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Issue

# 3



ITB Asia  
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## Tours sector hots up in Asia

Klook gets US\$60 million funding, GTA partners Bokum to get hotels to sell tours to guests

By Raini Hamdi

The online tours and activities segment hots up in Asia with Hong Kong's Klook completing near US\$60 million in Series C funding, the largest ever for an in-destination service booking platform, just months after Singapore's BeMyGuest closed a Series A in July that gave it a total equity funding to-date of US\$8.5 million.

Whether B2C as Klook mainly is, or B2B which BeMyGuest has pivoted to, tours and activities in Asia is in for a shake-up as investors begin to hanker after a market that is being buoyed by the rise of Asian FITs and their

adoption of mobile booking.

Klook's president and co-founder Eric Gnock Fah told *TTG Show Daily*: "For the most part, B2B and B2C will usually coexist and, in some cases, go hand in hand. Looking at market players, we see that B2C currently presents a bigger opportunity."

Klook has 30,000 tours and activities on its platform. Fifty per cent of users book upon arrival, 70 per cent via mobile. Gnock Fah wants to cement its mobile-first and instant confirmation solutions, and create personalised experiences with AI.

The company has launched a visual search function, allowing

travellers to use pictures taken during their travels to gain activity suggestions nearby. It will soon enable voice search function, as well as other new functions by mid-2018.

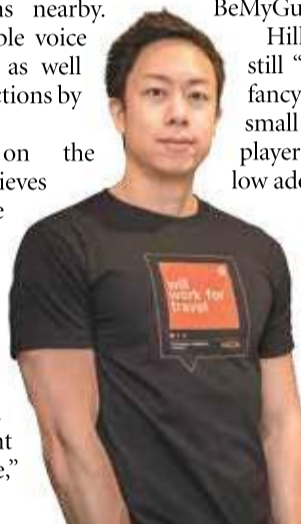
BeMyGuest on the other hand believes B2B is the space to be in. "Asia has overtaken Europe in tours and activities, said to be worth around US\$33.3 billion now, and only 11 per cent is booked online,"

said Graham Hills, chief commercial officer, a new position at BeMyGuest.

Hills said the business is still "very much in its infancy", fragmented with small or mom-and-pop players in the region with a low adoption of technology.

Added Kei Shibata, CEO of Venture Republic Global, who is now on the board of BeMyGuest: "Aggregating them as quickly as possible is important and

Gnock Fah: Lots more to be done



that's the strength BeMyGuest has as (first mover)."

Clement Wong, CEO of BeMyGuest, said Klook's Series C funding, led by Goldman Sachs and existing investors Sequoia Capital and Matrix Partners, is "a positive reaffirmation of the rapid growth that the tours and activities sector is experiencing in Asia".

"Asia has overtaken Europe this year in terms of market size for tours and activities, and being the hottest sector in travel, we expect this investment trend to continue," said Wong.

Meanwhile, Sam Turner who leads wholesale and sourcing for Hotelbeds Group, said the growth in tours and activities has been twice faster than in bedbanks that the group has created a separate division for it.

"Asia is currently the smallest proportion but we're seeing an 80 per cent jump," said Turner.

"I expect more consolidation in the space. It has created a lot of excitement as historically the distribution has been very offline. Consolidation is inevitable."

Even hotels are now getting into the act, by being resellers of tours. GTA, now part of Hotelbeds Group, has tied up with Ireland's Bokun, using its content and technology to allow hotels to resell tours and activities, then everyone will earn commissions.

Stefano Zeni, GTA head of commercial management and destination services, said this would be launched in the Middle East and Europe, and he is here at ITB Asia to propose to hotel partners in Asia to resell tours & activities to guests.

## Hotelbeds Group on the prowl for new blood

By Raini Hamdi

Hotelbeds Group, which completed its acquisition of GTA on October 4 and Tourico Holidays in June, is on a recruitment drive for Asia, with Tourico's director of global recruitment Kieran Le-Petit being at the show to suss out potentials, especially in bedbanks contracting.

"People usually assume that three companies that are consolidating will mean layoffs. We're absolutely the opposite. Not only are we not retrenching, we are talent mapping, creating a

new organisation structure, and have a five-year recruitment plan with Asia specified as the first place (for recruitment) because of the growth prospects in the region," said Le-Petit.

In Asia, the departments of the three products – Hotelbeds, Tourico and GTA – have been integrated, paving the way for fresh recruitment.

Only three per cent of Tourico staff in Asia left as a result of the

integration, he said. "When Expedia bought Orbitz in Australia, it was 60 to 70 per cent. I know because I recruited a lot of them. Usually I smell 'blood' in the water. There is no blood in the water around us – we're the sharks circling for blood (laughs)."

Some 60 vacancies are available for Asia, primarily people experienced in negotiating contracts with hotels. The recruitment drive is consistent



Le-Petit: hoping to hire at ITB Asia



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## News

# Shedding light on rumours

The Northern Lights are not going anywhere, but tourism boards in Scandinavia have acknowledged the need to diversify and promote other offerings to outbound Asians



A vibrant Aurora Borealis on display in the night sky over Norway

By Pamela Chow

Amid concerns that the Northern Lights may be fading, tourism stakeholders in Nordic countries are moving to clear up rumours among the trade and sustain arrival volumes from Asia.

“The Northern Lights are now one of the main destination sights for Malaysian travellers, who are afraid they won’t get a chance to see them before they fade,” said Patricia Ng, deputy general manager, Harpers Travel.

However, Nordic tourism authorities are hoping to dispel such worries that the Aurora Borealis is disappearing.

Kjell Ellefsen, Japan representative of VisitNorway, told *TTG Show Daily* that this prevalent impression is “a misconception”.

“There has been talk about it coming to a low cycle, but there’s not enough data to prove that for certain. In fact, just a month or two ago, the sun had one of the largest solar flares, resulting in brighter auroras

on both Poles,” he clarified.

As a result, tourism boards of Norway, Finland and Iceland are using ITB Asia 2017 to inform the trade that the Northern Lights are here to stay. Concurrently, as interest in Scandinavia remains high, they are looking at combining aurora-viewing with other activities and attractions to keep visitors coming.

For example, VisitNorway plans to move promotions away from nature offerings, and spotlight other aspects like food and culture instead, said Ellefsen.

Meanwhile, Finland is dabbling in education tourism to bring in large groups of visitors from Asian countries – such as China and Hong Kong – in order to encourage higher numbers of overnight stays, off-winter visits, and drive tourism into non-mainstream destinations outside Helsinki and Lapland.

“We are still in the development process for this plan, although we already have some products ready,” said David Wu, director, VisitFinland China.

“We are speaking to some schools to get them to open in the summer for international students – this is a big trend that we’re receiving many enquiries for.”

Anticipating a sustained influx of tourist numbers, Iceland is promoting The Icelandic Pledge, a pledge that appeals for responsible tourism practice, such as leaving natural attractions untouched and taking safety precautions at more precarious sites, shared Thorleifur Thor Jonsson, senior manager, trade delegations, Promote Iceland.

## Engage private sector early on in crisis management

By Raini Hamdi

The private sector should be engaged early on in crisis management, be it a health-related outbreak, act of god or act of mad men, said new WTTC president & CEO Gloria Guevara Manzo who has observed that past experiences have proven that this invariably leads to faster recovery.

In her first interview with an Asian media since replacing David Scowsill on August 15, Guevara told *TTG Show Daily* that WTTC research shows that recovery from a crisis takes from two to 30 months, but if governments involve the private sector early on in managing the issue, recovery is faster and consequently fewer jobs are impacted.

She gave the example of the Ebola crisis in Africa where the private sector was not engaged from the beginning and, on top of that, some international authorities painted the entire continent as one country. “There was not even a single case of Ebola in some of the African countries, yet, they saw a lot of cancellations and tourism was impacted,” said Guevara.

One important aspect why the private sector needed to be engaged because, unlike governments which change with election and see new ministers which may be inexperienced or try to reinvent the wheel, the private sector does not change, ex-

plained Guevara, who was Mexico’s tourism secretary before joining WTTC and had previously worked with private sector companies including Sabre Corporation.

Guevara is also keen to bridge government and private sector co-operation on safety and security, and effective travel and tourism planning which is linked to the current problem of overcrowding and anti-tourism sentiments in destinations such as Spain.

On the latter, in particular, she’s watching Asia as WTTC’s data shows 10 of the world’s fastest-growing tourism cities over the next 10 years are all in Asia, six of them in China and the other four being Manila, New Delhi, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.

Asked what this signals to her, she said: “Europe is right now the largest. If Asia travel and tourism continues to grow at this rate, it will be the largest. The question is, what are they doing to plan for growth and capture their fair share?”

She added: “Growth has to be well-planned and (destinations) have to consider the impact of tourism on natural and cultural assets, as well as the social impact.”

Guevara: pushing for planned tourism growth and support for female players



Tourists in front of a Chinese temple, Choo Chay Keong temple, in George Town, Penang, Malaysia. George Town is a UNESCO world heritage site

## SE Asia the new darling of Chinese holiday makers

Chinese outbound specialists are redesigning their group tour itineraries in favour of South-east Asia as the Chinese government’s ban on group tours to South Korea continues to hold.

According to Charlie Wang, event manager from China-based Oryxtrip.com, South Korea used to be his top-selling destination due to the close proximity and low costs.

Wang said: “It is a pity because South Korea is a very popular destination. Now that we cannot sell it, we must think of other destinations that can offer a similar experience and budget.”

Oryxtrip has sent more groups to Thailand and the Philippines instead.



Luo: China demand will return quickly

Luo Xin, product supervisor of Aoyou.com in Beijing, shared that there are more groups travelling to Hong Kong and Singapore now.

She added that even though Chinese FITs could arrange to visit South Korea on their own, few who would do so due to the overall tension between the two nations.

However, Luo is certain that the Chinese “will return to South Korea once the ban is lifted”.

Jie Bai, a representative from Unicore Communications in Beijing, who organises events for Chinese clients across Asia said that they will be promoting more of Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore in light of this.

When asked about the impact of the travel ban, Hong Yeji, manager of global sales team, Lotte Hotels & Resorts in South Korea, told *TTG Show Daily* that business has “declined massively” as 40 per cent of their guests are from China.

Since the travel ban kicked in earlier this year, only 10 per cent of Lotte’s travellers are from China now.

“We have to diversify our source markets and look at attracting guests from other countries because we have no idea how long this situation will last,” Hong lamented.

Maintaining optimism, Caitrin Moh, MICE manager of KTO Singapore Office, said the NTO is now “more strategic in raising our profile across other markets especially emerging ones in South-east Asia”.

She added that KTO’s presence at ITB Asia 2017 allows them to identify potential markets and meet new business partners. – Paige Lee Pei Qi

“We are talking to our members about validating our agenda for travel and tourism development that is sustainable and inclusive. This is indeed related to the over-tourism issue, and we are partnering McKenzie to come up with specific solutions and best practices to avoid over-tourism (set to be ready by December).”

“We want to work with local governments to build the path for tourism benefits to be spread out, for them to have the right flows of visitors, put in context the benefits and the concerns of local citizens.”

And, being the first woman to be elected at the male-dominated WTTC, she is passionate to advance the leadership space for women in travel and tourism.

The industry is powered 50 per cent by women, she said, adding “now we want to make sure we support them to move up (the ladder)”.

– Full report, *TTG Asia, View From The Top, January 2018*



## News

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# IR bodes new dawn for Desaru

An integrated resort is in the works in Desaru, bringing a combination of superlative attractions, premium hotels and aggressive promotions that could spell a dramatic makeover for the destination

## By S Puvaneswary

Malaysia-based Themed Attractions Resorts & Hotels will intensify marketing of the Desaru Coast integrated resort destination, in the southern state of Johor in Peninsular Malaysia, in anticipation of the scheduled opening of its anchor attraction Desaru Coast Adventure Waterpark in late June 2018.

The adventure waterpark will be one of the world's biggest waterparks featuring 17 different slides and a mix of wet and dry rides.

An e-commerce site for the integrated resort destination is targeted to go live in time for the opening, according to Philip Whittaker, acting CEO, Integrated Theme Parks & Attraction.

The anticipated attraction will join other components of Desaru Coast, including the 27-hole The Els Club Desaru Coast Ocean Course (which opened in September 2016) and the 18-hole The Els Club Desaru Coast Valley Course (which opened in March 2017).

Whittaker said key markets include

domestic tourists and visitors from Singapore, Indonesia, Greater China and India. The company is looking to appoint sales representatives in target markets overseas, while sales calls to Shanghai and Guangzhou have been planned for the end of the year.

In addition, after ITB Asia 2017, 60 buyers will attend a fam trip to Desaru Coast jointly organised by Tourism Johor and Themed Attractions Resorts & Hotels.



