-old government. Airlines cut flights, arrivals dipped, a number of hotel constructions stopped, some travel agencies went out of business and travel advisories were issued against Indonesia, except Bali.

### 2002/2005 – BALI BOMBINGS

Relying heavily on Bali for tourism in the wake of the economic and social crises, the country suffered a new setback from the bombings in Bali. The 2002 bombing caused average daily arrivals to the island to drop from over 5,000 to around 1,000 (October 2002). Some hotels and travel companies shuttered, and travel warnings were issued against Indonesia, including Bali. Then, just as the situation was starting to recover with tourists returning, the second bombing took place in 2005.

## NTO CHIEFS



- 1984: Joop Ave
- 1994: Andi Mappi Sammeng
- 2004: Udin Saifuddin
- 2014: Esthy Reko Astuti

## TOURISM MINISTERS

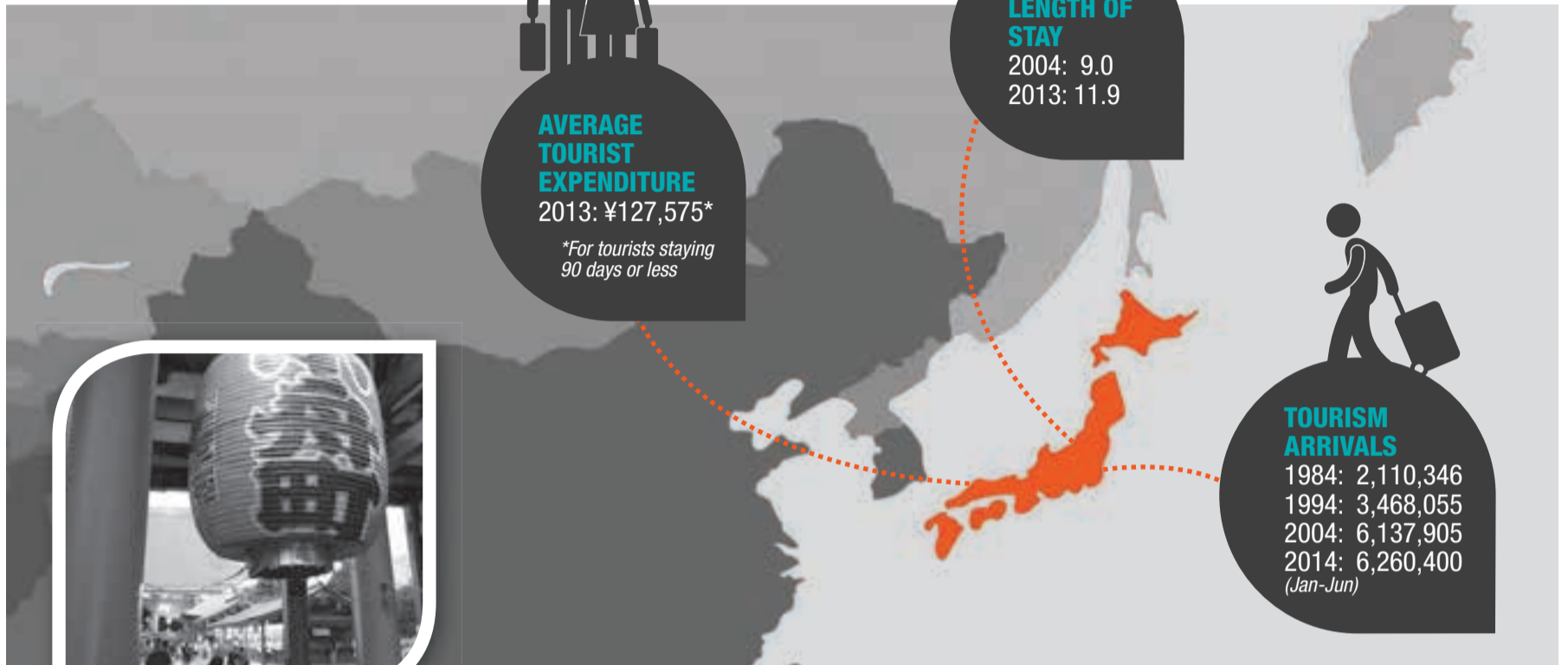
- 1984: Achmad Tahir
- 1994: Joop Ave
- 2004: I Gede Ardika & Jero Wacik
- 2014: Mari Elka Pangestu



# Infographics

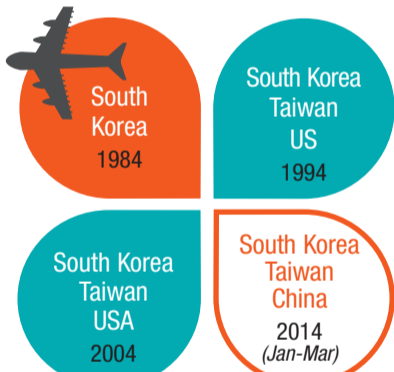
## JAPAN

By Hannah Koh

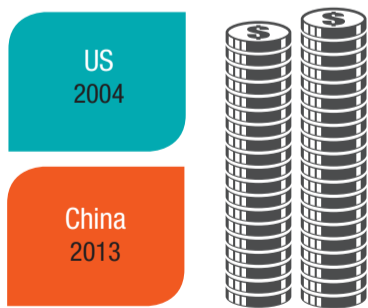


Source: All from Japan National Tourism Organization Singapore and 2013 figures from Japan Tourism Agency unless otherwise stated

### TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



### BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)



### DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN



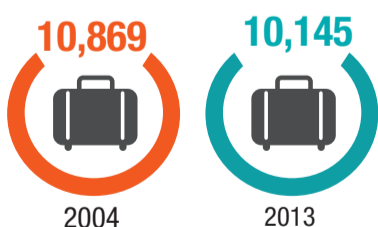
2004: Yokoso Japan  
2014: Japan. Endless Discovery



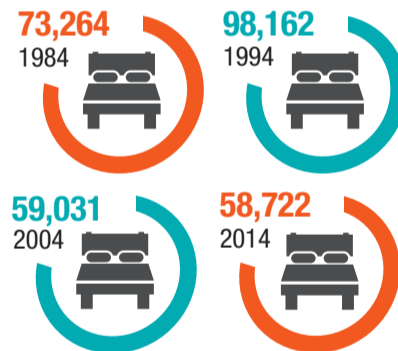
### NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS



### NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



### NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS (JHA MEMBERS)



Source: Japan Hotel Association (JHA)

### NTO CHIEFS

2004: Nakamura Minoru  
2014: Matsuyama Ryoichi



### TOURISM MINISTERS

1984: Kawamoto Kakuzo  
1994: Sukanuma Motoharu  
2004: Ishihara Nobuteru  
2014: Kubo Shigeto

### LEST WE FORGET

#### 1985 - PLAZA ACCORD

The Plaza Accord caused the Japanese yen to appreciate 46 per cent against the dollar. As a result, Japan's export and GDP growth essentially halted in the first half of 1986, according to the IMF.

#### 2002/2003 - SARS

The outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) slowed international arrivals growth, especially with the World Health Organization issuing an emergency travel advisory.

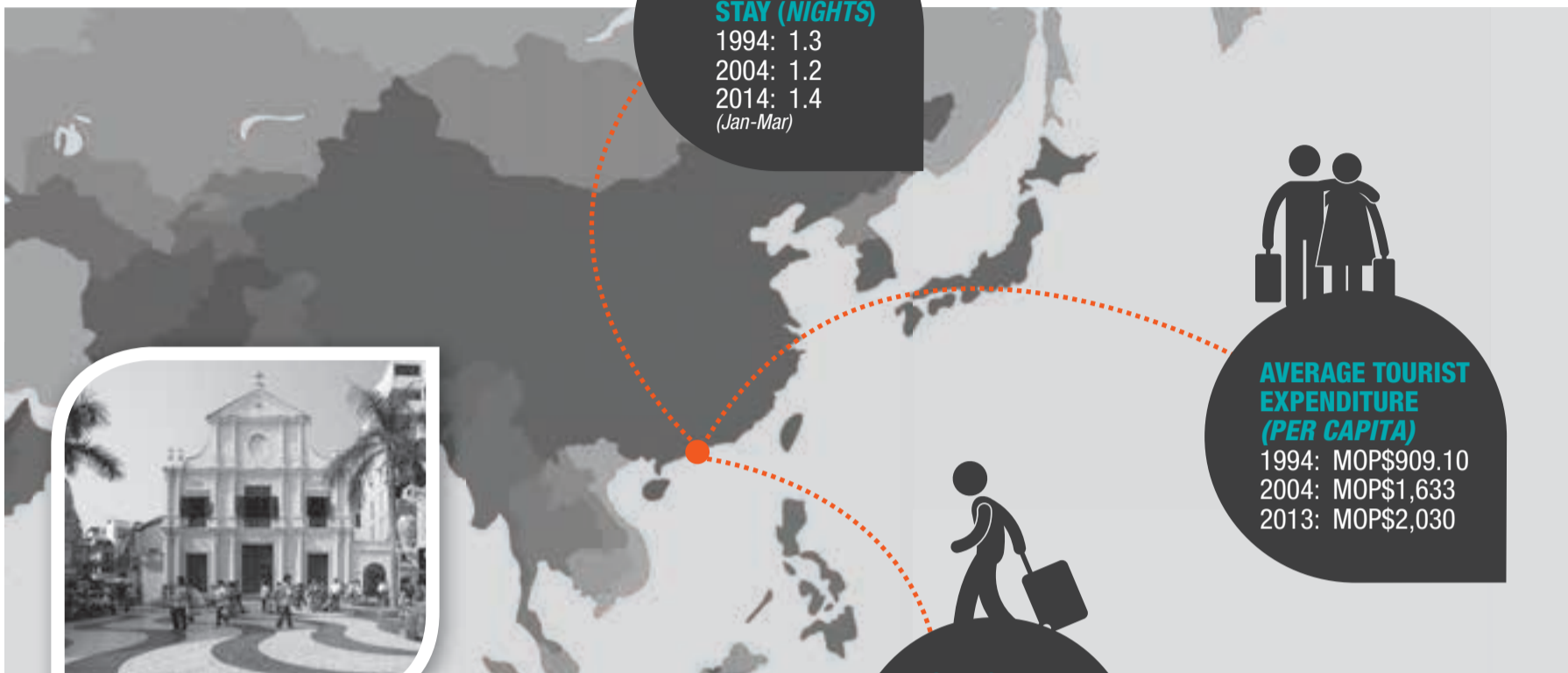
#### 2011 - TOHOKU EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI

International arrivals to Japan was left in tatters after the March 11 twin disasters as did the subsequent nuclear crisis.



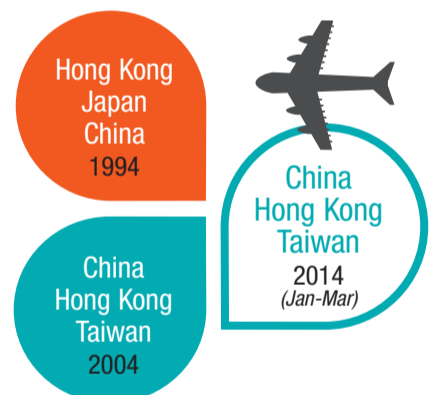
# MACAU

By **Caroline Boey**

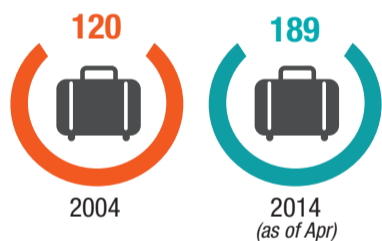


Source: All from Macau Government Tourist Office unless otherwise stated

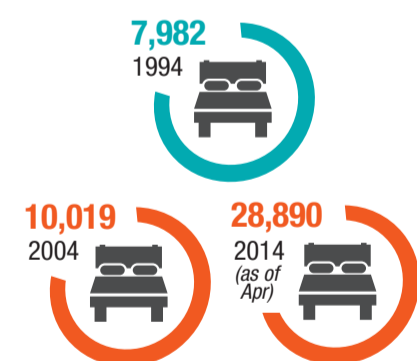
## TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



## NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



## NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS

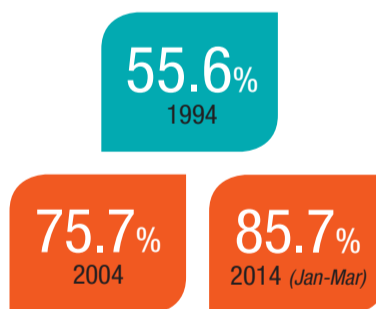


Source: Horwath International

## NTO CHIEFS

- 1984:** Joaquim Leonel Ferreira Marinho de Bastos
- 1994/2004:** João Manuel Costa Antunes
- 2014:** Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes

## AOR



## ARR



## LEST WE FORGET

### 1987 – STOCK MARKET CRASH

The crash began in Hong Kong and spread around the world. Neighbouring Macau took a direct hit as the number of visitors from Hong Kong, a top source market, plunged following the crisis.