Whittaker: bringing a broader appeal

Beyond the theme park launch, openings slated for after June 2018 include four premium hotels and resorts – the 275-key The Westin Desaru Coast Resort; Aman Resorts & Villas comprising 46 units of club suites and 48 units of residential villas; 123-key Anantara Desaru Coast Resort & Villas; and 365-key Hard Rock Hotel.

Also opening within the integrated resort is a multipurpose venue, known as Desaru Coast Conference Centre, which will be equipped with a banquet area and exhibition space that can host 1,000 participants.

Given what it has in store, Whittaker said he is expecting Desaru Coast to attract a spectrum of travellers – from holidaymakers to honeymooners and corporate clients.

He added that Desaru Coast will have an “affordable luxury” positioning – while there are high-end hotel options, it is not marketed as a exclusive destination for the rich.

Speaking to *TTG Show Daily*, Azizi Borhan, managing director at Asutra Convex, commented: “The components of Desaru Coast – the hotels, waterpark, convention centre and others – will help us create itineraries that promote Johor as a mono destination, rather than in combination with Singapore.”

Cautiously optimistic, Sharon Nor, product manager at Sri Sutra Travel, said: “We’ll have to see the theme park and the type and number of activities it can offer to determine how big a pull it will be for the destination.

“Regional markets as well as the Indian market are interested in theme parks. There is a possibility that Desaru Coast development will be able to increase the length of stay of tourists in Johor.”

## All work, all play at the OC Photos by Fandy Razak



## News

# Tunisia has eyes on China market

An NTO office in Shanghai and negotiations with carriers on China flights to follow recent visa-free allowance

By Caroline Boey

Marketing itself as the new destination in Africa for Asia and participating at ITB Asia for the first time, Tunisia is setting its sights on growing the number of Chinese travellers from 11,000 to 500,000 in its tourism strategy to reach 10 million visitor arrivals by 2020.

Total visitor arrivals now stand at five million.

Since offering visa-free entry to Chinese travellers in 2016, the number of tourists increased 94 per cent that year and was up 49 per cent to-date this year.

Tunisia, which was awarded the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize, opened an office in Beijing 10 years ago as part of its embassy.

With the China explosion, it is planning to expand its presence to Shanghai by 2020, according to Leila Tekaiia, spokesperson, Official Tunisian Tourism Board.

Klaus Lengefeld, technical expert, Fund for Training and Promotion of Youth Employment in Tunisia, German Society for International Cooperation, told *TTG Show Daily*: "With China numbers reach-

ing critical mass, Tunisia can start negotiations with carriers such as China Southern Airlines or Tunisair to begin operating flights between the two countries.

"Negotiations can start next year and it is possible for direct flights to operate by 2019."

Tunisia is a one- to two-hour flight from Europe's main aviation hubs and there are 12 daily flights from Paris, according to Mehdi Allani, head of promotion and marketing committee, Tunisian Hotel Federation.

Allani added Chinese travellers are also coming via the Middle East and Chinese tour groups are combining a two-day shopping trip in Dubai before visiting Tunisia, a moderate Islamic country with Roman and French influence.

Tekaiia said Chinese tour groups, which are booking their trips with Ctrip, spend between three and five days discovering the country's historic, cultural, archaeological, beach and desert attractions.

More is being done to train Chinese-speaking guides and for the industry to

learn how to welcome Chinese guests and provide the hospitality they are used to, she added.

Meanwhile, the China Outbound Tourism Research Institute is conducting a study on spend and tour patterns to help Tunisia develop a China strategy, said director Wolfgang Georg Arlt.

Rather than focus on numbers, Tunisia should develop special interest programmes to attract quality tourists, Arlt opined.

Tunisia has 700 classified hotels and 200,000 rooms including five-star international luxury brands with a new Four Seasons in the capital Tunis. A Ritz-Carlton and Anantara are in the pipeline, Allani said, noting that five-star room rates are affordable, around 60 euros (US\$71) in winter and 150 euros in summer.

There are also eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites across Tunisia.

Allani added that Tunisia is popular with French incentive groups and MNCs like Coca Cola, IBM and Samsung have held their programmes in the destination.



From left: Tunisian Hotel Federation's Amina Sta and Mehdi Allani with Official Tunisian Tourism Board's Leila Tekaiia

"We hope in the next two years to welcome incentives from Asia," Allani added.

Tekaiia said leisure travellers from Asia, who are fans of the Star Wars movies, are visiting Tunisia to view the sets that still remain and these locations can be used for incentive groups.

## Blacklane makes major inroads

By Raini Hamdi

Blacklane's recent acquisition of US-based Solve, which offers VIP concierge services, will strengthen its foothold in the market, where it already has the potential to displace one of the major income streams of inbound tour operators – airport transfers.

Solve is an 18-month firm that offers services such as curbside and airside passenger meet-and-greet, fast-track security, expedited customs and immigration, and lounge access, which ties in neatly with Blacklane's business model of offering high-quality rides at fair, fixed and all-inclusive rates bookable on its website, mobile app or via distribution and channel partners, in real-time with instant confirmation.

Blacklane's co-founder & CEO Jens Wohltorf told *TTG Show Daily* he is rebuilding Solve and relaunching it by year-end using the same principles that have driven Blacklane to be a trusted brand with a smart booking technology and global scalability.

Blacklane is able to offer, say, an airport transfer at prices which are a third of those charged by legacy operators because it has been able to consolidate fragmented local service providers and retrain them to offer professional chauffeur-driven service.

The company now operates in more than 50 countries, 250 cities and 500 airports. In Asia-Pacific, business has expanded rapidly under the charge of regional director Lo Li-Wen based in Singapore. In 1.5 years, Blacklane has increased its footprint in the region from 20 to 80 countries.

From December 1, travellers will be able to book Blacklane's airport services, with or without airport transfers. Just as Blacklane has made professional chauffeur-driven service accessible and affordable to more travellers, Wohltorf said the new service would no longer be the re-



From inside a Blacklane vehicle, Wohltorf shared updates on the company's latest acquisition, headway made in airport services, democratising the chauffeur-driven experience and constructive disruption

serve of the famous and beautiful.

He believes in "constructive" disruption, pointing out that what Blacklane has done is to put existing infrastructure to better use – for example aggregating mom-and-pop players onto the Blacklane platform, resolving their biggest issue that only 20 per cent of their vehicles are utilised. "With low utilisation, they have to charge high prices in order to survive. But with 70 or 80 per cent utilisation, they are able to charge lower prices," he said.

He admitted however airport transfers, long been a high profit margin and revenue centre for inbound tour operators, may be a thing of the past for them. But he said tour operators should work with

Blacklane and focus on their core area of providing personalised itineraries and service delivery to clients.

Even legacies like Hertz are working with Blacklane. Since March this year, Hertz Europe has been providing Hertz Driver Services powered by Blacklane, where Hertz customers in Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain and the UK can book airport transfers, limousines and chauffeur services through Hertz website or customer service telephone number.

As the old saying goes, if you can't beat them, join them.

– Full report, *View From the Top*, TTG Asia March 2017

## Moscow kicks off preparations for 2018 World Cup

In preparation for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, Moscow Department of Sport and Tourism is stepping up its security and tourism offerings.

At a press conference on Wednesday, officials shared that the city has been improving its local infrastructure to receive the expected influx of tourists next year.

Enhancements include a new Safe City project, featuring a security system that monitors all events and supplies information to all security services and agencies, via a surveillance network that includes more than 142,000 cameras. This will be complemented by tourist information centres and tourist police who are fluent in foreign languages.

To accommodate the spike in arrivals, the Russian city has also been encouraging hotels to be rated. It now has 224 three-star hotels, and 120 certified four- and five-star ones. By end-2017, 11 more hotels will open, adding 3,800 rooms to the city.

Moscow will get Chinese-friendly too, with 22 hotels already adapted for Chinese tourists. In 2016, Moscow welcomed some 512,000 travellers from China, a source market that formed the bulk of its Asian arrivals that same year, which totalled 650,000.

The World Cup is expected to bring more than one million football fans to Moscow.





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## News

# TAT shows off the many facets of Thailand

New marketing concept will sustain the kingdom's tourism growth momentum



Santi: different ways to amaze visitors to Thailand

By Mimi Hudoyo

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has soft-launched at ITB Asia 2017 a new marketing concept which focuses on new source markets, new traveller segments and new ways to enjoy the kingdom.

Named *The Million Shades of Thailand*, the new concept is set for an official launch this November at World Travel Market London and again in

January 2018 at ASEAN Tourism Forum when it heads to Chiang Mai.

In his soft launch presentation on October 25, Tanes Petsuwan, deputy governor for Marketing Communications of TAT, explained the concept's three areas of focus, "the 3Ns, which are New Destinations, New Segmentation and New Product".

New Destinations, which

refers to target source markets TAT is keen on courting, include Canada, Latin America and China's secondary cities.

Tanes said: "It was not feasible in the past to promote Thailand (to travellers in) Latin America because (the journey) was too long for them and air connectivity was lacking.

"These days, airlines such as the Middle Eastern carriers offer good connections and use new aircraft that can fly a longer distance, and are equipped with (extensive) onboard entertainment that make for a more enjoyable journey."

As for New Segment, TAT will reach out to millennial travellers who are lured by digital social media and customer-focused activities.

And finally, for New Product, TAT is spotlighting Gastronomy, Nature and Beach, Arts and Craft, Culture, and Way of Life.

In an interview with *TTG Show Daily*, Santi Chudintra, deputy governor for TAT's international marketing (Asia and South Pacific), said he hopes that the new marketing concept will "invite the world to travel to Thailand, and open

their minds and perspectives (so that) they will find new things (and) interesting stories."

Santi explained that there are different ways to enjoy Thailand's many different destinations.

Drawing a food analogy, he said: "Take *pad thai* for instance. You'll find it at a street vendor and at a high-end restaurant. You'll find it wrapped in a leaf or in an omelette."

He pointed out that local food, handicraft, souvenirs and other products come in different variations across the country, festivals are celebrated in unique ways in different locations, and the beach experience is different everywhere.

*The Million Shades of Thailand* is expected to help Thailand maintain its competitive edge in the travel industry

International arrivals to Thailand in 2016 totalled 32.6 million and the number is expected to rise to 34.5 million. Meanwhile, tourism revenue is expected to hit US\$50 billion, up from 2016's US\$42 billion.

## IN BRIEF

### A wellness focus

Pullman Hotels & Resorts is strengthening its commitment to well-being with a programme to help travellers adopt a healthier lifestyle.

The new approach is based on four universal pillars of health: sleep, food, sport and spa, with customisation options for each, along with four key fundamentals: age defense, energy boost, balance and detox.

### An app for perks

Visitors to Luxembourg can now score either free or discounted entrance tickets to more than 60 locations and museums, as well as free access to public transport.

All visitors need to do is download the new Luxembourg Card mobile app from Google Play or Apple App Store.

### Sweet suites

Royal Plaza on Scotts are offering meeting planners the option of transforming its new Corporate Suites from a contemporary residence into a sophisticated meeting room.

Each suite features a 10-seat board table, built-in projection screen and Bose speaker.

## MakeMyTrip courts budget travellers

Having set its sights on budget travellers from India, MakeMyTrip is expanding its product line – currently comprising four- and five-star hotel accommodation in India and elsewhere – to include budget accommodation.

Chairman and group CEO of MakeMyTrip, Deep Kalra, said his company is targeting Indians looking for rooms priced from US\$25 and above when travelling within India and overseas.

Deep said: "The budget travel segment (in India) is huge. Roughly 200,000 Indians book online monthly through their mobile phones."

To ensure only quality budget accommodation is offered, MakeMyTrip is enforcing an accreditation system.

"In India, we are accrediting budget accommodation in terms of amenity, hygiene and safety considerations, among others. By accrediting these independent properties, we give assurances to our buyers.

"Outside of India, we're looking at 32 cities that are popular with Indian travellers and they include Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Hong Kong, New York and London. We use our partners overseas to help us with the accreditation, covering homestays and secondary homes." – **S Puvaneswary**

## Malaysia's north to soar on Qatar's wings

Qatar Airways' new thrice-weekly flights between Doha and Penang, commencing February 6, 2018, are spurring hopes among Malaysian inbound agents of stronger European traffic to the northern region of the country.

The new service will be the first longhaul flight to Penang, an island destination that gets mostly air connections with regional destinations in South-east Asia and North Asia.

Diethelm Travel Malaysia's managing director, Manfred Kurz, believes that the new flights are "perfect" for promoting the northern region of Malaysia, where Penang is, to the Europeans. Popular destinations in the north include Langkawi, Kedah, and the Belum Temenggor Forest Reserve in Perak state.

"I foresee the UK senior market will be interested in these flights due to the country's historical links with Penang," said Kurz.

As the "Germans like to move around more and tend to end

their holiday with a beach stay", Kurz predicts that an open jaw arrangement would appeal to the travellers, where they start off in Kuala Lumpur before proceeding overland to Perak (state) and onward to Penang, and leaving for Doha on the new Qatar Airways flight.

The new flights are a boon to Malaysia's business events specialists too, opined Yap Sook Ling, managing director, Asian Overland Services Tours & Travel.

She told *TTG Show Daily* that the flights will "provide an opportunity to promote Penang for business events and to attract more international conferences".

Arokia Das, senior manager at Luxury Tours Malaysia, agreed: "Penang is relatively new to the business events scene. Corporates and associations intending to have their event in South-east Asia will see Penang as a fresh option (due to the improved access)."

And because "Qatar Airways

has a solid reputation and airfares are reasonable", Arokia thinks it will be easier now to sell Penang to the European market.

He added: "For the leisure segment, we are looking at selling just Penang or combining Penang with East Malaysia, which has rich eco-tourism and cultural offerings."

Longhaul buyers at ITB Asia 2017 are equally upbeat about the new air link.

Jesko Kregel, senior product manager, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore at TUI Deutschland based in Hannover, said: "Our (best selling) tours combine Singapore and Langkawi. The new flights to Penang will provide us with options in creating new itineraries for the northern region of Malaysia. Qatar Airways is known for its good service and affordability, so promoting the airlines and the new route will not be too hard."

A new buyer to ITB Asia, Joe Calstas, director general, board member at the Institute of Jour-

nalism and Communication based in Geneva, Switzerland, said: "We are considering holding seminars related to journalism in Penang, and improved longhaul connectivity will certainly help.

"We will be meeting with the Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau at ITB Asia to know more about the offerings in the state."

Calstas shared that most of those attending his association's events in Asia are Europeans.

But when asked if the new flights would boost Malaysia's Middle Eastern footfalls, Ally Bhoonee, executive director at World Avenues, said he didn't think so.

"Most Middle Eastern visitors to Malaysia are from Saudi Arabia, and in the past, many from Saudi Arabia used

Qatar Airways. With the ongoing sanctions (placed on Qatar by Saudi Arabia), the new flights will only benefit Qataris and the expatriates living in Qatar," he explained. – **S Puvaneswary**



Kregel: new ways to sell the north



Calstas: eyeing Penang for events

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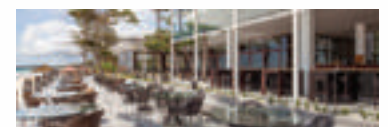
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## In the spotlight

# Future of hotel representation

The nature of hotel representation is changing but the philosophy behind it hasn't, says Geoff Andrew, CEO, Worldhotels, who tells Raini Hamdi why representation has a future despite new competition

### What is the future of representation?

When people talk of representation, it conjures up an old-fashioned way of doing business and some have made it their mission to reinvent the word. But I think it's exactly what we do. A hotel is under more competitive pressure right now with the chains getting bigger, OTAs getting a larger share and margins being squeezed as acquisitions outstrip room revenue growth. Hotels need representation more than ever.

Hotels need the sales reach into international markets which they could hardly afford and definitely can't now. The nature of sales however is changing. It's not the traditional us visiting the agents or getting

RFPs; much of sales has moved online and we have had to move with it.

The idea of how you represent a hotel is also changing. We've become a hospitality services company. For example, we launched a Why? programme over a year ago. It forces hotels to answer a fundamental question: Why do you exist? Why should anyone stay with you versus the other hotel next door? One of the services we offer is helping a hotel to stand out in the crowd. We can also help them balance their distribution on OTAs versus their own websites.

So we put them through a whole workshop covering not just sales and marketing but all the way to service delivery. Hotels

that have taken this see material changes in the way they are being reviewed online. They get higher rankings on TripAdvisor or Booking.com and this isn't just marketing but revenue. A Cornell research shows every point you gain on one of these sites is worth 5.5 per cent in terms of your ability to drive rate up without losing volume. You can't dismiss OTAs but if you're working with them, at least do the best you can and try to get your visibility up.

Then we work with them on how they can get more business directly, which involves a full audit of the hotel website, booking engine, strategy to improve traffic and conversion on the website. Online is so important that we're putting more resources in helping hotels in that area of sales. Worldhotels now has a digital account manager and experts who do the audits. We're trying to fill the need the hotel has in terms of competing. It's a tough world. The nature of representation is changing but the fundamental philosophy – how do we best represent your property and help you achieve the optimum in roomnights and at the right rate? – hasn't changed.

I've been in the business for 30 years. I started with Utell, I know how it works, and that the philosophy hasn't changed.

### What is the impact of hotel chains launching soft brands to get independent hotels into their fold?

We battle with owners who say we're going to Hilton, Hyatt, etc, whereas before they didn't necessarily want the big brands. But now those chains are offering soft brands – it's ridiculously expensive but hey they got them. And of course at the other end is to pick up a tech-and-plug and you have a channel manager; it is so simple to pick up OTA business these days. We still occupy the middle ground, from hard branding on the one end to simple plug-in on the other.

The battle is the quality of service you deliver. Some hotels think they've figured out the technology but often they haven't figured out the sales. It's great to have an engine, but if you aren't pushing business through that engine, you're doing only half the work.

### Do you consider chains your competition now rather than the other representation companies?

There are opportunities for hotels to stay independent, so while the other representation companies are still competitors they are also partners. We are all trying to protect the individual ideal against the encroachment of the big boys.

It's going to be down to who's giving the best value at the right price. We think the combined organisation with ALHI (Associated Luxury Hotels International, whose parent Associated Luxury Hotels

bought Worldhotels in February from Boston-based private equity firm Battery Ventures) is going to give us an edge in a number of areas that will sit well with some hotels.

Relais & Chateaux for instance has a certain profile; they have an F&B niche. We have done well in city hotels, even though we have resorts. Our sweet spot is business travel although we also have a lot of leisure.

### How is the new parent good for you and your members?

ALHI is a good fit as they also deal with independents and are hotel people (ALHI describes itself as a global sales organisation dedicated to the meeting and incentive marketplace, handling global sales services for over 250 luxury level hotels and resorts primarily in the US.) Battery Ventures was more technology focussed; they had sold Trust and Nexus to Sabre and we didn't fit in with their strategy.

Already, ALHI is generating leads for us. They have clients that they can't place in their own portfolio so they pass those leads to us. As well, ALHI has a programme called Global Luxury Alliance and we've picked 50 or so of our hotels that fit the criteria to join this alliance so they will now benefit from the resources and expertise of ALHI's sales team.

### What's the criteria?

They have to be luxury, upper end members, and if they have meeting facilities and are in destinations ALHI believes has the demand, we put out an invitation to them.

But all this gets bigger than meetings and incentives. Between us, we have 150-odd sales people and 600 hotels. One of the things we're looking at is what services can we add that will benefit both organisations and members? Within the parent group, we're evolving some ideas, for example, enlarging our loyalty programme Peak Points to potentially include ALHI hotels. We want to strengthen our proposition to give mem-

bers more than what they were getting before, while ALHI is looking for a way to broaden their offerings to their hotels and their global footprint.

Below: Three of Worldhotels' many Asian properties – The Park Lane Jakarta, Indonesia; Lotte Hotel Hanoi, Vietnam and Carlton City Hotel, Singapore



Geoff Andrew  
CEO, Worldhotels





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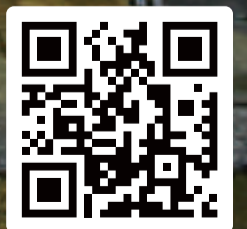


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## Intelligence

# The impact of millennials on corporate travel and expense



Within the past year, millennials (born 1981-1997) surpassed baby boomers (born 1946-1964) as the largest living generation in the US and now make up the largest share of employees in the American workforce, according to Pew Research. This generation, totalling more than 75 million people, has changed how organisations recruit, retain and use their workforces, but to date, there has been little information about what millennials actually spend on corporate travel and expenses.

To gain more insight, Concur analysed US\$36 billion in dining, entertainment and hotel expenses processed via Concur Technologies between 1Q2015 and 1Q2017, broken down by general age brackets: 22-35 (millennials), 36-49 (Gen X) and 50-65 (baby boomers). Here's a look at what the survey uncovered.

Older generations still spend the most.

Employees ages 36-65 account for 80 per cent of dining, entertainment and hotel transactions, and total expenses per employee in this age range are 66 per cent more than millennials, averaging US\$8,596 compared to US\$5,188 over nine quarters (1Q2015 to 1Q2017).

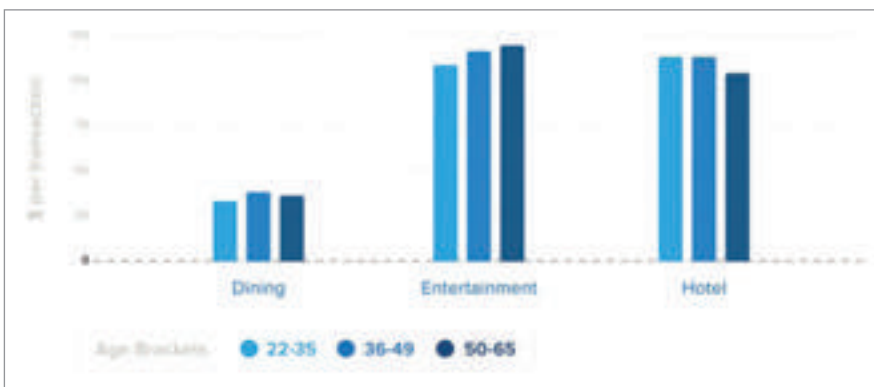
However, breaking things down by transaction tells a slightly different story.

Millennial purchasing patterns may defy their reputation for being selfish and entitled, but they aren't drastically different than their senior colleagues, which we might expect.

In fact, millennials spend:

- 8 per cent less than employees ages 36-65 on dining and entertainment, approximately US\$44 per transaction compared to US\$52.
- US\$33 per meal when travelling, while colleagues between ages 36-65 spend US\$39 (which also indicates a senior-level title may not necessarily come with a more lavish per diem).
- Three per cent more on hotel related expenses (from their room, to parking, Wi-Fi and room service) than senior colleagues, averaging US\$114 per transaction compared to US\$111.

### Age Bracket Spend Per Transaction

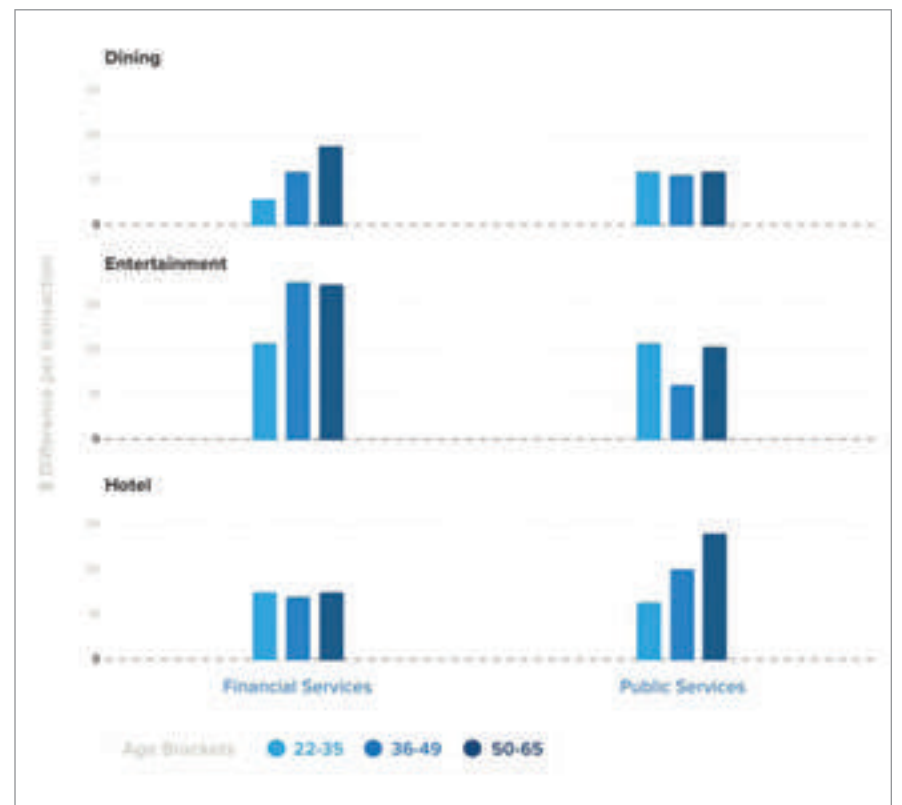


The spending gap gets bigger when you compare industries and countries.

On average, all generations in the financial services and public services industries spend more per business travel transaction compared to other industries – 22 per cent and 19 per cent more respectively.