### PRE-1999 – RISE IN TRIAD INCIDENTS

Leading up to the Portuguese government's handover of Macau to China, triad activity was rampant. While there was little impact on ordinary residents, the increasing reports created a negative image of safety and security.

### 2002/2003 – SARS OUTBREAK

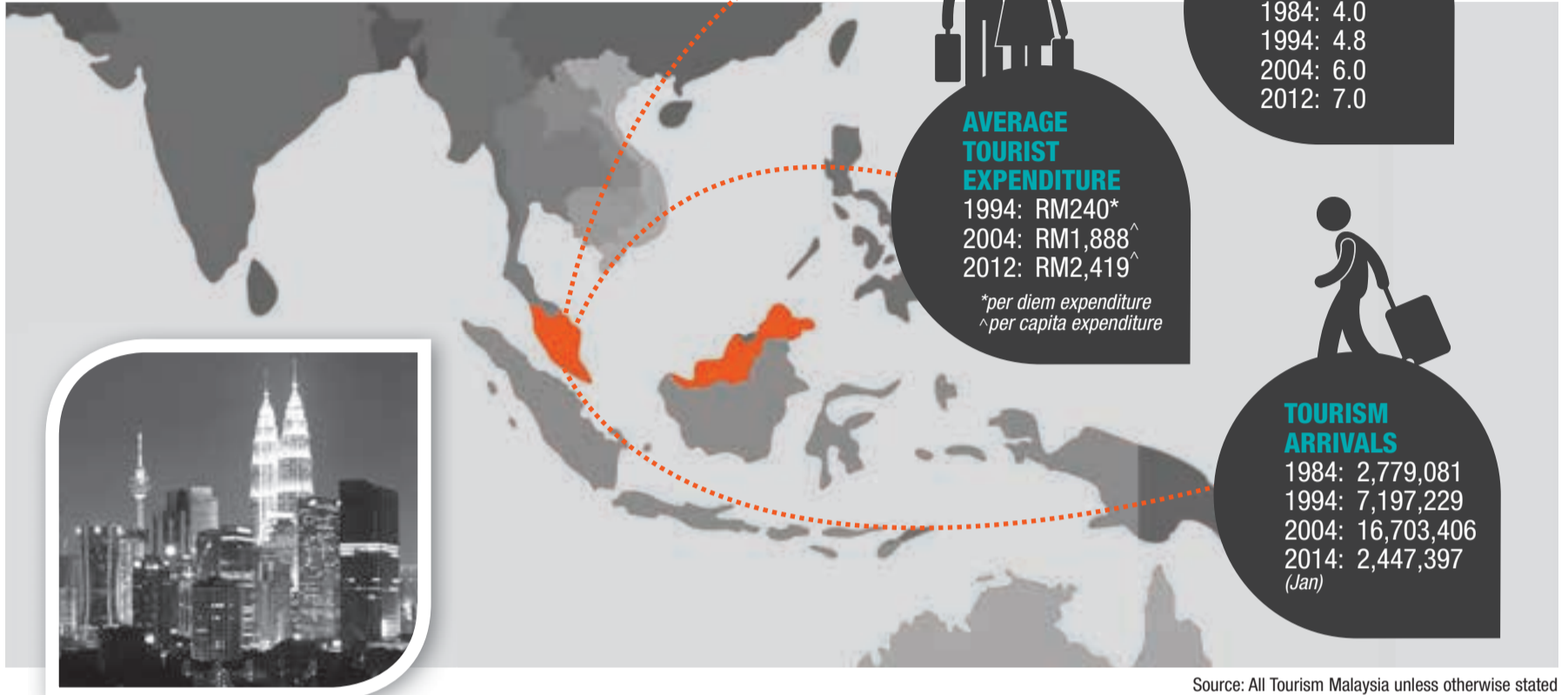
Although the majority of cases were reported in Hong Kong, Macau was also affected. The outbreak in southern China resulted in thousands afflicted, with the disease spreading to infect people in 37 countries.



# Infographics

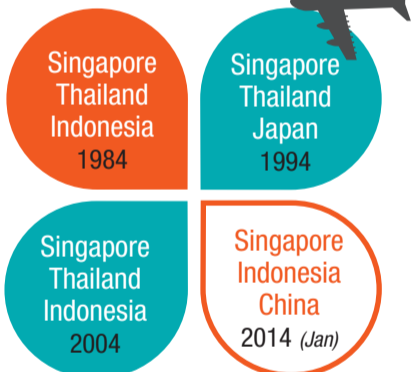
## MALAYSIA

By S Puvaneswary

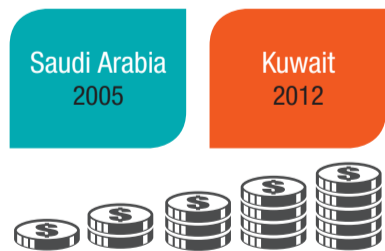


Source: All Tourism Malaysia unless otherwise stated

### TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



### BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)

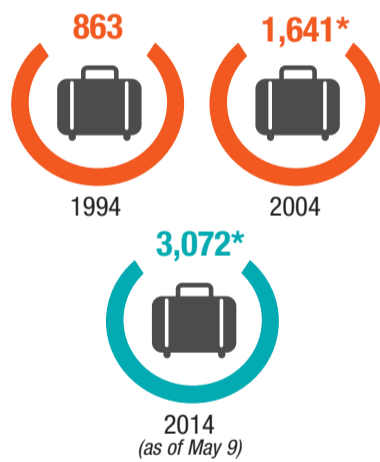


### DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN

1990: Fascinating Malaysia. Year of Festivals.  
 1994: Fascinating Malaysia. Naturally More.  
 2014: Malaysia Truly Asia

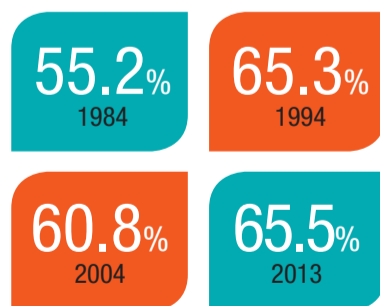


### NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



\*Malaysian Association of Tour & Travel Agents (MATTA) members  
 Source: Tourism Malaysia and MATTA

### AOR

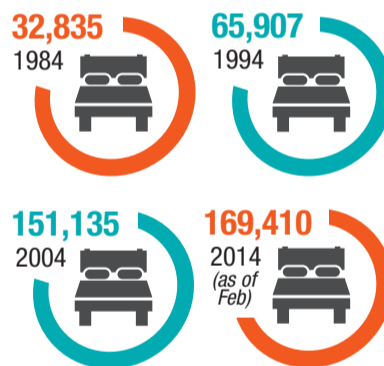


### ARR



Source: STR Global – Kuala Lumpur, luxury and upper-upscale class

### NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS



Source: Tourism Malaysia and Malaysian Association of Hotels

### NTO CHIEFS

1984: Hamzah Abdul Majid  
 1994: Ahmad Bakri Shabdin  
 2004: Abdullah Jonid  
 2014: Mirza Mohammad Taiyab

### TOURISM MINISTERS

1984: Razaleigh Hamzah  
 1994: Sabarruddin Chik  
 2004: Muhammad Leo Michael Toyad Abdullah



2014: **Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz**



### 1986 – CANCELLED! TOURISM MISSION TO AUSTRALIA

Tourist Development Corporation cancelled a tourism mission to Australia in July due to strained relations between Malaysia and Australia, after the hanging of two Australians convicted under Malaysia's drug trafficking laws. That year, arrivals from Australia fell short of forecast arrivals of 81,000.

### 1998 – RINGGIT PEGGED AT RM3.80

The Malaysian government pegged the ringgit at RM3.80 against the US dollar in August to stop speculation on the ringgit and to stabilise its

value, which had dropped from RM2.50 per US dollar in 1997 to RM4.60 in January 1998. Malaysians travelling on holidays overseas were imposed a limit of RM10,000.

### 2009 – H191 INFLUENZA VIRUS OUTBREAK

Malaysia was also hit by the outbreak, which was part of a worldwide pandemic. Malaysia Airlines (MAS) reported that flight cancellations from Japan and China were the most among all its routes.

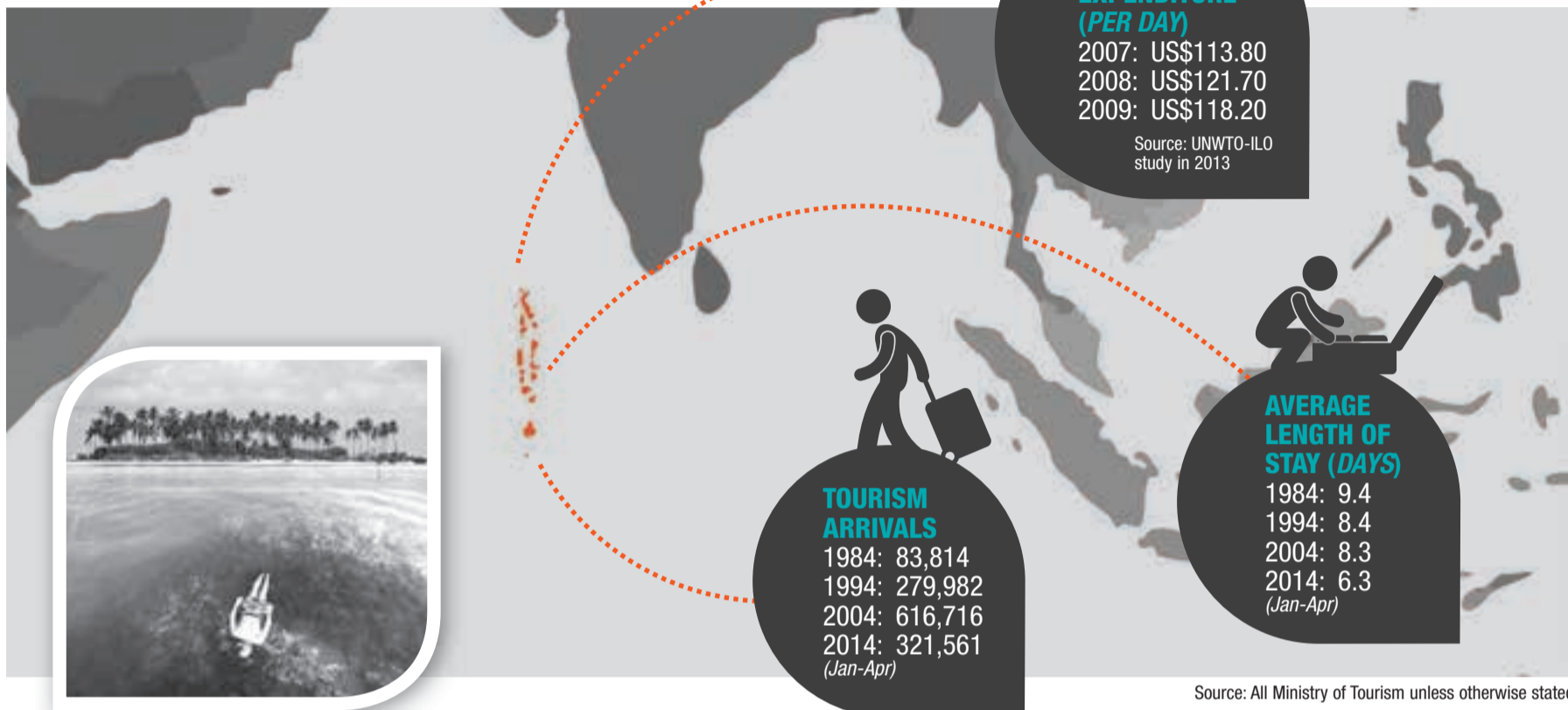
### 2014 – WHAT HAPPENED TO FLIGHT MH370?

The search for MAS' Beijing-bound flight MH370 continues at press time. Inbound operators handling the Chinese market have reported many cancellations for tours from all over China.