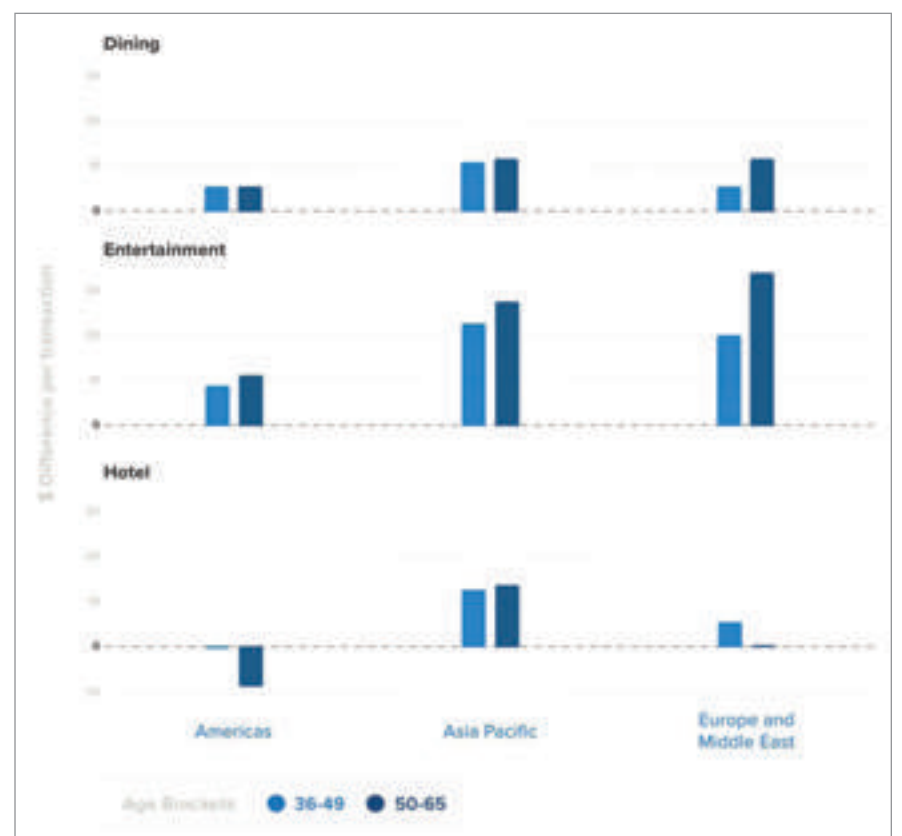
For example, employees ages 36-65 working in financial services spend an average of US\$52 per meal, while employees in the same age range working in healthcare spend US\$42. Meanwhile, millennials in public service jobs spend an average of US\$124 per hotel transaction compared to millennials working in healthcare who spend US\$107.

### Difference From Average Industry Spend – Financial Services and Public Services



By and large, millennials spend less on dining, entertainment and hotel expenses than older generations globally. By region, we see the biggest difference between what senior colleagues and millennials spend in Asia-Pacific, Europe and the Middle East.

### Difference From Millennial Spend



How different generations spend company dollars is one piece of the puzzle.

As the workforce evolves, employee spend patterns is one of many factors companies should consider to make sure travel, expense and invoice management programs meet their changing needs.

For example, the millennial generation is looking for a seamless experience to book and manage travel, but are companies adapting quickly enough to implement integrated online and mobile booking experiences?

- Regular check-ups on your travel and expense policy are also a great way to stay ahead of the curve. And regardless of employee age, a few key policy principles stand true.
- Be clear and to the point. Make sure your policy is straightforward. The easier your policy is to understand, the easier it is for your employees to follow (and enforce).
- Ensure policies are easy to find. If your policy is buried in an intranet, it isn't going to be used. Making your policy visible keeps it top of mind. And if you update it, plan a procedure to inform employees of this change.

Emphasise the benefits. Explaining the reasons behind the policy and how it benefits all employees helps with acceptance. Not only having a policy to follow, but holding everyone accountable (no exemptions, regardless of rank), keeps it fair all around.



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## Analysis

# The technology experience

From immersive videos to Virtual Reality product experiences, there's plenty today's technology can do to enhance the delegate experience at business events. Yet, adoption is not as extensive as events specialists would like. **Karen Yue** finds out why

**W**hile in conversation with four event industry specialists on the application of technology in engaging the audience, one constant refrain to emerge was that these are now exciting times to be in for event players.

Evie Loo, senior vice president and managing director, China for Jack Morton Worldwide, said: "Almost every event experience that we create and work with clients on these days includes some form of technology."

Offering an example, Loo said Jack Morton Worldwide helped to develop and create a Virtual Reality Google Tilt Brush experience at the recent China Porsche Dealer Conference. Event participants got to don Virtual Reality goggles and create their own 3D image in a virtual world surrounding the new Porsche Panamera Turbo. The 3D image is also available for download to the participant's mobile phone as a GIF.

She said: "Different auto brands have used a lot of Artificial Intelligence to enhance their events experiences – with robots deployed to sign guests in at the reception, and to brew and pour coffee in the lounge.

"We have worked with 3D printed models on-site (to produce personalised parting gifts) for guests."

Oni Chukwu, president & CEO at etouches, a global company specialising cloud event management software and sourcing solutions, said: "Immersive technology is advancing well and its applications in business events are many. Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, immersive videos (also known as 360-degree videos) and (transmitter devices like) iBeacon are all common these days.

"In fact, technology is woven deeper into meeting and events, to a point now that attendees and organisers both realise that without using fairly immersive technology, meetings are not as successful. In my opinion, this is an exciting time to be in the meetings and events industry."

According to Qixin Liow, account manager with Pacific World Singapore, some of the bigger business events handled by the company had utilised a 270-degree projection as an immersive experience for delegates, Virtual Reality masks as entertainment during themed dinners, and QR codes in delegate registration and attendance tracking.

"We are now exploring possibilities of using Xylobands – wristbands with LED bulbs that light up according to action or music," added Liow.

### Differing rate of adoption

However, the extent of technology being used to engage event attendees is varied.

Pacific World Singapore's Liow said: "We are only skimming the surface of the possibilities for technology at events because a lot of companies are still wary and hesitant to try out new (ideas)."

The scene is different over in China, according to Jack Morton Worldwide's Loo.

"Events here are adopting technology much quicker than the rest of the world. Everything here can be scanned and is interactive. Every event is looking to out-do the one before with different technology," she said.

"However, you do find that people here use technology (just to check off a box). Virtual Reality is used in most events, but unless the content is on point and relevant – and this takes a lot of time and budget to perfect, it doesn't convey the correct corporate message," she added.

Clients' hesitancy around technology usage in audience engagement stems from several reasons – costs, lack of knowledge and insufficient time to clearly define objectives.

Liow said new event technology "comes with a much heftier price tag compared to your usual manual and old school ways".

While Chukwu agrees that cost is prohibitive for most, he is seeing changes. He explained: "It is true that there has not been much application of Augmented Re-

ality at meetings and events because that is fairly expensive to work. But think about driverless cars. A year or two ago, people said it wasn't possible to implement and was too costly. Yet it is happening now. Today, the cost of Augmented Reality usage is starting to come down.

"For now, immersive videos are much more within reach because they are affordable, and are being used at events today. It can cost a few thousands of dollars to produce (marketing materials in the form of immersive videos), depending on how elaborate the content is, how you want to engage your delegates, and how many delegates you want to engage."

Loo opined that the problem is "mainly a knowledge issue".

She said: "Many people are unaware of what's available and what's new. Clients get cold feet if it is technology they haven't used before, but in order to engage new technology you have to take a leap of faith.

"We often get the brief to do something that is super creative and never done before, but in the end the client would want an example of it from a previous event! Partly this is down to not having trusted partners – many new ideas come from small start-ups; big corporations are sometimes scared of investing in technology from a start-up agency they haven't worked with before. It's a risk for them, which holds them back."

Pacific World Singapore's senior account manager, Andrea Teo, also suggested that time was another obstacle.

She elaborated: "There needs to be sufficient time invested into a project to have clear objectives, which is often the most challenging, and to decide on the right technology solutions/products to deliver that experience. Time is also needed for User Acceptance Tests to ensure that the (user interface and experience) do not end up marring the event."

Teo believes that the business events industry could see better and more sophisticated adoption of technology in audience engagement. "It's time to move beyond online registration (which is now a given) and look into enhanced interactivity and more experience-personalisation, through the harvest of data and analytics to create tailored event experiences for that top-of-mind recall," she urged.

Examples of available technology that can help "create a better attendee experience", according to Liow, include an emotion tracker that allows organisers to read how attendees are feeling – perhaps too cold or bored with the content on stage – and to implement solutions immediately.

### Age, IoT as catalysts

Industry players agree that both an increasingly younger workforce and a wider application of Internet of Things in daily routine will drive corporations to utilise more technology in their event delivery.

Chukwu said: "People don't use use one level of technology at home and a different one at work; they expect the same level of technology and convenience in both en-



Clients get cold feet if it is technology they haven't used before, but in order to engage new technology you have to take a leap of faith."

**Evie Loo**  
Senior vice president and managing director, China, Jack Morton Worldwide

vironments. Look at the way the Internet of Things has crept into our homes – we can control the functions of our refrigerators or TVs remotely. So, this is familiar to people and they expect the same level of technology when they are at work and at events."

Teo sees millennials as the driving force. She said: "Gen Y-ers were at the forefront of the technology boom and they have grown accustomed to having technology as an integral part of life. Now that they are stepping into the workforce, automation and technology is all the more (essential)."

And brands hoping to connect with the tech-savvy consumer of today must take heed, opined Loo.

"(This is especially true) in China as everyone is stuck to their mobile phone screen 24 hours a day, so creating interactions via the phone is vital," she said.

"However, it's interesting to note that luxury brands that are using technology for engagement through WeChat are moving away from that at events. Instead, personalised items that are crafted, that participants can touch, feel and see are definitely in vogue for luxury brands. That personal human touch, craftsmen and professional age-old experience is a growing trend in luxury events here, and it seems to be a backlash against the over-reliance on technology."



Education is key. Train and expose more event professionals to technology, make it a common topic of conversation among the trade, and share the knowledge with clients. The more commonplace it gets, the more receptive people will be (to technology).

**Andrea Teo**  
Senior account manager, Pacific World Singapore



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## Analysis

# Competing for fun

In Asia, the business of fun is a serious industry as attractions keep up the amusement war through constant reinvention. By **Pamela Chow**



Shanghai Disneyland

Asia has been the hotbed of a theme park rush, with intellectual-property (IP) partnerships on the uptick as destinations the likes of Shanghai Disneyland, Legoland Japan and Malaysia's Movie Animation Park Studios seek out movie and cartoon producers to create new universes of amusement.

With fun being a serious business in Asia, water playgrounds have also been making a splash. From 2015-2016, visitor volume to water parks in the region climbed 5.4 per cent from 19.5 million to 20.9 million, reported the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) and AECOM.

To quench the region's thirst for watery

fun, new operators are thronging the market – at least 15 water parks have opened in the last three years in Thailand alone, said Wuthichai Luangamornlert, managing director of Siam Park City, at the Asian Attractions Expo 2017 in Singapore in June.

“We're seeing a growth in private investment in this new emerging market as tourism spreads from Pattaya, Bangkok and Chiang Mai to the second-tier cities,” observed Wuthichai.

Meanwhile, service supplier WhiteWater Southeast Asia has signed to develop “world-class water parks” in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Bahrain, said CEO Chris Perry.

Yet, as the competition heats up, the market size is shrinking. In 2015-2016, overall visitor numbers in Asia-Pacific's top 20 amusement parks dipped 2.8 per cent from 130.9 million to 127.3 million, according to the 2016 TEA/AECOM Theme Index and Museum Index.

The decrease, as outlined in the report, is in part due to more parks opening in China, drawing droves of Chinese visitors to domestic attractions and away from those in neighbouring countries.

Confronted with sliding popularity and a tightening market share, incumbents around Asia are facing a mounting pressure to reinvent.

### Fun for the whole family

The key, industry players believe, lies in multigenerational experiences. President and CEO of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), Paul Noland, observed: “We are seeing parks capitalise on the nostalgia factor. Successive generations like to share experiences that they enjoyed growing up, so the trend is to create high-quality rides that all members of the family can enjoy.”

Wuthichai agreed, adding that family rides generate the most visibility and discussion on social media for Siam Park City, Thailand's oldest water park.

“The trend is to become more family-oriented, so we've invested in rides that the whole family can go on,” said Wuthichai. “We've had customers who haven't visited

our park in five years come back.”

Operators also reported that more developers are capitalising on this trend by transforming casino complexes into mixed-use, family-friendly destinations.

According to Ken Wheatley, director of entertainment technology supplier Christie, Macau led the pack in the development of mixed-use integrated resorts, which was soon replicated in the Philippines, South Korea and Singapore.

The latest talk of the town is Okada Manila, a 44ha integrated resort in the Entertainment City gaming strip. The US\$2.4 billion project boasts a casino, hotel, dining and shopping outlets, and conference spaces, in addition to a 1.2km-long multimedia show comprising choreographed water, light and music performances.

Such multimedia shows are also gaining traction with operators across Asia, checking off boxes as a multigenerational, sustainable and cost-effective revenue driver, with Marina Bay Sands' Spectra light-and-water extravaganza by its prominence as a recent example.

“Multimedia presentations help us keep (attractions) current and relevant for the next generation, who come back to experience something old that's new again,” said Paul Rivet, director of entertainment at Walt Disney Attractions Japan.

Often conducted in the evening, multimedia shows motivate visitors to stay longer at resorts or even overnight, and can drive on-site F&B spending to 15 per cent more, said Jean-Christophe Canizares, chairman and CEO of French multimedia provider ECA2, which developed the Wings of Time show in Sentosa.

They can also be “refreshed easily and changed seasonally”, said Michael Reid, founder of IconPath Curated Experiences.

This is a big selling point – especially for regional parks with smaller budgets – as operators prioritise the “sustained repeatable value” of an attraction, explained Ron Merriman, managing director of MR ProFun China, the company that helmed Ferrari World Abu Dhabi.

While parkgoers may be eager to embrace multimedia extravaganzas, industry

experts caution operators against leaning on trending technology as the focal point of the attraction.

“We have to recognise it's the story and experience that is important. The technology delivers it,” said Darrell Metzger, former CEO of Ocean Park. “We have to be willing to abandon the technology and replace it with whatever it is that can tell your story.”

### The park battle wages on

As Asia continues to receive new openings and expansions, China is seeing multiple IP projects – including Zhuhai's Lionsgate Entertainment World and Universal Studios Beijing – in the development pipeline. TEA projects that by 2020, attendance at theme parks in China will surpass those in the US.

While numerous IP-driven developments are in the pipeline across Asia, countries outside of China may find greater favour in smaller or regional IP projects.

Malaysia and the Philippines were quick to hop on this trend, with the Genting Group's 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox World opening this year-end, and the launch of the DreamWorks-branded DreamPlay attraction in City of Dreams Manila.

Entertainment + Culture Advisors reported that other Asian markets, including Vietnam and South Korea, are in talks to develop integrated resorts with international IP.

Still, Indonesia currently lacks IP attractions, noted David Sutiono, director of Funworld Prima. He added that in order to boost international visitor volume, the country should promote its culture and islands, as it has potential for huge market growth in 10 years or more.

Wuthichai commented: “It can be difficult for major companies to come in because there is no major land mass like the US or China. In my opinion, smaller integrated resorts are the solution.”

On the other hand, Wuthichai is optimistic of Thailand's theme park potential, as the country received 32.5 million visitors in 2016 and expects an upwards of 34 million this year. The country's main concern lies in increasing repeat visitations, which will be tackled with continued government investment in man-made attractions over the next five years, he shared.

Elsewhere in Asia, previously untapped markets are emerging into the fore. Said IAAPA's Noland: “Vietnam has huge growth potential right now, and we also are seeing growth in Malaysia, South Korea and India.”

## Upcoming attractions in Asia

### Jeju Shinhwa World, South Korea

Opening in phases this year, the 250ha Jeju Shinhwa World will be Jeju's first integrated resort. It will encompass premium accommodation, a family theme park, water park, Jeju's largest retail and F&B complex, a YG entertainment centre, MICE facilities and casinos. The 344-room Somerset Jeju Shinhwa World opened on April 25, while the 630-room Jeju Shinhwa World Marriott Resort & Spa will launch in two phases, starting with 486 rooms in late-2017.

### Wet'n'Wild Haikou, China

Built on the Mission Hills Golf Resort Haikou on Hainan Island, Wet'n'Wild Haikou is one of Village Roadshow Theme Parks' (VRTP) first debuts in Asia, bringing China its first

### Wet'n'Wild-branded theme park.

The site is a cluster of hotels – including the recently opened Ritz-Carlton – and a retail, dining and entertainment precinct. VRTP is currently providing consultation for development and will operate the park following its opening, slated for later this year.

### Lionsgate Entertainment World, China

Scheduled to open by the end of 2018 in Novotown on Hengqin Island in Zhuhai, the 2.2ha indoor park will be themed around Lionsgate's key franchises, including *The Hunger Games*, *The Twilight Saga*, *The Divergent Series* and *Now You See Me*. It is developed by Thinkwell Group with consultation by VRTP, which will manage its operations after the opening.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox World, Malaysia

Under the 10-year Genting Integrated Tourism Plan, Genting Group is developing its Outdoor Theme Park into the US\$300 million 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox World. The 10ha park will feature six themed zones such as *Alien vs Predator*, *Ice Age* and *Planet of the Apes*. It is slated to open later this year.

### Universal Studios Beijing, China

Universal Studios' latest foray is a 405ha destination resort in Tongzhou, Beijing, with a reported US\$3.3 billion initial capital investment.

A joint venture between Beijing Shouhuan Cultural Tourism Investment and Universal Parks & Resorts, the theme park will feature existing Universal Studio attractions as well

as new attractions reflecting China's cultural heritage, alongside a retail, dining and entertainment district and themed hotels. It is scheduled to open in 2020 or later.



Lionsgate Entertainment World

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## Feature Incentive ideas

# 10

## TOP INCENTIVE IDEAS

From leaping off a working aeroplane over New Zealand to making music with traditional Okinawan instruments, *TTG Show Daily* reporters uncover some of the world's most unique and exciting reward ideas

### 1 Dive into the ultimate bragging rights

An experience that's hard to beat for thrills, self-reward and a sense of accomplishment, Skydive Wanaka on New Zealand's South Island is a top choice set in breathtaking scenery in which brave participants can see up to six lakes, Mt Cook and the Clutha River.

Strap your top achievers to a beautiful stranger for a tandem ride in a funky orange plane, and let the adventure take shape. Everyone gets a home-video of his experience for show-and-tell for many years to come.

**Capacity:** Up to nine passengers with tandem guides at a single time

**Email:** dropzone@skydivewanaka.com  
**Website:** www.skydivewanaka.com

### 2 Go wild in Bako

Take your top performers out of the familiar city and into the beautiful natural surroundings of Bako National Park, Sarawak's oldest national park, where local residents – proboscis monkeys, long-tailed macaques, silvered leaf-monkeys, common water monitors, plantain squirrels, wild boar and mouse deer – thrive.

To see these creatures in their natural habitat, the park offers a number of well-marked trails. Pick a short pleasant stroll to refresh the mind of your winners, or send them off on a full-day hike for a bonding opportunity.

**Capacity:** 78 pax

**Email:** npbooking@sarawak.gov.my  
**Website:** www.bakonationalpark.com

### 3 Dig your toes into the sands of the Thar

Jaisalmer is a world heritage city in Western India, known for its resplendent forts, ornate temples and the seemingly endless great Indian Thar desert. A desert safari offers a unique way to discover the vast sand dunes, and top achievers can later wine and dine in style in the middle of the desert, with traditional Rajasthani dancers providing memorable entertainment.

Groups can even choose to spend the night in the desert – in luxurious tents of course – or return to the city for accommodation in a hotel.

**Capacity:** Up to 100 pax

**Email:** globalalpcord@alpcord.com

### 4 Make music in Okinawa

Famous as a melting pot of numerous Asia-Pacific cultures, the southern Japanese islands of Okinawa are fiercely proud of their unique history and traditions. One of the best ways to get acquainted with Okinawan culture is through its music, a key component of any local gathering.

Put your top achievers in a music-making workshop organised by DMC Okinawa, where they will be instructed by musicians skilled in some of the instruments commonly used in Okinawan music, such as the *sanshin* guitar, *sanba* castanets, the small *paranku* drum and the much larger *taiko* drum.

Participants are taught the basics of their instrument and coached to perform a song. Larger incentive groups are encouraged to break down into smaller bands and hold a competition of their new-found musical skills.

**Capacity:** 30 pax

**Email:** plan@dmc-okinawa.co.jp

**Website:** www.dmc-okinawa.co.jp/en

### 5 Fight of the titans

Further stoke the competitive spirit in your top performers with a *prokout* session, which means "fight" in Cambodian.

Prokout Fitness and Fight Centre puts groups of participants through the basics of *Kun Khmer*, traditional Cambodian fighting, which dates back centuries. As well as learning some of the moves, dedicated instructors will be on hand to share their knowledge about the spiritual martial art and the activi-

ties that devoted masters must carry out in their daily lives to ensure a win in the ring.

**Capacity:** Up to 50 pax

**Email:** theodore@prokout.com

**Website:** www.prokout.com

### 6 Baa, baa woolly sheep

For a unique wilderness experience, catch the annual sheep mustering and shearing.

A quintessentially New Zealand event, guests will be surrounded by the sights, sounds and smells of one of the North Island's largest sheep high country station.

Antipodean Luxury Travel will organise a helicopter transfer from a luxury lodge at Cape Kidnappers to the station where 46,000 sheep will be shorn.

Then learn how the wool is graded into classes and which products are made from each type of wool. Guests will be able to choose their own wool to be spun into a garment of their choice to take home as a memento of their visit.

**Capacity:** Unavailable at press time

**Email:** enquiries@antipodeanluxurytravel.com

**Website:** www.antipodeanluxurytravel.com

### 7 Score breakfast on court at the Australian Open

No other Grand Slam offers a behind the scenes experience like this.

Have breakfast on court at the Australian Open before the crowds arrive, meet with tennis personalities and get close to the tennis action with VIP seats. Experts will also be on hand to provide an overview of the day's play and insights into the players. Or indulge in an evening of fine dining and entertainment on court with special guest appearances by legends of the sport.

**Capacity:** 12 pax for VIP On Court Seating; up to 300 pax for breakfast or dinner

**Email:** aohospitality@tennis.com.au

**Website:** www.tennis.com.au

### 8 Rule this kitchen

The Open Farm Community, a lifestyle establishment in Singapore that supports local farms has launched interactive masterclasses. Its team of chefs and bartenders, will guide participants – from greenhorns to experienced

cooks – in delicious creations amid a lush garden setting.

Top performers can then shake up a mean cocktail with a resident bartender, or whip up their own batch of ice cream under the guidance of a chef.

**Capacity:** From 10 pax

**Email:** vanessa.tng@spa-esprit.com

### 9 Cruise down Brahmaputra River

The five-deck *MV Mahabaahu*, equipped with elegant suites, a spa, swimming pool, restaurant, lounge and bar, offers a distinguished way to explore the Brahmaputra River in India's serene north-eastern region.

A number of upstream and downstream itineraries are available, and incentive groups can pick a three-night downstream option that also takes in visits to a tea estate, Kaziranga National Park, Peacock Island and Kamakhya Temple. Enhance the experience with a private barbecue dinner on a deserted island.

**Capacity:** 50 pax

**Email:** cruisedirector@

mahabaahucruiseindia.com

**Website:** www.mahabaahucruiseindia.com



### 10 Pottering around

Get your winners acquainted with locals in Klipah Village, near the Borobudur Temple in Indonesia. The experience begins with a ride in an *andong* horse cart from the hotel to the village. Along the way, see locals going about their daily activities. Upon reaching the village, local potters will teach the group how to make pottery using traditional methods. At the end of it all, everyone gets to bring home their masterpiece, a priceless memory.

**Capacity:** Up to 20 pax

**Email:** info.desk@plataran.com

**Website:** www.plataran.com



2

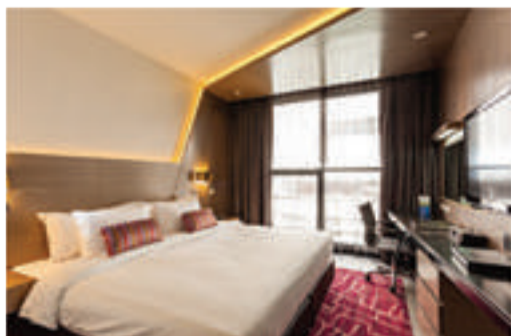
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## Host city

# What's for fun in Singapore?



Well, plenty! Let **TTG Show Daily's** editorial folks in Singapore show you the way

### **Karen Yue, group editor**

#### **See how Singapore's forefathers lived**

An evergreen attraction in my books, the Chinatown Heritage Centre occupies a three-storey shophouse on Chinatown's 48 Pagoda Street and recreates the cramped living conditions of Singapore's early Chinese community in the post-1960s era.

Each exhibit takes the form of a room and tells the story of the occupants. Rely on a handy audio and visual device to hear how the occupants once lived and what daily concerns they had, from a newly-wed couple getting ready for their first child to an exhausted cooked food peddler.

I love how Chinatown Heritage Centre uses elaborate details to bring the experience to life, from voices of occupants arguing in a Chinese dialect over access to water to prayer altars placed overhead and well-worn clothes hanging on walls.

Walking through this interactive museum always gives me goosebumps because I feel like I have indeed travelled back in time to see how my grandparents once lived, but I love it and have visited several times.