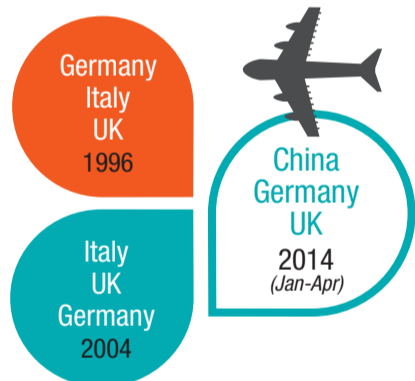
# MALDIVES

By Feizal Samath

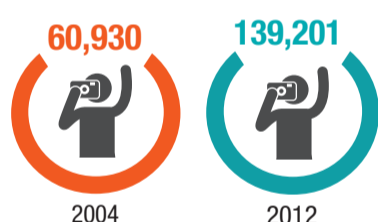


Source: All Ministry of Tourism unless otherwise stated

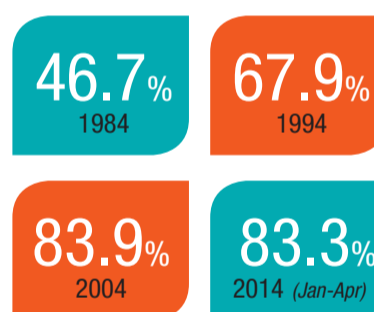
## TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



## NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS (MALDIVIANS ONLY)



## AOR



## LEST WE FORGET

### 2004 – INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI

Several resorts were destroyed or seriously damaged in the catastrophe that struck on Boxing Day. Arrivals fell by 36 per cent in 2005.

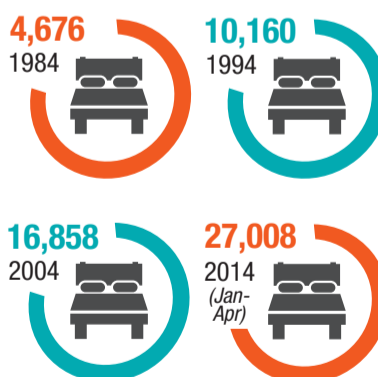
### 2008-2009 – GLOBAL ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

This had a massive and lasting effect on the Maldivian economy. Several source markets in Europe were affected and continue to be so.

### 2012 – PRESIDENT MOHAMED NASHEED OUSTED

He was forced to resign due to political developments followed by severe unrest in the capital, Male. There was a slight drop in arrivals, which later picked up.

## NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS (BEDS)



## DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN



According to the Ministry of Tourism, there was just one campaign logo: *Maldives – The Sunny Side of Life* initiated in 2000. An attempt to change it in 2012 to *Maldives – Always Natural* failed and the authorities reverted back to the old logo.

## NTO CHIEFS

2014: Mohamed Adam, managing director of the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation

## TOURISM MINISTERS

1994: Ibrahim Hussein Zaki  
2004: **Mustafa Lutfi**  
2014: **Ahmed Adheeb Abdul Ghafoor**



# Infographics

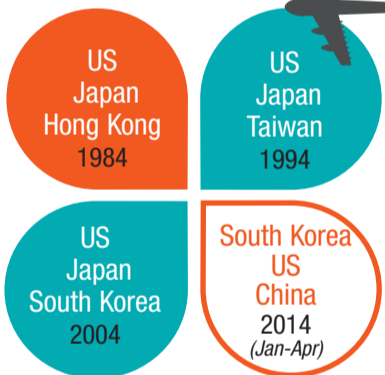
## PHILIPPINES

By Rosa Ocampo



Source: All Department of Tourism unless otherwise stated

### TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



### DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN

- 1984: The Philippines: Where Asia Wears a Smile
- 1994: Huwag Maging Dayuhan sa Sariling Bayan (Don't Be a Stranger in Your Own Country)
- 2004: Wow Philippines More than the Usual
- 2014: It's More Fun in the Philippines

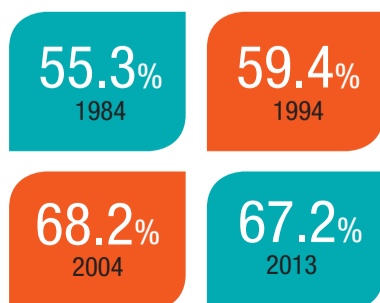


### NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS

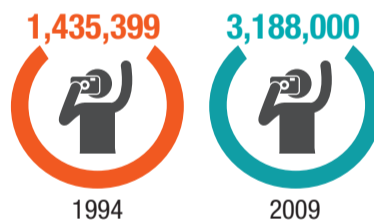


Source: Accommodation Capacity Survey 2012. Note that the survey was only conducted in 2012.

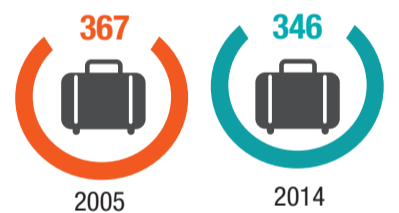
### AOR



### NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS



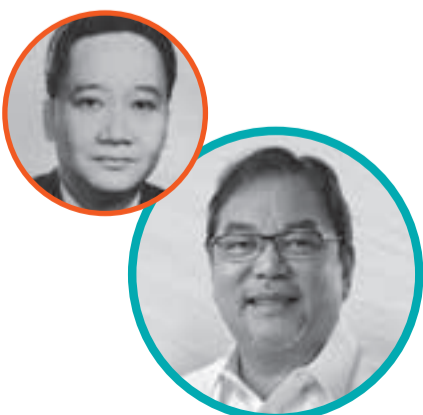
### NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES (PTAA\* MEMBERS)



\*Philippine Travel Agencies Association

### NTO CHIEFS/ TOURISM MINISTERS

- 1984: **Jose Aspiras**
- 1994: Vicente J Carlos
- 2004: Robert Dean Barbers, Roberto Pagdanganan, Evelyn Pantig & Joseph Durano
- 2014: **Ramon R Jiminez Jr**



### LEST WE FORGET

#### 1983 – ASSASSINATION OF BENIGNO AQUINO JR

The August 21 assassination of Benigno Aquino JR, greatest political foe of dictator president Ferdinand Marcos, as well as a series of coup de e'tat and attempted coups till 1989, raised security issues.

#### 1991 – MOUNT PINATUBO ERUPTION

#### 1997 – ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS

Both events were uncontrollable factors that slowed down tourism.

#### 2001 – 9/11 ATTACK & DOS PALMAS KIDNAPPING

The 9/11 terrorist attack in New York City shook air travel worldwide, including to the Philippines. Earlier in May, the kidnapping of tourists in Dos Palmas, Palawan had also hurt the destination's image.

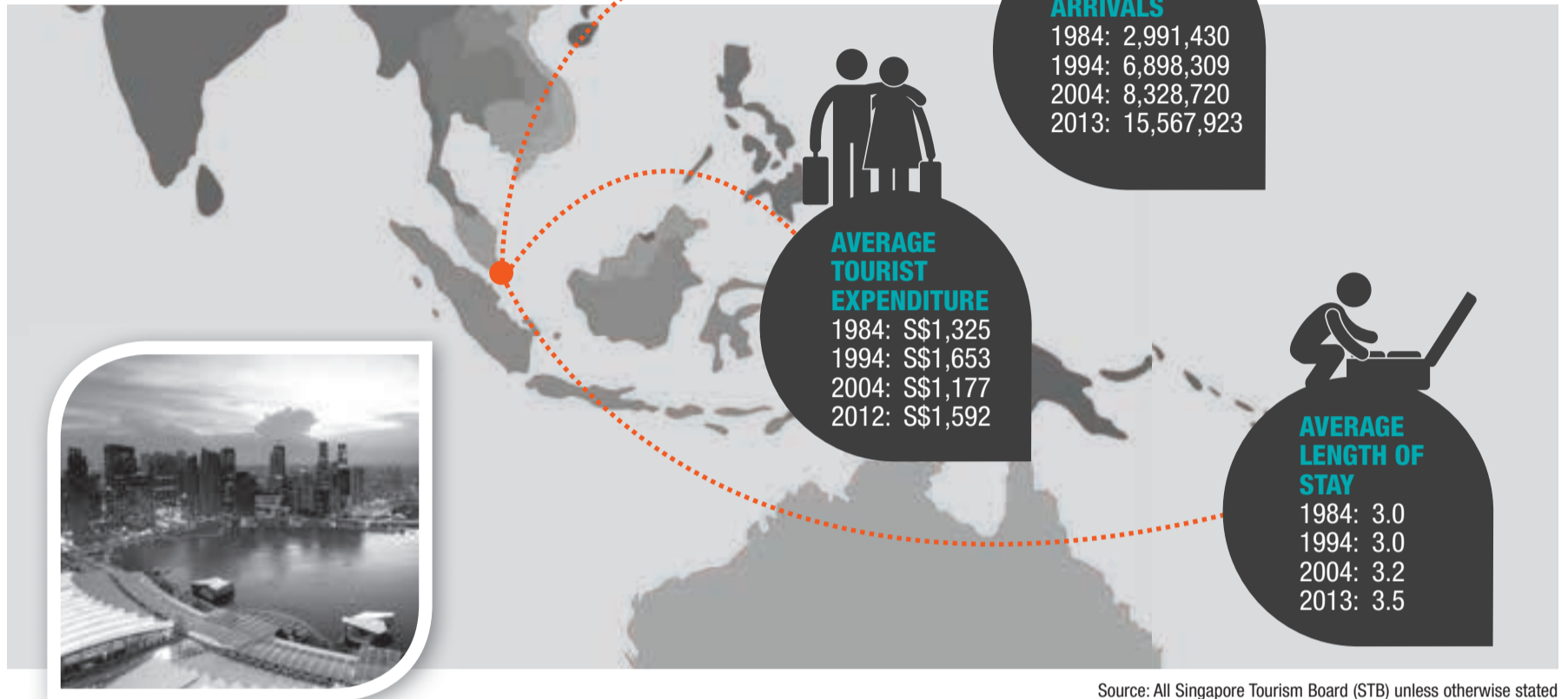
#### 2012 – SCARBOROUGH SHOAL DISPUTE

The standoff began in April after the Philippine Navy confronted eight Chinese fishing vessels in the disputed area. Chinese tours to the Philippines were suspended due to the ongoing tensions, which also saw a protest in Hong Kong.



# SINGAPORE

By Paige Lee Peiqi



Source: All Singapore Tourism Board (STB) unless otherwise stated

## TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



## BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)

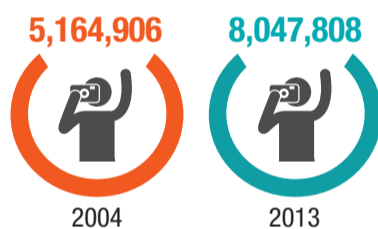


## DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN

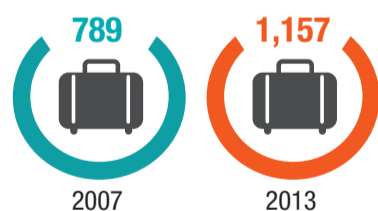
- 1984: Surprising Singapore
- 1995: New Asia – Singapore
- 2004: Uniquely Singapore
- 2014: YourSingapore



## NO. OF OUTBOUND TRIPS



## NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



## NTO CHIEFS

- 1984: Yuen Kum Chuen
- 1994: Pek Hock Thiam
- Tan Chin Nam
- 2004: Lim Neo Chian
- 2014: Lionel Yeo

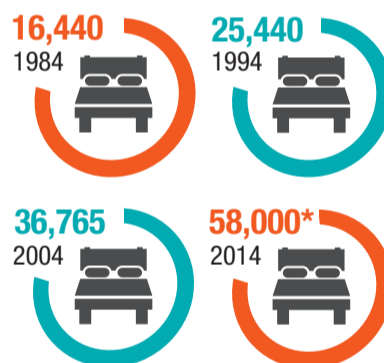


## TOURISM MINISTERS

- 1984: Tony Tan Keng Yam
- 1994: Yeo Cheow Tong
- 2004: George Yeo & Lim Hng Kiang
- 2014: S Iswaran\*

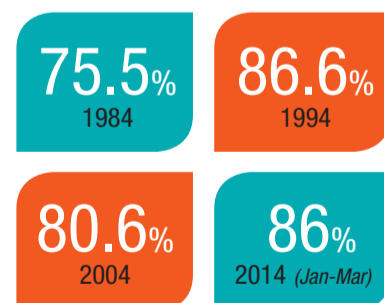
\*While Lim remains as head of Ministry for Trade and Industry, of which STB is under purview, second minister Iswaran oversees the tourism portfolio.

## NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS

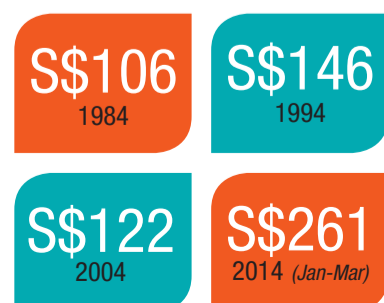


\*An approximate figure based on 2013's count and about 3,000 rooms expected to come on stream in 2014.

## AOR



## ARR



## LEST WE FORGET

### 1997/1998 – ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS

This crisis caused visitor arrivals in 1997 to dip for the first time since 1983, by 1.3 per cent to 7.2 million, and a further 13.9 per cent to 6.2 million in 1998.