### **Raini Hamdi, senior editor**

#### **Artistic haunt**

The National Gallery Singapore is a must! Just being in that beautifully-renovated storied monument alone is an inspiring experience. Add to that the quiet joy of perusing the world's largest public collection of Singapore and South-east Asian art, and retracing Singapore's history in a place that itself made history.

The largest museum in Singapore comprises the City Hall and the former Supreme Court buildings which are now linked through bridges. Some S\$532 million went into the renovation and the museum has been re-opened since November 2015.

The perfect ending to a visit is to dine and/or wine there, as our National Gallery boasts a few of the best restaurants and bars in the city with views facing the Padang that will make you switch your camera to pano mode faster than you can say, cheers.

### **Xinyi Liang-Pholsena, editor, TTG Asia**

#### **Get the local flavour**

For a taste of the quintessential Singaporean experience, visit a hawker centre to savour the Lion City's signature eats at down-to-earth prices. My favourite hawker centre is Old Airport Road Food Centre, which is just a quick hop away from town by MRT (Dakota Station). At this iconic institution, you can find a wide array of local treats from over a hundred stalls; check out Nam Sing Hokkien Mee, Dong Ji Fried Kway Teow, Albert Street Big Prawn Mee and Laoban Soya Beancurd. Bring an empty stomach, some friends (to share the food), plus a pack of tissue or handkerchief – the heat in such open-air dining venues can be unbearable but the yummy food will more than make up for it.

### **Pamela Chow, reporter – Singapore**

#### **Explore an offshore island**

Discover the many gems scattered around Singapore in one of its offshore islands. A 45-minute ferry ride from the Marina South Pier will take you to St John Island, a serene atoll with a small community and lush trails to trek through. From here, cross over to the nearby Lazarus Island, which hides a quiet crescent beach where you can enjoy clear blue waters and white sand away from the crowds.



Clockwise from top left: Chinatown Heritage Centre, JooChiat/Katong neighbourhood, Vespa sidecar tour

### **Paige Lee Pei Qi, assistant editor**

#### **– special projects**

#### **Walk the Southern Ridges**

A quintessential piece of fine art juxtaposed against natural beauty, the Southern Ridges is a 10km seamless stretch of green open space that brings you through Mount Faber Park, Telok Blangah Hill Park, HortPark, Kent Ridge Park and Labrador Nature Reserve.

The Ridges consist of picturesque ridges and pathways, including the iconic Henderson Waves where you will be able to take in panoramic views of the city, harbour and the Southern Islands.

Check out the ridges at night when soft lighting sets the architectural masterpiece aglow. You can begin the scenic walk from Hort Park or Mount Faber Park. One more thing to sweeten the deal – entry is entirely free.

### **Rachel AJ Lee, sub-editor**

#### **Vroom around in a Vespa sidecar**

Climb into a vintage Vespa sidecar and potter around Singapore with Sideways.sg. A half-day motorbike tour takes about three hours, and brings travellers through Chinatown and the Civic District. Weave

through Chinatown's streets to see our traditional shophouses, and take a whiff of the incense emanating from old Chinese temples.

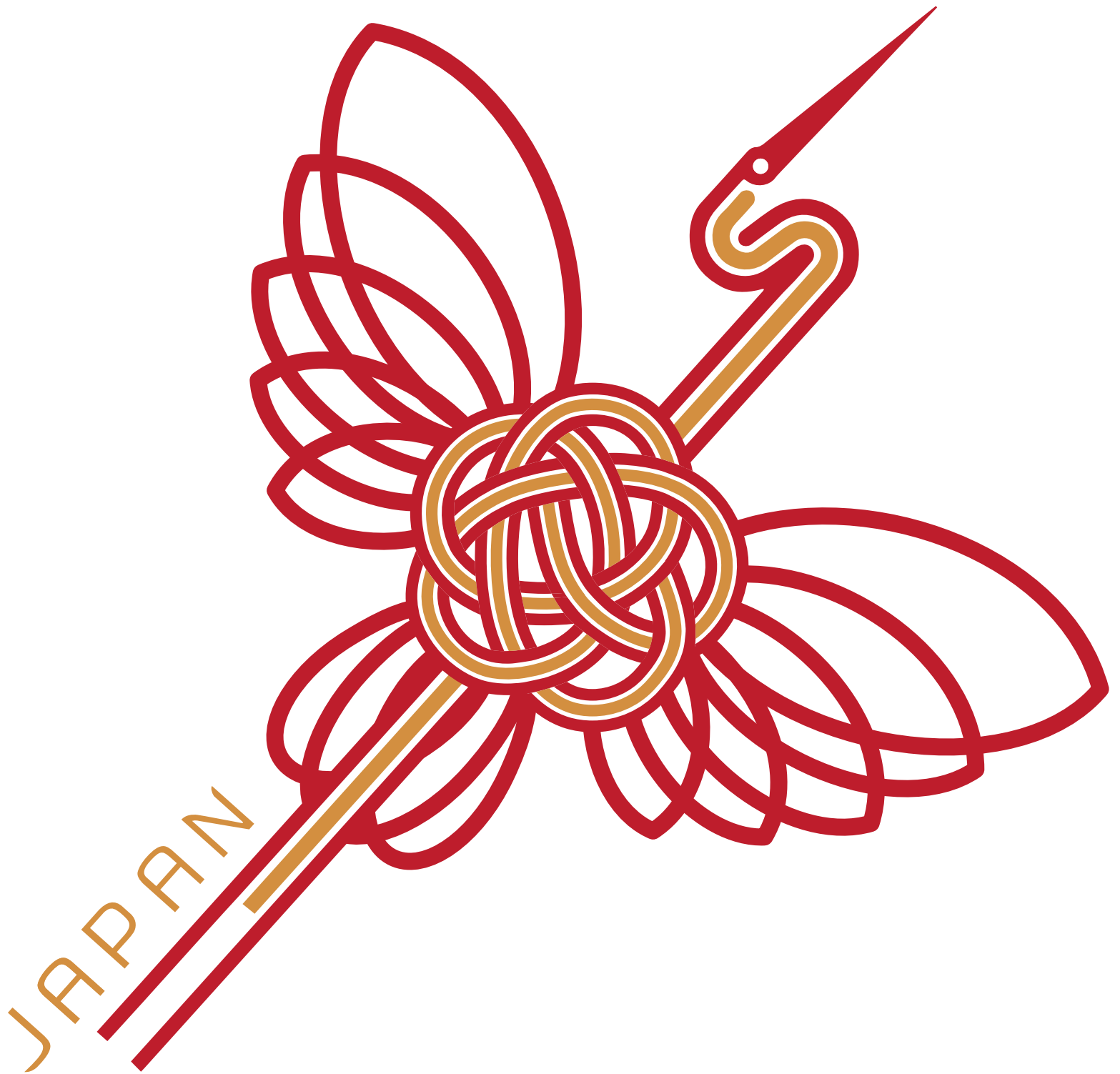
Meanwhile, the Civic District is where some of the country's most historic buildings have been restored and given a new lease of life, such as the former Supreme Court which has been reincarnated as the National Gallery Singapore.

The tour also features a visit to clan houses in Bukit Pasoh, and little-known rooftop vantage points for stunning views over the city state.

### **Yixin Ng, sub-editor**

#### **Joo Chiat/Katong neighbourhood walk**

Stroll around Singapore's Joo Chiat neighbourhood and you're in for a cultural delight at every turn. If the neighbourhood was a patchwork of Peranakan heritage, then the row of pastel-coloured houses on Koon Seng Road is its central motif. The houses stand as an enduring icon of pre-war Peranakan architecture, amid shophouse clusters that feature Straits Chinese eateries and even museums built into an old family homes (The Intan and Katong Antique House).



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## Destination Germany

# Germany aims higher with SE-Asia

The German National Tourism Board is targeting key South-east Asian markets to achieve its goals of scoring longer average nights and higher tourist traffic to lesser-known parts of Germany, writes [Pamela Chow](#)

Since opening an office in Singapore, the German National Tourism Board (GNTB) has intensified its marketing efforts in Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia.

These were earlier identified as the top four South-east Asian markets by growth in visitor numbers. The volume of arrivals from Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia rose by 15.4, 15.5 and 16.1 per cent respectively from 2015 to 2016. Information about Indonesian arrivals is unavailable as press time.

The factors spurring this growth include increased media coverage of Germany in South-east Asia, diplomatic and business co-operation between Germany and the region as well as marketing of the country's tourism brand Destination Germany, explained Chun Hoy Yuen, director of marketing & sales for Germany National Tourism Office (GNTO) – Singapore (ASEAN).

He said: "Destination Germany is becoming more interesting for FITs or smaller groups looking for less-rushed regional tours."

Popular activities that are "usual components of any holiday tour package" include sightseeing at famous historical and scenic towns in and around the main cities, eating street food and outlet shopping.

Chun expects arrivals from the four target markets will "rise significantly" with these lures.

To increase its mileage in the region, GNTO (ASEAN) this month made its rounds in key markets with an ASEAN Roadshow, where German suppliers met with invited local trade representatives at a week-long series of networking dinners in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Singapore.

Among its goals is increasing the number of nights spent in the country, said Chun, as "many South-east Asian travellers start or end their journey in



Muenstertal in southern Black Forest is one of the German alpine regions favoured by travellers

Germany" and typically clock in an average stay of three to five nights according to agent feedback.

To encourage longer stays, GNTB aims to "extend the routes also towards the north and the German shoreline as well as focus on the beautiful scenery in the east of Germany", explained Chun. "Germany-exclusive routes usually focus on the alpine region, the Black Forest region and

the capital city of Berlin."

"Berlin has seen a very big increase in the number of visitors. Several major German cities, such as Hamburg, Stuttgart and Cologne are increasingly (included) on the tour routes of many South-east Asian travellers who have researched what to do and see in Germany," he remarked.

GNTB is also boosting its digital marketing, with an emphasis on social media

campaigns and collaborations. Under Destination Germany, 2018's themes are set to be Culinary Germany, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Karl Marx's birth and the European Athletics Championships in August at The Olympiastadion Berlin.

With these efforts, the board has forecasted that overnight stays by visitors from the Asia-Pacific region will increase by 122.7 per cent by 2030.

### Destination in numbers

## 232,573

The number of overnight stays in Germany by visitors from India in January-April 2017, marking a seven per cent rise from 2016

## 4.6 billion euros

Equivalent to US\$5.4 billion, this is the total tourist receipts generated by Chinese travellers in 2016, up 15 per cent from 2015

## 4 million

The estimated projected increase in overnight stays by visitors from South-east Asia and South America by 2030

### Hot stuff

#### Saks Off 5th

Earlier this year, New York concept store Saks Off 5th forayed into Europe with its Germany openings in Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg, Rotterdam and Stuttgart. The premium off-price retailer offers designer brands such as Stella McCartney, Burberry, Victoria Beckham and Gucci.

#### Moxy Berlin Ostbahnhof

Debuted by Moxy Hotels, a bold and experiential brand under Marriott International, Moxy Berlin Ostbahnhof welcomes social travellers with communal spaces – such as Living Rooms and game rooms – spontaneous jamming sessions and a bar that doubles as the check-in desk, where guests can receive a complimentary cocktail upon arrival.

#### Elbphilharmonie

The tallest inhabited building in Hamburg, Elbphilharmonie – also known as Elbe Philharmonic Hall – is a concert hall in Hamburg. Opened in January, the glass hall sits atop an old warehouse building (Kaispeicher A, built in 1963) near the historical Speicherstadt. It will host performances by some of the world's finest singers and



Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg

musicians. Between the old warehouse and the glass structure is a public viewing area that extends around the building.

#### Jaz Stuttgart

Opening later this year is Jaz Stuttgart, a laid-back design hotel featuring an eclectic

mix of music, art and food. The 166-room hotel sits next to Milaneo shopping mall and houses Rhythms Bar & Kitchen, which serves quality local and Swabian cuisine. Weary travellers can relax in the in-house sauna, steam bath, experience showers, fitness equipment and more.



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# Celebrating a fruitful year

VNAT's investment in various strong outbound Asian markets this year is quickly paying off, and inspiring the NTO to extend its destination promotion efforts to Europe in 2018. [Marissa Carruthers](#) reports

Vietnam's tourism chiefs have stepped up their marketing campaign, helping to secure a 28.8 per cent jump in foreign visitor numbers in the first seven months of 2017.

While Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) has focused its tourism promotional activities this year on China, the country's leading source of travellers, it has also invested in Australia, which has been identified as a key market under the tourism development strategy to 2020, as well as in Japan and South-east Asian countries.

Northern Europe is another target market, with VNAT attending various trade-shows in the region to connect with industry players, such as ITB Berlin, WTM in London and International French Travel Market Top Resa.

In 2018, several fam trips to Vietnam will be organised, and VNAT plans on ploughing more budget into European promotion, as well as opening a representative office in the region.

Pham Ha, CEO of Luxury Travel Vi-

etnam, expects to see the UK, Germany, Spain and France perform well throughout 2018, having already enjoyed increases of 20 to 30 per cent this year.