### 2002/2003 – SARS OUTBREAK

This pandemic resulted in visitor arrivals for April and May plummeting by over 70 per cent while the full-year figure fell to 6.1 million from 7.6 million in 2002. The government launched a Relief Package in the form of tax rebates and bridging loans for the tourism and transport sectors.

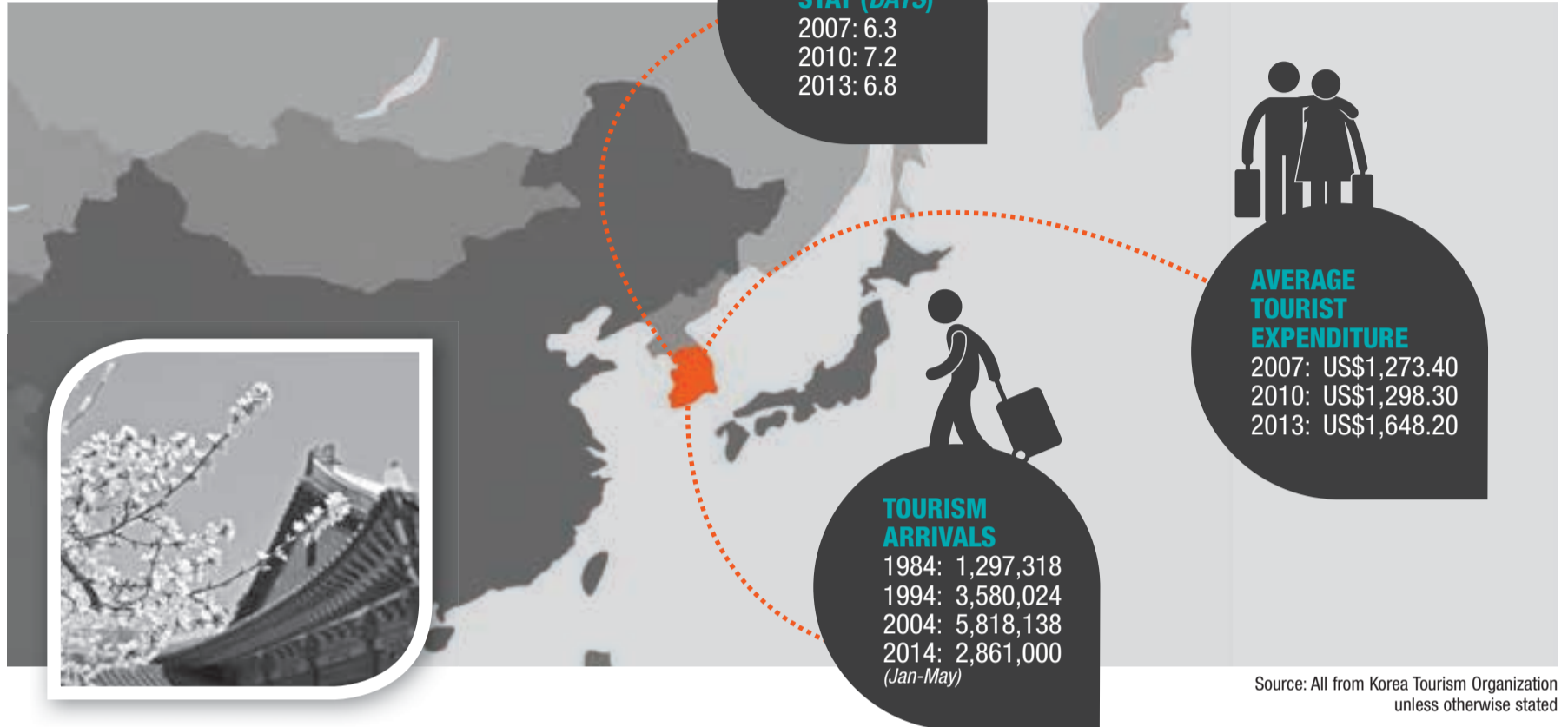
### 2008/2009 – GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

This crisis rattled the global tourism industry as many travellers started cutting back on their travelling and spending as well. STB mitigated this impact and strategised to target increasingly value-conscious travellers. Short-term measures, such as the Building On Opportunities to Strengthen Tourism initiative, were rolled out to help the tourism sector weather the economic downturn and to drive demand for Singapore.

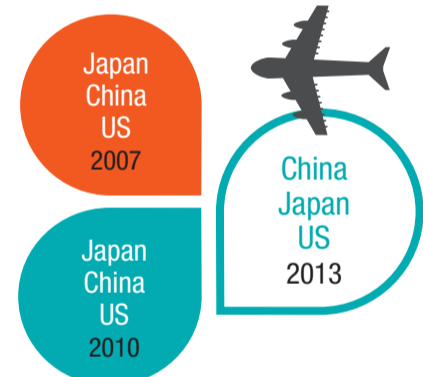
# Infographics

## SOUTH KOREA

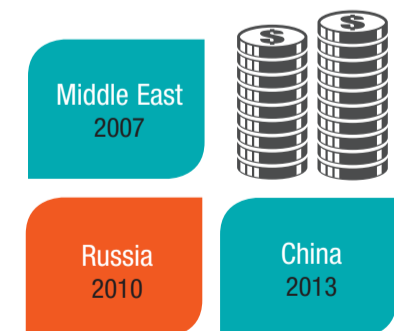
By Kathy Neo



### TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



### BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)

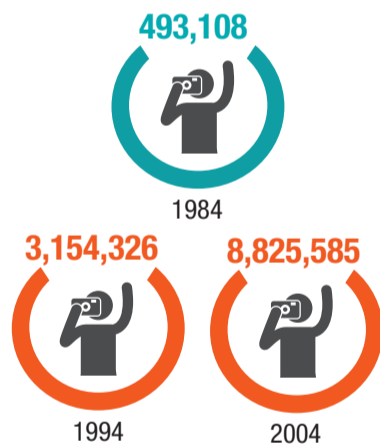


### DESTINATION BRANDING/ SLOGAN



2014: Korea, Be Inspired

### NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS



### NTO CHIEFS

1984: Ha Dae Don  
1994: Ji Yeon Tae  
2004: Yoo Gun  
2014: **Byeon Chu Seok**

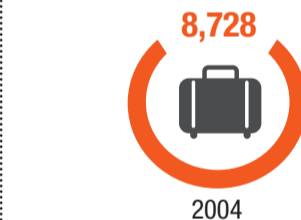


### TOURISM MINISTERS

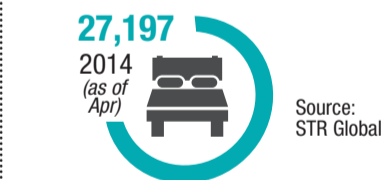
1984: Lee Ji Heui  
1994: Lee Min Seob & Ju Don Sik  
2004: Lee Chang Dong & Jung Dong Chae  
2014: **Yoo Ji Ryeong**



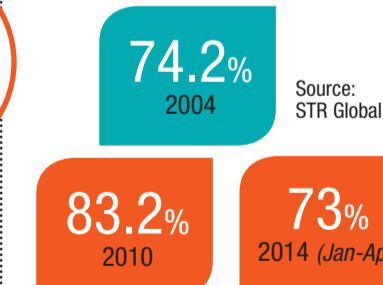
### NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



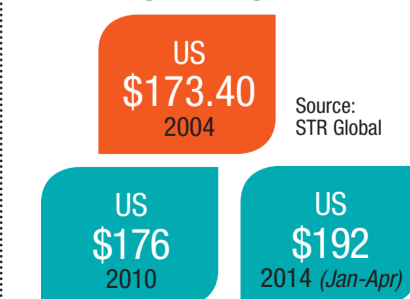
### NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS (SEOUL)



### AOR (SEOUL)



### ARR (SEOUL)



### LEST WE FORGET

#### 2009 – OUTBREAK OF H191 INFLUENZA VIRUS

Reported swine flu cases in South Korea caused cancellation of tours by Japanese travellers. The Korean government raised its pandemic alert level to two out of four, and carried out emergency procedures 24 hours a day to prevent the spread of the virus.

#### 2011-2013 – TENSIONS ESCALATE FOLLOWING DEATH OF NORTH KOREAN LEADER KIM JONG-IL

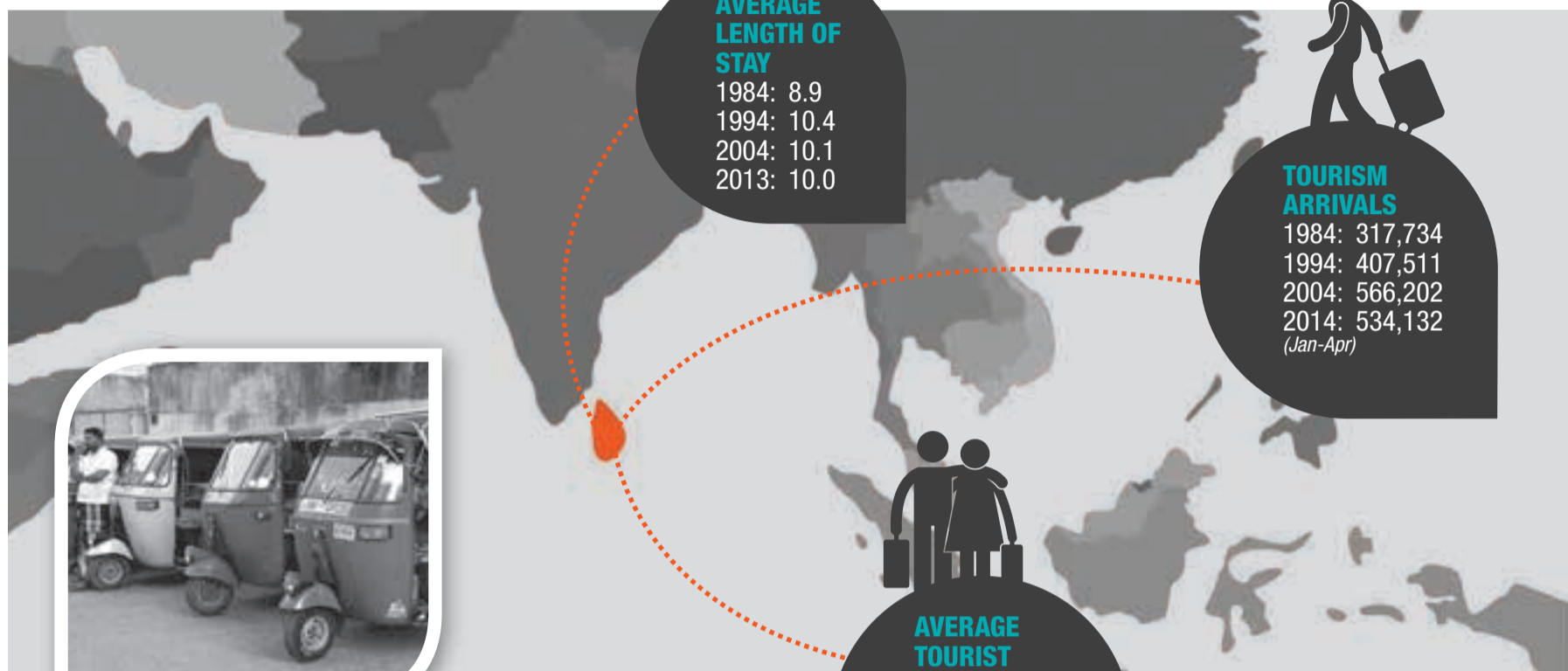
In 2013, worries of a nuclear attack surfaced amid an increasingly provocative North Korea. The Korea Tourism Organization had to issue a press release to reassure travellers that the entire country remained stable and that all tourism facilities were operating as normal.

#### 2014 – SINKING OF SEWOL

The capsizing of a ferry en route to Jeju resulted in a death toll of nearly 300, many of them local secondary school students on an excursion. The government attracted criticism for its disaster response. Cancellations of educational trips in the domestic market and postponement/downsizing of events were reported.

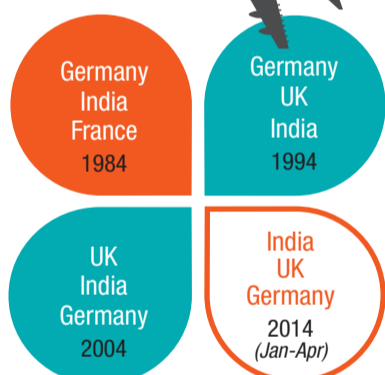
# SRI LANKA

By Feizal Samath



Source: All from Sri Lanka Tourism and industry unless otherwise stated

## TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



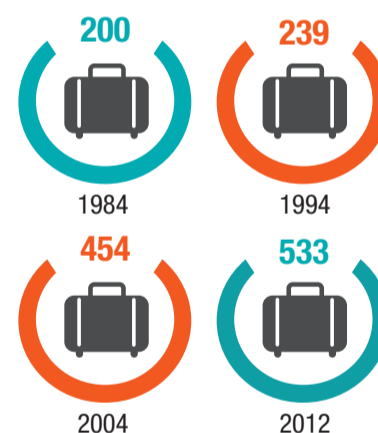
## NO. OF OUTBOUND DEPARTURES (SRI LANKANS ONLY)



## AVERAGE TOURIST EXPENDITURE (PER DAY)

1984: US\$37.20  
1994: US\$54.20  
2004: US\$72.20  
2013: US\$156.50

## NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



## NTO CHIEFS

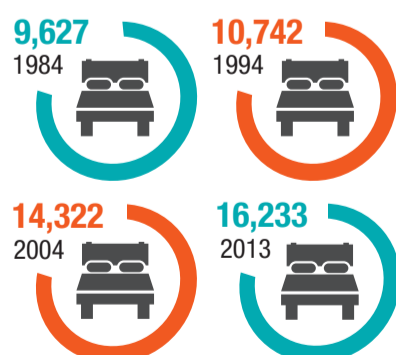
1984: HP Siriwardana  
1994: HMS Samaranayake  
2004: Renton de Alwis & Udaya Nanayakkara  
2014: Bashwara Gunaratne

## TOURISM MINISTERS

1984: Anandatissa de Alwis  
1994: Dharmasiri Senanayake  
2004: Gamini Lokuge & **Anura Bandaranaike**  
2014: **Basil Rajapaksa**



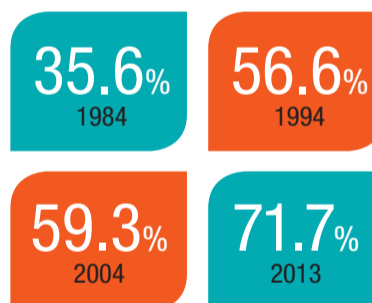
## NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS



## DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN

2004: Sri Lanka: A Land Like No Other  
2014: Sri Lanka: Wonder of Asia

## AOR



## LEST WE FORGET

### 1983 – ETHNIC RIOTS

The July attacks on minority Tamils by sections of the Sinhalese community eventually led to a full-blown civil war that would affect tourism for the next 25 years, particularly in the north and east.

### 1986 – BOMB BLAST AT BANDARANAIKE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

An Air Lanka Lockheed L-1011 TriStar was blown up on May 3 by a suspected Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) bomb, killing 21 including 13 foreigners.

### 2001 – LTTE ATTACK

### ON BANDARANAIKE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND NEARBY AIR FORCE BASE

In the shocking strike, the Tamil Tigers destroyed and damaged 20 airforce planes and five SriLankan Airlines' Airbuses. No foreigners or local civilians were injured.

### 2004 – INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI

At least 40,000 locals and tourists died in this disaster that rocketed the coastline of Sri Lanka. Several hotels were destroyed or damaged.

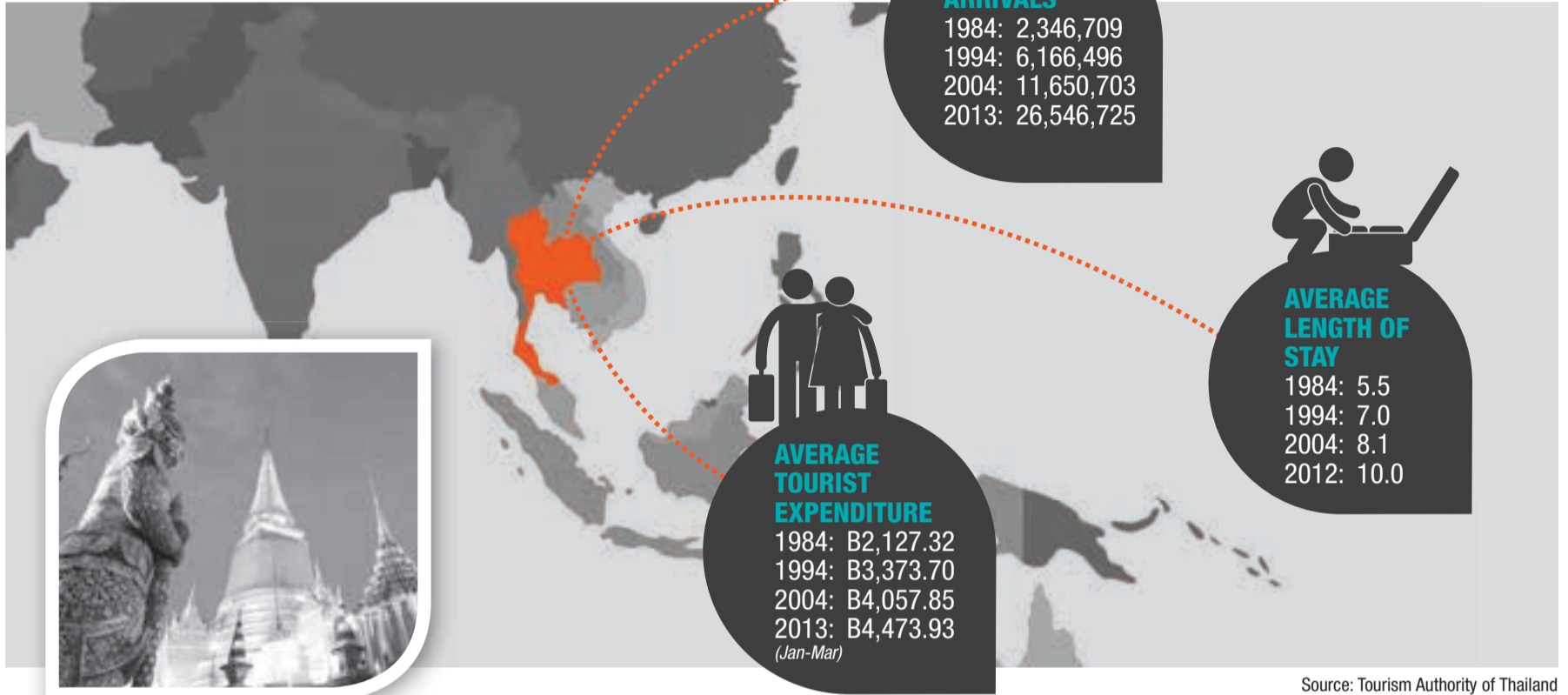
### 2007-2009 – WAR ESCALATES BEFORE FINALLY ENDING

Government troops move to crush Tamil Tigers, finally succeeding in May 2009. The escalation of hostilities during this period affected tourism as there were fears of rebel bombs in the safer parts of Sri Lanka.

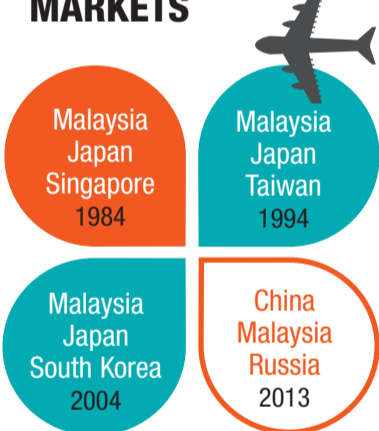
# Infographics

## THAILAND

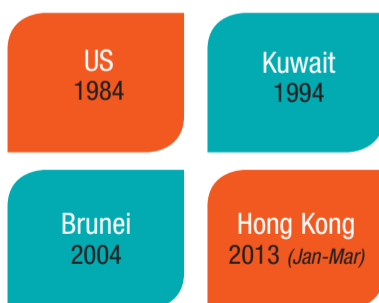
By Greg Lowe



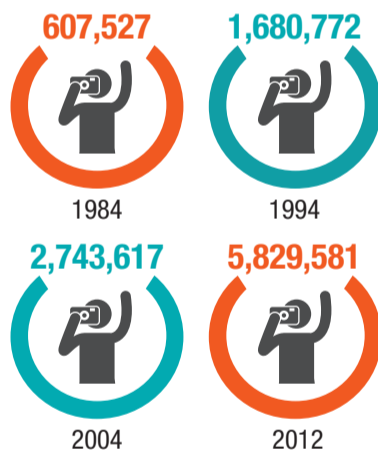
### TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



### BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)



### NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS



### NTO CHIEFS

**1984:** Somchai Hiranyakit  
**1994:** Dharmnoon Prachuabmoh/  
 Seree Wangphachitr  
**2004:** Juthamas Siriwan  
**2014:** Thawatchai Arunyk

### TOURISM MINISTERS

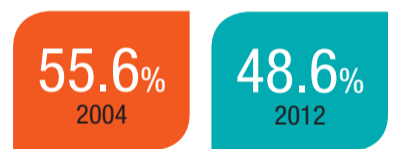
**2004:** Sontaya Khunpleum  
**2014:** Somsak Pureesrisak

### DESTINATION BRANDING/ SLOGAN



**1984:** Thailand...The Most Exotic Country in Asia  
**1994:** Discover the Treasures of a Kingdom  
**2004:** Amazing Thailand, Unseen Treasure  
**2014:** Amazing Thailand: It Begins with the People...

### AOR (BANGKOK)



### 2003 – SARS, BALI BOMBING

The SARS crisis and 2002 Bali bombing caused arrivals from Oceania to drop, particularly Australians, by about 19 per cent.

### 2004 – INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI

The natural disaster devastated parts of the Andaman Coast, killing 5,395 and injuring almost 9,000 with some 3,000 missing.

### 2008 – OCCUPATION OF SUVARNABHUMI, DON MUEANG AIRPORTS

Protestors occupied both airports from November 25 to December 2, leaving thousands of international visitors stranded.

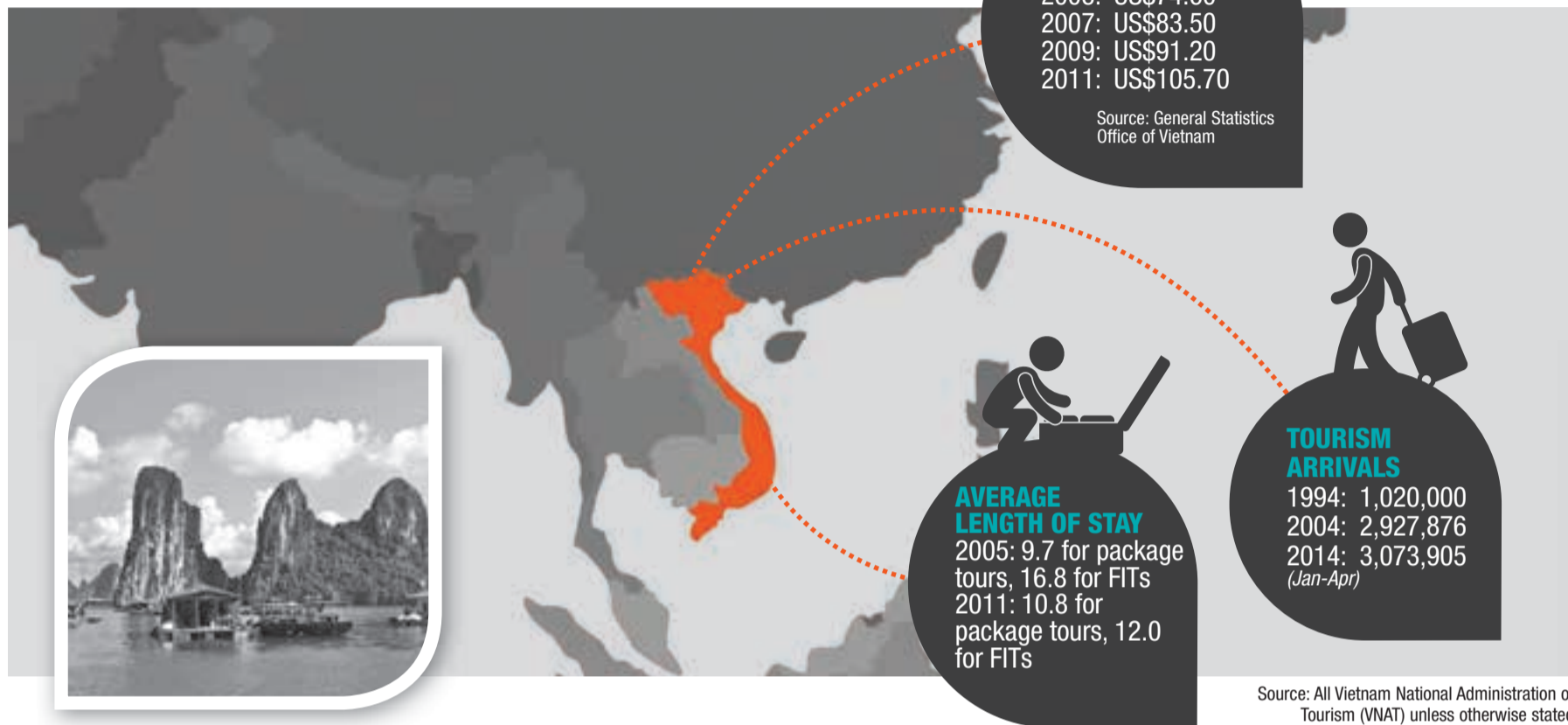
### 2011 – WORST FLOODS IN SIX DECADES

The floods waterlogged 65 of 77 provinces. Negative news flow caused arrivals even to unscathed southern areas, like Phuket, to dip.