He added: "In 2018, we expect Europe will recover from the economic crisis and unemployment."

For Europeans looking to return to their holiday plans, Ha believes that "Vietnam seems to be a safe (travel destination)" for them, especially at a time when "Europe still faces (threat of) terrorism".

A Memorandum of Understanding signed between Vietnam and Japan to promote bilateral tourism has also paid off, with Japanese arrivals rising 7.4 per cent in the first eight months of 2017. South Korea is also expected to shine for Vietnam.

Yen Troung, marketing manager at Caravelle Saigon, told

: "Japan and (South) Korea have been our biggest growth markets in 2017, and I foresee this to continue into 2018 as they have shown growth in both the leisure and corporate segments."

Jeff Redl, Diethelm Travel Vietnam

managing director, expects the US and French markets to perform well in 2018, thanks to Vietnamese and US travel agencies jointly promoting tourism heavily since the beginning of 2017.

He said: "In North America, the US outbound market is performing very well thanks to the strong dollar. But in South America, Brazilians have cut back on international travel dramatically this year amid the country's economic and political crisis, although the picture could improve next year."

Armand Cheveux, director of business development at Asia DMC, said improved infrastructure, the development of airlines and accommodation, as well as new forms of tourism, such as adventure tourism in central Vietnam, is helping attract more tourists.

Looking to the future, Redl hopes to see more efforts from the authorities in promoting Vietnam to alternative markets, especially the shorthaul ones; in developing MICE business, and in developing new destinations in Vietnam to pique the interest of Western travellers.

## Destination in numbers

**29.7**

The percentage increase on international arrivals to Vietnam in the first eight months of 2017, representing a total of 8,472,379 visitors

**6,324,994**

The number of Asian visitors to Vietnam in the first eight months of 2017 – the largest source region for the destination

**7,182,458**

The number of foreign arrivals visiting Vietnam by air in the first eight months of 2017, a 32.1 per cent increase

Tourists traveling in a boat along the Ngo Dong River, Ninh Binh, Vietnam (bottom)



Hot stuff



From left: Emperor Cruises; Friday Pho; Vietnam House

**Emperor Cruises**

Emperor Cruises is redefining luxury cruising experiences in Bai Tu Long Bay with newly built custom vessels, exclusive itineraries and an ongoing commitment to sustainable travel initiatives. It recently launched an all-inclusive, three-day Emperor Hideaway at off-the-beaten-track Bai Tu Long Bay. The programme allows guests to choose their own itinerary and explore wild beaches and islands in Bai Xep Geological Park.

**Saigon Social Space**

Having opened in August, this 15,000m<sup>2</sup> multipurpose event space boasts flexible areas for meetings, three swimming pools, a

large lake and fountain with sala-style dining booths, an al fresco dining area, several bars and a meeting area for up to 80 people, with additional space for another 70 on the terrace. The Saigon Social Space is also available for private hire.

**Friday Pho**

Caravelle Saigon has rolled out a Friday Pho excursion, offering guests the chance to sample the national dish in hidden spots of Ho Chi Minh City. Starting at 08.00, guests are taken down a winding back alley to Pho Minh – one of District 1’s first pho restaurants – where they can learn how to make the dish before sampling it.

**Diethelm Travel’s Go Local**

Diethelm Travel has launched a series of Go Local products that grant visitors precious interactions with the locals. Participants can cycle or walk to villages to get a different outlook on the sights. Go Local products include food tours, learning to make paper quills and attending workshops to create the traditional conical Vietnamese hat, *non la*.

**Vietnam House**

This historic downtown Saigon restaurant, which first opened in 1992 in a 1910-built colonial French building, has re-opened with a celebrity chef at its helm. Headed by WMC Group, with Chef Luke Nguyen in the kitchen,

the restaurant stays true to its French colonial roots, while also offering a range of authentic Vietnamese dishes.

**Mama’s Cooking**

The Anam in Cam Ranh has recruited 12 mothers of its staff to serve up an authentic slice of Vietnamese culture every Wednesday and Sunday evening. Drawing on centuries-old recipes handed down the generations, the mother cooks serve up timeless Vietnamese classics in true home-made style. The launch coincides with the opening of the resort’s Indochine Grill that specialises in European fine dining with a strong focus on classical French cuisine.




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## Destination Malaysia

# Malaysia truly magnetic

A timeless destination campaign and 2017 SEA Games hosting work in Malaysia's favour. By [S Puvaneswary](#)



Malaysia's good mix of nature, culture and modern entertainment allows her to lure travellers with different desires; Kuala Lumpur skyline above

The *Malaysia Truly Asia* marketing campaign was launched in 1999 during The World Travel Market in London to create better awareness and perception about Malaysia and to convince the world that Malaysia was a destination for holiday-makers.

At that time, awareness of Malaysia as a holiday destination was low. The popular opinion was that Malaysia lacked distinction or uniqueness because of its racial diversity. However, it is Malaysia's racial diversity that makes her a unique country.

Since its inception, the campaign has

### Destination in numbers

**31.8 million**

The number of tourist arrivals Malaysia is aiming for in 2017, up from 26.76 million last year

**470**

The number of direct flights weekly between China and Malaysia

**5.9 nights**

The average stay of foreign tourists in Malaysia

### Hot stuff

#### TRACE

Situated 40 floors above ground in Element Kuala Lumpur, TRACE restaurant and bar opened in May, offering a stunning bird's-eye view of the city. It is the perfect place to catch the sunrise or sunset. Both local and western-fusion cuisine is served. Designed by Avalon Collective Interior Design, the restaurant features floor-to-ceiling windows with abundant natural sunlight.

TRACE is open daily from 06.30 to 23.00, serving breakfast buffet, lunch, dinner and cocktails.

#### Genting Highlands Premium Outlets

Genting Highlands Premium Outlets which opened in June is South-east Asia's first hilltop premium outlet centre. Located a mere 45-minute drive from Kuala Lumpur, Genting Highlands Premium Outlets features 150 outlet stores that offer discounts of up to 65 per cent every day. Brands include Adidas, Hugo Boss, Kate Spade New York, Michael Kors, Moschino, Polo Ralph Lauren, Superdry and Tumi.

Opening hours are from 10.00 to 22.00 daily.

#### Sunway Velocity Hotel Kuala Lumpur

The 351-key Sunway Velocity Hotel Kuala Lumpur opened on September 20 within Sunway Velocity Kuala Lumpur, a 23-acre self-contained integrated mixed development. Facilities include an all-day café, and infin-



From left: Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson; Movie Animation Park Studio; Sunway Velocity Hotel Kuala Lumpur

ity swimming pool and Jacuzzi, a 24-hour fitness centre, and a 12-seat boardroom. The hotel is linked to two underground Mass Rapid Transit stations, which makes it easy for guests to reach other commercial hubs and local attractions within the city.

#### Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson

Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson opened in July as the largest resort in Port Dickson, with 522 villas over water and 122 in the tower block. Many of these villas offer spectacular views of the open sea. Each villa is spacious, tastefully decorated and comes with its own

private dip pool and steam room for luxury and privacy.

The resort is about an hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and nestled along Pasir Panjang beach.

#### Movie Animation Park Studios

Movie Animation Park Studios (MAPS), Asia's first animation theme park located in Ipoh, Perak opened in June.

Sprawled over 52 acres of land, it features 23 interactive attractions and 15 thrilling rides in six themed zones. It houses both international and homegrown Intellectual Prop-



erties (IPs) including DreamWorks characters, The Smurfs and The Home of BoBoiBoy. Attractions include South-east Asia's first car an bike stunt show, *Stunt Legends*, themed restaurants and Malaysia's biggest drop tower, Megamind Megadrop.

Operating hours are from 10.00 to 18.00 daily.

#### Setia SPICE Convention Centre, Penang

Opened this March, Setia SPICE Convention Centre is one of five key components of The Subterranean Penang International Conven-

been promoting Malaysia as a land of many cultures, wonders and attractions, highlighting the country's natural beauty and exciting destinations along with the different events, festivals and celebrations held every year.

Digital and print campaigns focus on different aspects of Malaysia according to the interests of holidaymakers from key markets.

Years on, the campaign remains relevant. Mirza Mohammad Taiyab, director-general of Tourism Malaysia, explained: "European tourists visit Malaysia to experience our nature and culture, and this is what we highlight in our campaigns to attract Europeans to Malaysia.

"Chinese holidaymakers come here to experience our modern shopping malls and beaches and sea sport activities.

"South-east Asian tourists visit Malaysia for shopping, nature activities, entertainment, and man-made attractions like theme parks while tourists from the Middle East are interested in greenery, islands and beaches.

"We highlight attractions and activities in our campaigns that will attract the different markets. However, the underlying theme, that Malaysia is a melting pot of cultures, remains constant throughout."

On opportunities in the coming year, KL Tan, president of the Malaysian Association of Tour & Travel Agents (MATTA), said: "The 2017 Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) which Malaysia hosted in August 2017 put the spotlight on Malaysia and created interest in the destination, especially among the people of South-east Asia. I am sure that in 2018, Malaysia will be receiving many repeat visitors, from supporters, athletes and officials – who will choose Malaysia as a relaxing holiday destination.

"Foreign media coverage on the destination during the SEA Games would have

also created interest among the curious, who will be interested in visiting Malaysia in the near future."

Tan added that "new world class products such as Movie Animation Park Studios in Perak and the soon-to-open 20th Century Fox World theme park at Resorts World Genting are bound to attract regional and Asian tourists to Malaysia next year".

He also believes that improvements in

air connectivity between Malaysia and China this year will bring more tourists from China. This year alone, Malaysia Airlines has launched nine new routes to China, while AirAsia commenced thrice-weekly flights between Langkawi and Shenzhen in August. AirAsia X began daily Kuala Lumpur-Wuhan flights in March.

However, a challenge Malaysia faces in handling the China market is the lack of Chinese speaking tourist guides especially

during the peak travel season of Chinese New Year and the Golden Week holidays, shared Adam Kamal, secretary-general of the Malaysian Inbound Tourism Association.

He also sees difficulty in attracting European tourists as a result of the lack of direct flights from Europe to Kuala Lumpur. Direct air access from Europe to Kuala Lumpur currently is limited to Heathrow and Amsterdam.



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tion and Exhibition Centre (SPICE).

The largest facility here is the 4,546m<sup>2</sup> Grand Ballroom on the subterranean floor, which can be further divided into four smaller rooms via operable wall partitions. The Grand Ballroom has a maximum capacity of 8,000 people in theatre setting. It is further supported by two VIP serviced rooms and 13 smaller function rooms, all across the lower and ground floors.

Atop Setia SPICE Convention Centre is a rooftop park, a seven acre "green lung" which is perfect for hosting outdoor events such as networking parties.

# Focusing on the positives

Latest destination campaigns focus on unique local experiences and hospitable culture, writes [Rosa Ocampo](#)



The private sector has a strong desire to dance with the Department of Tourism to advance Philippine tourism; Kadayawan Festival in Davao pictured

There is no easy answer to the question: What kind of marketing and promotions will help rehab Philippine tourism, when the country's image has been affected by the current political situation?

To assuage safety and security concerns, tourism marketing and promotions are now focusing on Filipinos' unique warmth and hospitality, as encapsulated in the *Experience the Philippines* tagline.

Meanwhile, the much-loved brand slogan *It's More Fun in the Philippines* has taken a backseat for the time being, as the fun angle is not seen as appropriate at a time when the industry is reeling from terrorist threats, a prolonged war in Marawi, and martial law in Mindanao.

*Experience the Philippines*, in addition to other marketing and promotions, also aims to lift the country's image and raise its profile in major source markets like South Korea, China, Japan, the US, as well as capture new ones like India, Israel, the Middle East. The campaign also promotes both existing and new tourist attractions.

Tourism undersecretary Benito Bengzon Jr. said a third *Experience the Philippines* campaign will soon be unveiled. It will be similar to the first *Anak (My Child)* television commercial, where a foreign tourist got a glimpse of Filipino hospitality when a mother who offered him food also called him *anak*.

Like the *Anak* campaign shot at the En-

chanted River in Surigao, the third campaign was also shot in Mindanao, revealed Bengzon.

Many in the travel trade favoured this move which highlights the Filipinos' unique hospitality.

Marites Pastorfide, assistant general manager/sales manager at Wayfair Tours, opined: "I like the word 'experience' and it is effective in selling the Philippines".

Similarly, Brett Hickey, group general manager of Seda Hotels, agreed that "the welcoming atmosphere in the Philippines", which is "different than any other", was a positive move.

However, some feel that three television commercials about Filipino's hospitality and a welcoming attitude aren't enough. Instead, more should be done.

Jojo Clemente, president of Rajah Tours told *TTG Show Daily*. "As far as I am concerned, I don't see any sort of concrete plan of the Department of Tourism (DoT). What is the next push? What is the next event? What needs to be done (to improve the country's image)?"