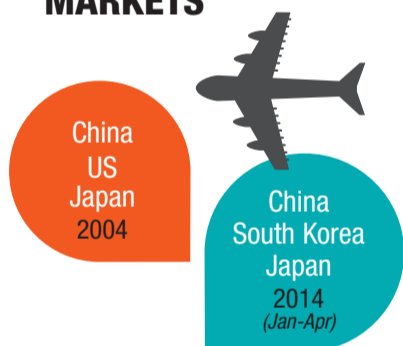


# VIETNAM

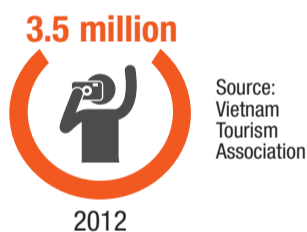
By Xinyi Liang-Pholsena



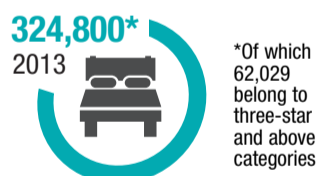
## TOP 3 OVERSEAS MARKETS



## NO. OF OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS



## NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS



## NO. OF TRAVEL AGENCIES



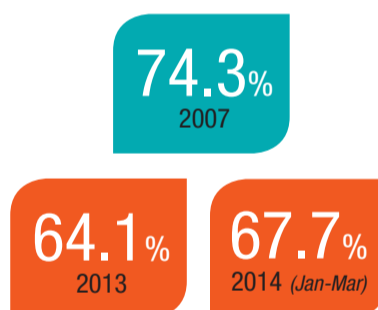
## TOURISM MINISTERS

2014: **Hoang Tuan Anh**  
Note that according to VNAT, there was no Ministry of Culture, Sports and Culture in 2004 and 1994.

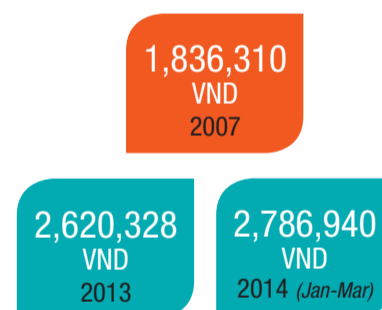
## NTO CHIEFS

1994: Do Quang Trung  
2004: Vo Thi Thang  
2014: Nguyen Van Tuan

## AOR



## ARR



## BIGGEST SPENDER (MARKET)



## DESTINATION BRANDING/SLOGAN

2004: Vietnam – A Destination for the New Millennium & Welcome to Vietnam

2014: Vietnam – Timeless Charm



## LEST WE FORGET

### 1975 – US TRADE EMBARGO

The US immediately imposed a trade embargo on the newly unified Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975, which prevented American businessmen and tourists from visiting the country. The embargo was eventually lifted on February 3, 1994 by President Clinton.

### 2002/2003 – SARS OUTBREAK

The outbreak and subsequent travel warnings from the World Health Organization dealt a severe blow to Vietnam's tourism and caused the country to lose around one million tourists from China and Taiwan.

### 2008 – GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

### 2009 – H1N1 PANDEMIC

Both events led to a dramatic decline in foreign arrivals by as much as 70 per cent during the most affected months, resulting in massive loss of bookings and low occupancy rates in hotels. Vietnam fell short of reaching its goal of attracting five million foreign visitors in 2008 and 4.5 million in 2009.

### 2014 – RIOT AGAINST CHINESE COMPANIES

Anti-Chinese sentiments in Vietnam boiled over in May when some 20,000 rioting workers attacked 15 factories in industrial parks outside Ho Chi Minh City. Although their target was Chinese companies, Taiwanese, South Korean and Singaporean factories were also implicated. The Chinese government issued a warning against travel to Vietnam, and many Chinese responded by cancelling their travel plans to the country.

## Under 40

# THE NEXT-GEN TRAVEL LEADERS

Young, ambitious and ready to rev up their business to greater heights, here are some of Asia's next-gen CEOs

**Indonesia | Pauline Suharno, 36, managing director, Elok Tour**

Pauline Suharno took over from her father Jono as managing director of Jakarta-based Elok Tour two years ago, a position she earned after many years of hard work in the company.

"I started working for my parents (her mother handles finance in the company) when I graduated from tourism high school in 1997, doing ticketing and hotel reservation. I worked in the morning and went to college in the evening, taking management subjects," said the second-generation leader.

Her association with the travel business, however, started much earlier during her childhood. "While other families spent school holidays travelling, my parents were busy serving them as it was the peak season," she recollected. "They took me to work to show how busy it was in the office... They showed me how many tickets they needed to sell to buy me shoes, to pay for school."

Besides recognising the value of hard work, the early exposure to the travel business also taught her the importance of delivering high service standards to meet clients' needs, a concept that remains core to the company despite a changing business environment. "This business is about serving people, so keeping up good service should always be the key to keep up the business."

While other travel firms set up in the '70s have grown to handle volume-based and group series travel, Elok Tour remains a medium-sized company specialising in ticketing and outbound travel, with an eye on catering to more niche segments like FITs, premium FITs, families and small incentives.

"Our clients are those who like to be pampered; they communicate more by phone (as opposed to emails), requiring a lot of assistance from the planning stage to the end of the trip," she said.

One of the changes Pauline had made to the company was to steer it towards a travel consultancy with more tailor-

made products. "We provide clients with one travel consultant as their point of contact to handle all their needs," she said. The company now boasts nine travel consultants and 50 staff.

Pauline sees further growth in niche services as Indonesians are becoming more affluent travellers.

"We have had clients of just two people but requiring a private guide. Also, there are companies giving out (incentive trip) bonuses to suppliers or presents to clients of only three to five people in a group. These are the kind of clients we are catering for," she added.

"This allows me to keep learning from problems and finding ways to solve them. This also improves my capacity as an assessor (of travel consultant certification)," said Pauline, who also sits on the executive board of the Association of Air Ticketing Companies in Indonesia as deputy secretary general and the Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA) Jakarta Chapter as business development coordinator.

Pauline envisions an industry where players big and small have a chance to grow. "ASITA has approached NTOs to organise fam trips and include the SMEs because some of them also handle MICE groups. And the more travel companies are familiar with the destinations, the bigger the chance for the NTOs to grow the market," she said. — *Mimi Hudo*

**Vietnam | Pham Ha, 39, CEO and founder, Luxury Travel**

Pursuing a tourism career was a natural option for Pham Ha, a Vietnamese native with a penchant for the good life and a strong interest in foreign languages – backed by a trio of degrees in French, English and business administration.

"I chose tourism as a career as I find it the happiest job in the world," said Pham, who started guiding tours during his student days in the 1990s. "I can meet many

people from different cultures, personalities, hobbies, backgrounds as well as new challenges, and a job well done makes people happy and me happy."

His exposure to high-flying international visitors through travel guiding would shape his life outlook and career. "Thanks to them, I have developed a good taste of life and know how to live a good life. They come as foreigners but leave as friends," he shared.

As Pham built up experience in the tourism industry in roles ranging from operations to sales and marketing, it deepened his desire to introduce Vietnam's beauty to more foreigners; it also led him to identify a gap in high-end, tailor-made travel at a time when budget, low-quality service was the call of the day and luxe resorts and international-standard golf courses were still far and few between in the country.



Clockwise from top: Pauline Suharno; Jason Wong; Pham Ha and Chotechuang Soorangura



With just “US\$1,000, one person, one laptop and one website”, Pham founded Luxury Travel in 2004, positioning the company as a luxury tour operator specialising in privately guided, fully bespoke and experiential travel experiences.

To that end, the tourism entrepreneur has designed training programmes for each of his staff – whom he calls “Luxers” – to ensure they embrace professionalism and a positive attitude when engaging with customers.

Now, a decade later, the Hanoi-based DMC boasts offices throughout Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, in addition to representative offices in California, London, Paris, Berlin,



Buenos Aires, Brisbane and New Delhi.

Last year, Luxury Travel unveiled its new B2B website and established a joint-venture company – Asia Premium Travel – in Cambodia.

As well, the ambitious Pham has sights set on realising another dream: to be the owner of a luxury cruise boat. Come end-2014, he will launch Emperor Cruises in Halong Bay, a 10-cabin traditional Vietnamese wooden boat featuring six-star, all-inclusive cruising experience with butler service.

“We want to create an experience that touches the heart and senses of the most discerning travellers. Our customers will be served like feudal emperors,” said Pham, who believed his latest venture would enable him to tap the unexploited ultra-luxury market. – *Xinyi Liang-Phol-sena*

## Thailand | Chotechuang Soorangura, 33, associate managing director, NS Travel & Tours

Chotechuang Soorangura cut his teeth as a marketer for brands such as ExxonMobil, Thanachart Bank and Procter & Gamble. Two years ago he decided to follow his younger twin brother Chatchawan into the travel business their father Suparek Soorangura, the current president of the outbound-focused Thai Travel Agents Association, established 35 years ago.

Following in their father’s footsteps is no mean feat when you consider the network of businesses he has developed over the past four decades.

“It’s more of an empire really,” said Chotechuang as he detailed some of the companies within the group, including NS Travel & Tours, which takes up 80 per cent of his time; the recently launched World Collection Travel that targets outbound MICE; Transasia Express, which boasts a fleet of 100 coaches and 30 vans; and Serenata Hotels & Resorts Group, which has a portfolio of 15 properties.

“Were lucky to have a highly experienced team, more than half of them have been with us for 17 to 20 years,” he said. This brings its challenges, however, especially when it comes to using new technology and social media, something he is trying to hardwire into the company’s DNA.

“I recently had a client say if we could not talk to them via Line (a social messaging app) he would go to another company, so I set up the account straightaway. The problem is some of our staff still don’t like using email, let alone social media.”

Chotechuang has already improved the design of NS Travel’s website and enhanced its search engine optimisation, and is looking at more contemporary ways to market the company. “One of the challenges is trying to adjust the company culture so we can attract enough new blood to keep us strong in the future while making sure we listen and learn from the experienced staff who have been with us for years.”

EC Vacation is one of his other innovations due to come online imminently. The business will work as a wholesaler for domestic tour operators. “No one has really looked at this type of wholesaling in Thailand before because it’s a high-volume, low-margin business. But I’m convinced it’s a viable idea as every tour operator is looking for customers today and customers still value service, so we can support both sides.” – *Greg Lowe*

## Hong Kong | Jason Wong, 33, general manager, Hong Thai Travel Services

The son of Jackie Wong, who founded Hong Thai Travel Services in 1966, Jason Wong was groomed for the tourism world from young by his dad and naturally took on the family business upon graduation from university in 2003.

“Tourism is an eye-opening industry which exposes me to various cultures as well as challenges. I like gaining new

knowledge, and the travel business trains both my adaptability and flexibility. In fact, being innovative is always our company motto,” said the younger Wong, who became the helmsman of the company three years ago.

“This particularly applies to our tour products. We think out of the box by working with different media and tourism bodies to explore new products, for instance, gourmet tours guided by celebrity chefs and the introduction of exotic destinations like Ethiopia and Brazil exclusively guided by travel guru James Hong,” he added.

The company has also worked with Tourism Australia to produce a series of short movies promoting outbound travel Down Under.

“Group travel has moved into a more insightful and personalised format. Moreover, we are stepping into a new emerging market – overseas wedding services,” Wong revealed.

They (my parents) showed me how many tickets they needed to sell to buy me shoes, to pay for school.

Pauline Suharno  
Managing director, Elok Tour Indonesia

Amid a burgeoning FIT market, Wong will continue to enhance Hong Thai’s successful position as a travel retail store by fine-tuning the company’s online platform through the roll-out of a wider product range that includes group buy special offers and online air ticketing functions.

“Hong Kong is such a convenient city so many clients still rely on frontline staff support at branches,” he said. “Still, social media channels like Facebook can’t be underestimated – our Facebook page now has the biggest number of fans (among travel agencies in Hong Kong) at around 100,000.”

Network distribution is key for Hong Thai, which currently boasts 24 branches in Hong Kong, China and Singapore. The opening of a joint-venture office in Shenzhen last September under the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement has enabled the company to take advantage of the vast Chinese outbound market. – *Prudence Lui*

## India | Ankush Nijhawan, 36, managing director, Nijhawan Group

Ankush Nijhawan is a third-generation leader at Nijhawan Group, a New Delhi-based travel conglomerate with diverse interests across the technology, hotel and airline representation domains.

Although the baton has been passed to

him, Nijhawan said it is his own passion for the industry and the myriad of opportunities available that keep him going. He joined the business in 2000 and became the managing director in 2004. Since then, his focus has been on establishing the company as one of the leading players in India.

“We are working in 14 countries today and are hopeful to take this tally to 30-35,” he revealed. “Now our aim is to be the largest B2B player in the world.”

In particular, Nijhawan has been focusing on the company’s technology products to make inroads into international markets including South-east Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

As part of its branding and business alignment process, the company has brought its existing products, Travel Boutique Online (TBO), Techmaster and the recently launched tboholidays.com, under the ambit of the TBO Group.

“Through TBO we have a strong inventory of domestic and international airlines, but now through tboholidays.com we are looking to further strengthen our hotel inventory. We aim to be one of India’s top two B2B players in the hotel business through tboholidays.com.”

Tboholidays.com now allows real-time booking of over 200,000 hotels worldwide, he said. “We have ensured a hassle-free booking experience for travel (consultants),” said Nijhawan.

He is also looking to aggressively market Techmaster, which offers a range of travel technology solutions for travel agencies, tour operators and consolidators in emerging countries.

“We have been exporting technology solutions to international markets including the Middle East and Africa. Our target now is to tap markets like the Far East and Latin America. We have purposely not sold technology solutions in India as the market here doesn’t value intellectual property,” said Nijhawan. – *Rohit Kaul*

## Philippines | Aileen Clemente, 40, president and chairman, Rajah Travel Corp

Aileen Clemente, president and chairman of Rajah Travel Corp, has brought the family-owned business into the high-tech age and transformed it from a travel agency into a travel management company.

“Rajah Travel is always evolving. We are always looking for ways to streamline operations and enhance processes. We have created new departments and shifted the organisational structure several times, always with a view to create a stronger team,” said Clemente, who just turned 40 in May.

“In recent years, we have also put extra focus on the digital and technology aspects of the business. We have upgraded our website to allow our clients to book online and harnessed the power of social media to communicate directly with our clients and partners.

“We are also reaping the benefits of technology, specifically cloud-based solutions. These have allowed us to move away from heavy capital expenditures and shift these to operating expenses,” Clemente enthused.

“We have improved our branding and created our own product lines. I am most

# Under 40



From left: Ankush Nijhawan; Aileen Clemente; Chris Ng; Chaminda Dias; Clifford Neo; Shafraz Fazley and Lawrence Cheng

fond of Funtastic Vacations, which we started for the Philippines. These are more theme-based itineraries and not just the usual city breaks that our competitors are selling," she added.

Clemente's work at Rajah Travel officially began 17 years ago, but unofficially she had been involved in the business since childhood. She said: "I have fond memories of helping out on tour runs and creating marketing collaterals when I was still a kid."

Rajah Travel was founded 42 years ago in 1972 by Aileen's parents, Joe and Alejandra Clemente. She said: "I continue along this path as I share their pride for the country and their vision of contributing to the economy through the multiplier effect that tourism generates.

"Also, this is more of a stewardship for me. I believe in the jobs we create and the families we help. Most of our current employees are the sons, daughters, relatives and neighbours of our previous employees," said Clemente. "In all honesty, this is my family." – **Rosa Ocampo**

## Malaysia | **Chris Ng, 38,** managing director, MP Travel & Tours

When the previous owner decided to part with MP Travel & Tours in 2010, Chris

I believe in the jobs we create and the families we help...In all honesty, this is my family.

**Aileen Clemente**  
President and chairman  
Rajah Travel Corp, Philippines

Ng, then the firm's general manager, saw further growth potential in the company. He bought over the business and has since been running the agency as managing director.

"I wanted to take (the company) to the next level," recalled Ng. "At the time, inbound comprised about 80 per cent of the total business revenue, outbound made up 10 per cent of the business and 10 per cent was from visa (processing) – we were the official outsource travel agency for the Singapore High Commission in Malaysia for the acceptance and submission of visa applications and collections.

"I have diversified the company's business by growing the outbound department and corporate business," he said, attributing the outbound business growth to strong support from airline partners such as Malaysia Airlines and LCCs like AirAsia.

"Prior to 2010, most of our outbound business was retail. Today, retail leisure business makes up only 30 per cent of our outbound business revenue while the remaining is outbound corporate business."

Today, both outbound and inbound business revenue are almost equal for MP Travel & Tours, revealed Ng, while the company has also expanded its share of corporate business.

"There is less risk in servicing corporate outbound travellers as this is a year-round market, compared with leisure outbound which is seasonal. There are also higher margins in handling corporate outbound," he remarked.

The next step in the business is to upgrade the company's B2B online booking engine, to allow tour packages to be booked online, and to develop a mobile phone application so that rooms and packages can be booked on the go with instant confirmation.

Ng said: "We need to stay ahead of the game as I see the usage of smartphones to make bookings as a future trend. We plan to develop this app within two years."

With a self-confessed immense love for his job, Ng finds personal satisfaction in taking the business to new heights and believes that innovation is key to growth.

"The challenge is to do things differently and to service your clients well," he stressed. "Everyone sells inbound tours to Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Langkawi and other places. We offer more variety. We have culinary tours, cycling tours and

packages for health tourism." – **S Puvaneswary**

## Singapore | **Clifford Neo, 38,** managing director, Dynasty Travel

With technology making huge strides and revolutionising the travel space, many critics have viewed traditional travel agencies as a 'sunset' industry. But Clifford Neo, managing director of Dynasty Travel, begs to differ, and is using innovative technology to drive the growth of his agency.

He said: "Technology is the rage today, and I have spearheaded many new initiatives and scored an industry breakthrough with our own iPhone travel app, iDynasty, in 2012."

With this app, customers are able to browse travel package details and even redeem their after-travel rewards points for shopping/food/travel vouchers and cinema tickets – on the go.

Keeping in mind customers' evolving travel needs, he added: "We want to slowly steer our sales consultants away from the traditional paper-and-pen tour agency norm."

This year Neo launched an iPad mini booking system, which enables all front-line staff to conduct their sales pitch anytime, anywhere.

In pursuit of brand excellence and customer satisfaction, Neo said the company is always looking to improve and differentiate itself from the rest of the industry by creating unique travel experiences.

Looking forward to the future, he said: "We are intending to capitalise on the surging tourist traffic from wealthy (markets) with special luxury travel package offerings.

"We are also looking to expand the business regionally via B2B collaborations with key partners in the region in countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia in the next two to three years to grow the business even further," he added. – **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

## Sri Lanka | **Chaminda Dias, 38,** managing director, Luxe Asia

For a 38-year-old, Chaminda Dias seems

to already boast close to half a lifetime of experience in the travel and hospitality sector.

Dias started his career as a management trainee at the Hilton Colombo, then moved to United Holidays to handle destination marketing before founding Luxe Asia five years ago with financial backing from Expolanka Holdings, a diversified conglomerate in Sri Lanka.

Operating in Sri Lanka with a presence in the Maldives, the Colombo-based DMC's core business is predominantly B2B but it has ventured into B2C initiatives in certain mature markets such as the UK, according to Dias.

Dias, who continues to head Luxe Asia as managing director when the company came under the ownership of Galle Face Hotel Group in January, believes that the new owner's inventory of 800 rooms across Sri Lanka will give the DMC further flexibility and edge in the market.

With his sights set for Luxe Asia to be "among the best travel groups" in Asia, Dias sees Luxe Asia as a well-established brand in five years' time, and one which leverages technology as a potent weapon to stay ahead.

"With the right technology platforms we can be anywhere we want; we can bring travellers from anywhere to anywhere (they want)," he said. "Innovation is changing the travel industry. Clients have access to products and are constantly searching for new packages, new ideas. That's where we want to pitch in and provide niches.

"For example Luxe Africa could be a possibility – anything is possible once we get our technological platforms. Africa is kind of a virgin territory and I would like to exploit that market," he added.

Mauritius, the Seychelles and Bali are also on Luxe Asia's radar within the next three years. Said Dias: "If they (travellers) trust you in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, they will trust you to get the product right in other places as well." – **Feizal Samath**

## Maldives | **Shafraz Fazley, 34,** managing director, Viluxur Holidays

Shafraz Fazley, managing director of Viluxur Holidays, has set a five-year timeline to achieve his goal of turning the DMC



into Asia's leading luxury travel consultancy.

Within three short years since its inception in 2010, Viluxur Holidays now boasts a US\$40 million annual turnover in the Maldives, with more than 100 staff across its four offices in Sri Lanka, Maldives, China and Singapore. The company recently moved its headquarters to Singapore and started B2C operations last year.

A GSA for many resorts in the Maldives and Sri Lanka alike, Fazley aims to launch one new inbound destination per year for Viluxur Holidays, with Mauritius, Seychelles and Bali being next on the radar.

"The key to entrepreneurial success is innovation, the confidence to take risks, healthy competition and the love to overcome obstacles," said Fazley.

"I also relish the opportunity for constant growth."

Viluxur Holidays' current strengths lie in China and other emerging markets in niche luxury segments such as wellness and photography travel, carefully identified by Fazley after a thorough analysis.

The ambitious entrepreneur wants to focus on creating theme-based experiences for discerning clients seeking meaningful travel.

"During our routine brainstorming sessions, great suggestions include tweaking responsible tourism experiences to enhance the satisfaction of the traveller," he said.

Activities like coral adoption, whale shark and manta ray protection, and local charitable missions will be implemented as innovative segments for Viluxur's destinations.

Recognising travellers' increasing willingness to pay a premium for specially designed trips, Fazley elaborated: "We can tap a few associations with certain interest and invite their members on a special tour. The idea is to incorporate their hobbies into their holidays." – **Feizal Samath**

### Macau | **Lawrence Cheng, 34,** manager-MICE & inbound, Meg-Star International Tours

When he first enrolled in Macau's Institute for Tourism Studies, Lawrence Cheng was not certain if he would pursue a career in the tourism industry.

The key to entrepreneurial success is innovation, the confidence to take risks, healthy competition and the love to overcome obstacles.

**Shafraz Fazley**, managing director, Viluxur Holidays Maldives

However, a stint as a tour leader after graduation convinced him that interacting with travellers and being able to meet their needs would give him immense job satisfaction.

Cheng then spent a year in ground operations at the Macau International Airport and three years in sales at Macau Fisherman's Wharf, further beefing up his portfolio by handling MICE and inbound operations at EGL Tours and business development at the Westin Resort Macau before joining the seven-year-old Meg-Star International Tours earlier this year.

"Meg-Star used to focus on selling hotels and air tickets, but saw the opportunity to establish a MICE & inbound department (in 2014)," Cheng said, adding that there are only about 10 DMCs in Macau.

Having cut his teeth organising Junior Chamber International Macao events, Wong jumped at the chance to join Meg-Star's newly launched department and incorporate new ideas into teambuilding activities.

"For example, we have added the element of a food treasure hunt in a Portuguese cooking class. The teams are given the recipe and have to go around Macau to find the ingredients; in the process learn more about the places they visit," he said.

"Each programme is tailor-made," Cheng continued. "The sales conference for a telecommunications company of 250 international attendees was based on the *Amazing Race* (reality show). But it included the challenge of finding a piece of puzzle at the various checkpoints (in order) to create the company's logo at the finish line." – **Caroline Boey**

### China | **Yates Fei, 34,** general manager, HRG China

Yates Fei first joined HRG in 2005, assuming his present role as general manager in October 2013 responsible for developing and executing HRG's overall business strategy in China.

Apart from playing a key role in winning a number of lucrative accounts for HRG, Fei successfully migrated more than 60 per cent of HRG China's clients onto a card platform as well as implemented the company's online strategy for a number of large multinational accounts.

"When HRG first entered the China market a decade ago, the concept of a TMC managing the travel needs of organisations based here was a fairly new concept," said Fei.

"HRG had to work hard to change mindsets, deliver tangible results and win new business by educating new clients on the concept of travel management via programmes that projected clear dollar values."

HRG was the first foreign-owned travel company to establish the corporate travel market in China through a majority share joint venture with Jin Jiang International in 2004.

The company has also grown from just 20 employees to over 280 based in the key locations of Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai, according to Fei.

He added: "During the last 10 years we have seen significant changes within the corporate travel industry including the introduction of dynamic online booking tools and the widespread use of mobile apps; payment methods moving from invoice to credit card platform; and a shift of

focus from air spend management to wider consolidation and process engineering.

"China is set to become the largest corporate travel market in the world, and the average Chinese business traveller has embraced technology and the use of online booking tools or travel apps."

On what motivates him in his job, the avid traveller replied: "My main objective is to deliver proven value to our clients. Once we deliver the savings, turn around perceptions and help the clients to achieve better compliance, I feel very rewarded."

– **Caroline Boey**

### Laos | **Markus Neur, 36,** owner, Tiger Trail

Born in Germany, 36-year-old Markus Neur found his calling on the other side of the world in Laos.

Neur joined Tiger Trail in 2005, taking over the Luang Prabang-based tour operator in 2008 as owner. The company now employs 56 full-time staff members in Luang Prabang and six staff in a franchise office in Thailand's Chiang Mai.

Since its beginnings in 2000, the company has always offered socially responsible and adventurous travel, developing its own Fair Trek brand to support local tourism initiatives.

Neur saw great potential in the adventure travel sector, implementing a 'We are Laos' ethos to hire predominantly Lao-tians and a small number of expats who know the destination. He is still excited today by the prospects of discovering remote landscapes in Laos and witnessing ongoing development in its towns.

From an agency offering short adven-

# Under 40

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My main objective is to deliver proven value to our clients. Once we deliver the savings...and help clients achieve better compliance, I feel very rewarded.

**Yates Fei**  
General manager, HRG China

ture tours and multi-day excursions, Tiger Trail now primarily operates as a DMC handling full country services for tour operators worldwide. While still assisting walk-in backpackers looking for a home-stay, the majority of clients are expats living in Indochina, and markets from the Americas and Australia.

“Present marketing activities are heavily aimed at social media, including what is perhaps the largest picture database of Laos on Flickr,” Neur commented.

“Great focus is also placed on regular engagement through Facebook, our habitual blogs, newsletters and after-sales customer care to (travel consultants) and individuals.”

Brand awareness among hotels, suppliers and visitors in the local region is being strengthened through a free Luang Prabang mini-guide, with the first edition published last year and the second due in October. Suppliers can also advertise their products by adding their branding to Ti-

ger Trail’s online video projects. – **David Andrews**

**Cambodia | Nick Reth, 26,**  
operations director and  
owner, Apsara Tours

For 26-year-old Nick Reth, the travel industry is all he has ever known. Born and raised in Cambodia, his growing up

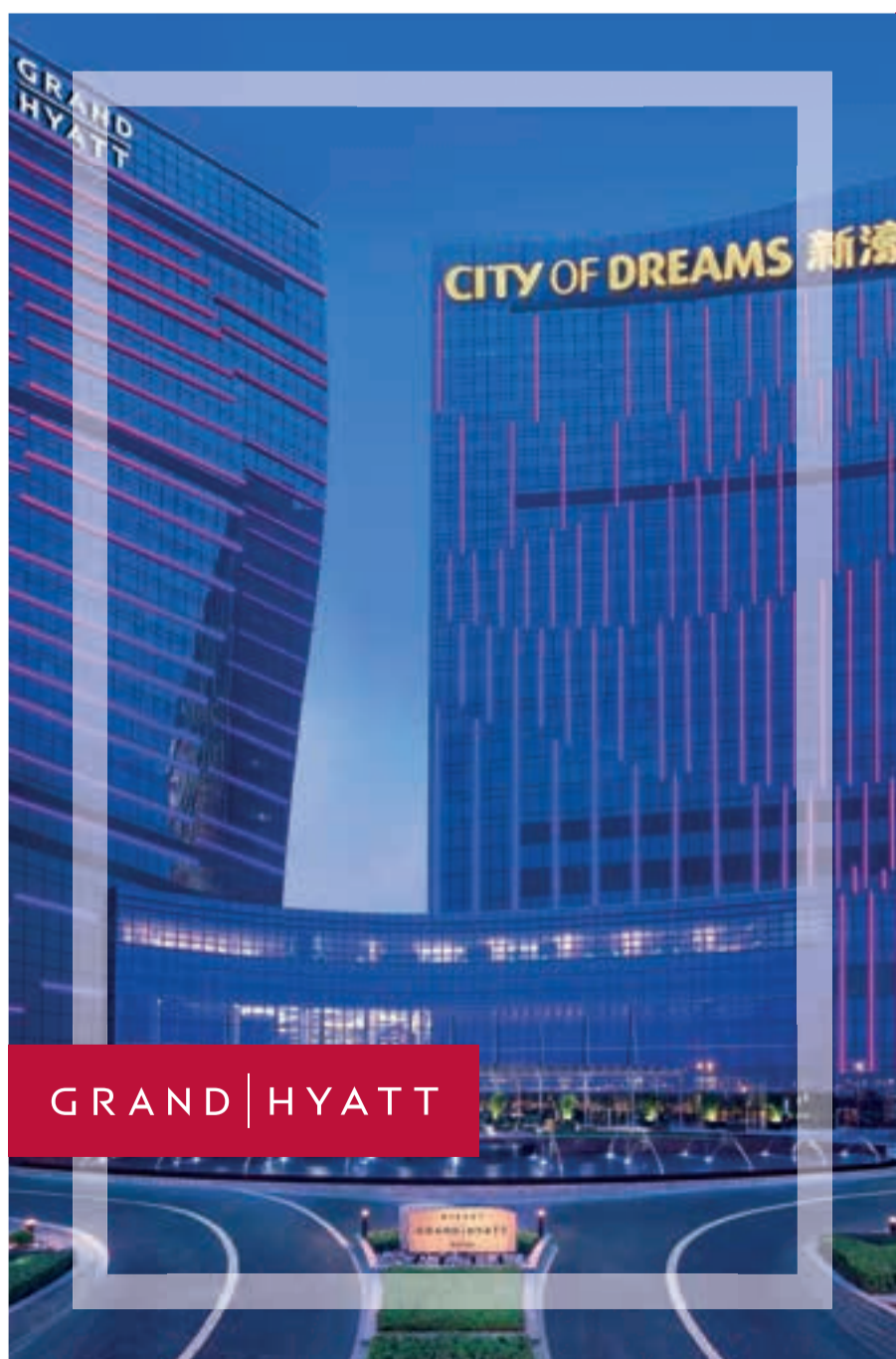
years also paralleled the development of tourism in the country. Reth is now the operations director and owner of Apsara Tours, which was established by his parents in 1991.

Apsara Tours was the first inbound operator to launch in Cambodia after the country opened its doors to foreign tourists following the dissolution of the Khmer Rouge party. The elder Reths saw great potential as few travellers at that time knew what Cambodia could offer and even fewer knew about the business of travel.

Now a full-fledged travel company with 50 full-time staff, Apsara Tours remains committed to a ‘can do’ attitude that has defined the company since day one.

A new website due for launch in mid-2014 will feature an integrated booking engine and enhanced user experience with the ability for clients to rate products, write testimonials and share videos and photos. Social media channels like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are used to promote new products and steer traffic to the company website.

This year, Apsara Travel is developing more products and appointing more sales representatives in Europe, North America, India and China, the latter of which is a new market it is aiming to grow. – **David Andrews**



GRAND | HYATT

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# Finale

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# WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE TOURISM A BETTER INDUSTRY?

A cross-section of industry leaders tells Gracia Chiang how



**CC ZHUANG**  
CO-FOUNDER AND CEO  
QUNAR.COM

As an industry, tourism as a whole is still lagging behind in technology adoption. It needs to be more aggressive in adopting technology – everything from mobile to infrastructure. This industry needs a total renovation.



**RAYMOND N BICKSON**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND  
CEO, TAJ HOTELS, RESORTS AND  
PALACES

Ease of travel is extremely important for seamless travel between countries. It's really a global business. Today what happens in Africa or South America has an effect on somebody in Hong Kong. Economies are so intertwined. Visas are a hindrance, and the government should not look at tourists as an easy target for tax.



**HIROMI TAGAWA**  
CHAIRMAN  
JTB CORP

The travel industry needs to ensure that there are 'perfect moments always' so that each moment is perfect for tourists. From the beginning to the end of the trip, so many people and moments are involved. If one person doesn't put in the effort, everything crumbles. We need to serve with impeccable service.



**GERALD LAWLESS**  
JUMEIRAH GROUP  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

There's a huge sense of responsibility within the industry that we have to do the right thing. From shark's fin soup to understanding how to look after the beautiful place you have. If you have a lovely coral reef you don't want to overcrowd it. You don't want to ruin the product that you're actually protecting and using to promote (your product).



**CLEMENT KWOK**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND  
CEO, THE HONGKONG AND  
SHANGHAI HOTELS

Sustainable tourism is...about the relationship that travellers have with companies that are taking sustainability seriously in everything that they do. Some people think that sustainable tourism is going into a forest somewhere and staying in very basic accommodation, or that it's a certain type of tourism experience. To me, it all starts with the way that companies behave themselves.



**MICHEL TARIDE**  
GROUP PRESIDENT  
HERTZ INTERNATIONAL

Our challenge is to keep it truly a people business. Invest in technology and use it as a key enabler to integrate all parts of travel, but keep this as a people business – people who want to serve, who love their customers and their fellow colleagues. I think this will make the world a better place\*.

*\*Responding to a panel question at WTTC Global Summit 2014 on what would make this an even better industry*

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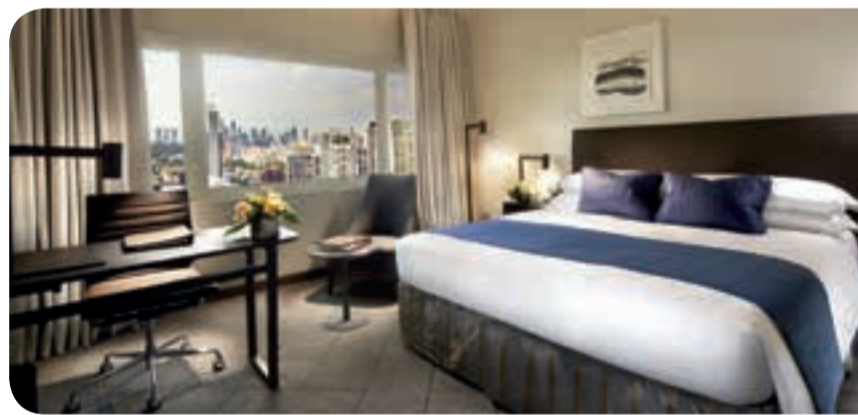
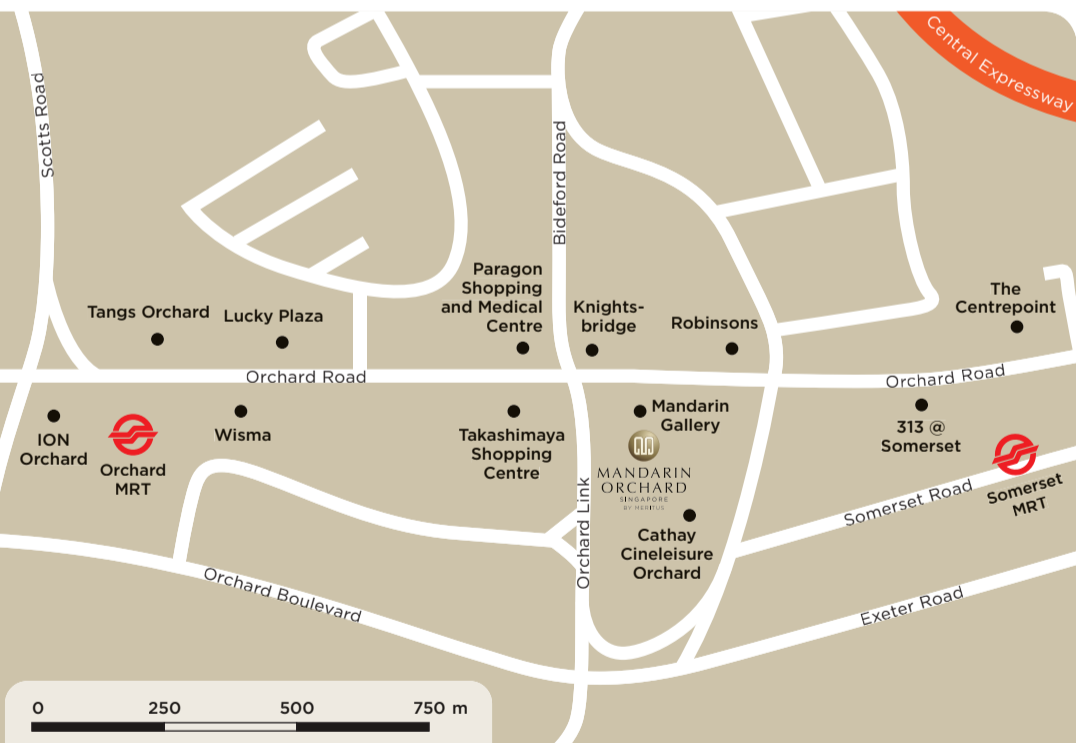
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