Meanwhile, Jerome dela Fuente, general manager of The Limketkai Luxe Hotel in Cagayan de Oro City in Mindanao, lamented that DoT promotions in Mindanao are heavily concentrated on Davao, stating that "Davao is not Mindanao".

Moreover, earlier this year there were concerns about the DoT not consulting with the private sector. This was followed

by the DoT becoming embroiled in embarrassing and costly anomalies in the execution of campaigns.

"They seem to be missing the point that the private sector wants to help them, but they are (unable to handle) a bit of criticism," shared Clemente.

He stressed: "The private sector is here to help. At the end of the day, we benefit. Don't they like it when they're backed by the private sector, knowing that they are not alone? I don't know why they are hesitant, and I don't know where the resistance is coming from."

At this point, it's difficult to see what's next for Philippine tourism due to the country's uncertain political situation. There is also the added problem of government officials talking about extending martial law nationwide, and the president's bloody drug war, both of which are fodder for global media.

As one travel trade leader grouched: "We can defend the destination against travel advisories from source countries but (the term) 'martial law' has a frightening ring to foreigners. That is one of the tough challenges in Philippine tourism. It's inextricably linked to the political situation."

Clemente added: "All (that's being done are) stop gap measures. We need to improve our image, as well as the country's infrastructure, and create a focused marketing programme."

But all is not lost, as there are various

## Destination in numbers

**98%**

The percentage of foreign tourists who come to the Philippines by air

**US\$29 million**

Foreign receipts from tourism for 1H17, almost a 15 per cent increase over the same period in 2016

**3.4 million**

The number of foreign tourists who visited the Philippines from January to June 2017. It is 12.7 per cent higher than the same period in 2016

silver linings, such as developers opening up new destinations and creating more options for tourists.

For instance, Ayala Land's Lio Tourism Estate in El Nido, Palawan, boasts 900 rooms that are suitable for different market segments.

As well, smaller carriers like Air Swift and Skyjet are helping to open up new destinations across the Philippines, such as Dumaguete, Siquijor, Batanes and the Mountain Province.

**Hot stuff**

**Movenpick Resort & Spa Boracay**

Movenpick plants its flag in Boracay with the soon-to-open five-star 333-key resort and spa on Punta Bunga beach. Rooms and suites are arranged in low-rise tropical village-style clusters and boast family rooms, a kids' club and a games area for teens.

Other features include seven dining outlets, 900m<sup>2</sup> venue for meetings and events, beach club, 3,300m<sup>2</sup> multi-level pool, wellness centre and spa, water sports activities and excursions.

**Seda Vertis North**

The 438-key hotel, located in Quezon City in metro Manila, departs from the brand's six other boutique-style hotels. Facilities include a 700m<sup>2</sup> ballroom, pool deck and spa, and several F&B outlets.

Similar to the other Seda-branded hotels, the property is a canvas for Filipino design talent including global furniture designers Kenneth Cobonpue and Vito Selma, sculptress Ann Paminutuan, and art pieces by Jaime Zobel de Ayala.

**Walled City of Intramuros**

Two areas in Manila's Walled City of Intramuros have been reopened to the public after a makeover. Paseo Solenad, part of the park facing Pasig River has been landscaped, while lighting has been improved. Meanwhile, Plaza Moriones is now flanked by flower-



From left: Movenpick Resort & Spa Boracay; Seda Vertis North

ing trees and a colourful fountain. There is also an unobstructed view of Fort Santiago's famous gate from Santa Clara Street.

More areas in Intramuros are set to open after their respective renovations, including the Rajah Soliman Theatre. The first phase of the renovation of Intramuros Museum and the Maestranza Chambers are also expected to be completed soon.

**Sky's the Limit Balloon Rides**

Sky's the Limit Balloon Rides was recently launched in Bohol. The company offers 45-minute rides that float directly above the Chocolate Hills. Rides occur daily in the af-

ternoon and at sunset. Costing 4,500 pesos (US\$87), the company requires a reservation two days in advance.

**Ashark Restaurant**

Located on the second floor of the Golden Phoenix Hotel in Manila, Ashark Restaurant is a newly opened eatery patterned after restaurant concepts in China.

Diners can choose to feast on four traditional cuisines – Guangdong, Sichuan, Hunan and Fujian – at the main dining room, which has the capacity for up to 200 pax, or in one of the eight VIP rooms, three of which are equipped with KTV.

**Atmosphere Resorts & Spa**

Families who head to the Atmosphere Resorts & Spa in Dauin, Negros Oriental, can now enjoy marine-based activities without leaving the kids behind.

The resort offers a wide array of marine activities for kids eight years old and above. Think customised yoga sessions; diving and snorkelling lessons with possibilities to see turtles, coral and fish at a depth of two metres; a Kid's Cove with fully-equipped playrooms; classrooms with educational materials and toys; babysitters for hire; kiddie pools; and even a happy hour for kids with non-alcoholic beverages.

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# In pursuit of good food

Swanky restaurants in integrated resorts have been luring international visitors to the territory. But to be positioned as a gastronomic capital, the destination must not forget its local cuisine. [Prudence Lui](#) reports

As Macau's integrated resorts (IRs) increasingly seek an edge through culinary offerings, travel agents say the time is ripe to position the city as a gastronomic capital for both its gourmet and local fare.

Since IRs came onto the scene a decade ago, bringing with them upscale international dining concepts, Macau's culinary profile has been significantly raised on the world stage.

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) recently submitted an application to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network for Gastronomy, and is collaborating with government entities and local associations on culinary events such as Lusofonia Festival and Macau Food Festival, a spokesperson told *TTG Show Daily*.

The HK\$26 billion (US\$3.3 billion), 1,390-room MGM Cotai, which will open soon, is already dropping celebrity chef names to win travellers over.

Vice president of resort sales, Victoria Fuh, said: "We aim to impress our audience by offering versatile dining with four celebrity chefs (Mauro Colagreco, Mitsuharu Tsumura, Graham Elliot and Janice Wong) helming our restaurants."

Over the last 12 months, Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) has been introducing new F&B concepts to answer demand for elevated gastronomic experiences, with additions such as oyster bar The Apron (December 2016) and luxury lifestyle cafe Cha Bei (January 2017) in Galaxy Macau; and Japanese-fusion Ufufu Café (May 2017) in Broadway Macau.

Said assistant senior vice president Jit Hoong Ng: "We do not discount the fact that our customers also need diverse and authentic experiences."

CITS Macau's international department manager, Cooper Zhang, said: "We are getting more enquiries and requests for gourmet experiences from mid- to high-tier Hong Kong clients craving a Michelin-star (meal)."

Indeed, international haute cuisine is just one part of the equation as Macau seeks to appeal to travellers, as tour operators also want Macanese delicacies and offerings to be highlighted in Macau's culinary pursuits.

Estoril Tours Travel's director of sales Johnny Choi opined: "It's vital to retain our own culinary character. A spate of F&B boutique outlets and cafés established by the young generation in recent

years also offer different taste and experience."

CITS Macau's Zhang agreed that local delicacy is a strong pull factor. While the agency does not yet have a dedicated gourmet tour, "a special or local meal experience is always one of the elements in our packages".

Institute for Tourism Studies, executive assistant manager, David Wong added: "In the old days, tourists from the mainland were very much focused on Macau's casinos but with the number of high-end hotels, restaurants and the attraction of Portuguese and Macanese cuisine, people are staying here longer and increasingly enjoying the more cultural side of Macau, and that includes fine dining and good local eateries."

Furthermore, local restaurants also make good dining venues for corporates in the lead-up to bigger events, pointed out MCI Macau's business development and events director, Olinto Oliveira.

"These culinary experiences, in conjunction with the venue offerings and the experiences that agencies are crafting, create an overall package that validates the destination as a premier option for events."

### Destination in numbers

## 84.2%

Macau's hotel occupancy rate in 1H2017, 4.9 percentage points higher than the same period last year

## 2.4 million

Visitor arrivals to Macau in 1H2017, up 0.9 per cent year-on-year. Overnight visitors were up 10.1 per cent, while same-day visitors decreased 9.1 per cent

## US\$2.1 billion

Visitor expenditure (excluding gaming) in 1Q2017, up 20.9 per cent over the same period last year. Per capita visitor expenditure totalled US\$213.6, an increase of 10.5 per cent

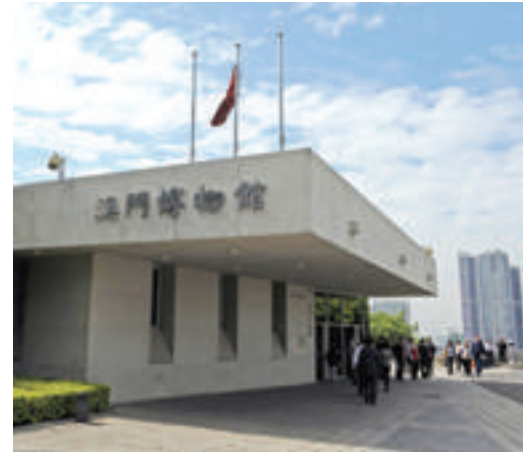
Clockwise from below: Dish from The Apron at Galaxy Macau; street food delights in Macau; celebrity chef Mauro Colagreco brings his latest restaurant to MGM Cotai



Peter Wehrens/istock



Hot stuff



Clockwise from above: Grand Lapa Hotel; Macao Museum; and Macau Roosevelt Hotel

**Grand Lapa Hotel**

The 416-room Grand Lapa Hotel will complete its makeover in spring 2018. Renovation has begun in phases since autumn 2016 and so far, about 150 rooms have already been revamped. Renovations of public areas are expected to be completed this month, while landscaping and painting of the hotel's exterior will be carried out in winter.

**Macau Roosevelt Hotel**

The Macau Roosevelt Hotel opened in July as a five-star, Old Hollywood-inspired urban retreat. It features 368 guestrooms, includ-

ing the Marilyn Penthouse, a private cigar lounge, bar, restaurant, fitness centre and an infinity pool with a view of the Jockey Club. The 12-storey hotel is located in Taipa Island, 10 minutes away from Macau International Airport.

**Macao Museum**

The Macao Museum has extended its free admission offer to every Tuesday, instead of just the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month.

This is to promote the history of Macau and attract visitors to the two major attractions in the Historic Centre of Macau, the

Ruins of St Paul's and Mount Fortress. The Macao Museum is open from 10:00 to 18.00 (ticket office closes at 17.30).

**Four Seasons Hotel Macao**

Four Seasons Hotel Macao, which celebrated its ninth anniversary in August, has completed its renovations to show off guestrooms with new interior elements and amenities, from new wallpaper and furniture to enhanced high-speed Internet access. "A new aesthetic approach fusing classic and contemporary elements" was taken, according to general manager Kris Kaminsky.

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## Destination Spain

# Profitable dance with Asia

With most of South-east Asia's top tourism source markets performing well for Spain, the NTO has stepped up efforts to convince more Asians to head over for work and play. [Rachel AJ Lee](#) reports

**B**oth foreign arrivals and tourist receipts are up for Spain in 2016. Arrivals rose 9.9 per cent from 2015 to reach past 75.3 million, while tourist expenditure saw an 8.3 per cent increment from 2015 figures to 77 billion euros (US\$91.7 billion).

Spain's top Asian source markets in 2016 were China, South Korea, Japan, India and Singapore. While it is no surprise that China is Spain's largest tourist source market, the destination witnessed a recent decline in Japanese arrivals due to various terrorism-related incidents in Europe.

A spokesperson from Spain Tourism Board – Southeast Asia, Australia & New Zealand told *TTG Show Daily* that the Japanese, especially the elderly, are “particularly concerned with security”.

Within South-east Asian markets, Singapore topped the charts in 2016 with 67,099 arrivals into Spain (up 72.1 per cent year-on-year), followed by the Philippines with 56,159 (up 1.3 per cent), Indonesia with 48,752 (up 38.6 per cent), Malaysia with 36,016 (up of 40.8 per cent), and Thailand with 23,647 (up 23.4 per cent).

Bearing this figures in mind, the tourism board will be targeting the leisure and incentive travel segments in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.

The spokesperson added: “The Philippines is dynamically catching up in the incentive travel market. Previously, the Philippines used to send special interest groups such as religious pilgrimages or gastronomic tours to Spain, but in the past two years the market has been sending high-value incentive groups.”

However, Filipinos require Schengen visas to travel to Europe or Spain, which the spokesperson felt was an “issue”.

Another issue for Spain in courting the



Capital city Madrid charms with elegant boulevards and impressive historical architecture and museums of European art

Asian market is the limited number of flights from Asia-Pacific. The *What's New in Catalonia 2017-2018* report from the Catalan Tourist Board found that Barcelona was one of the most “unserved destinations from the Asia-Pacific”, and that there was definitely room to grow.

Currently, Singapore Airlines flies five times weekly from Singapore to Barcelona via Milan, and recently on April 28, 2017, Korean Air started flying thrice-weekly from Seoul to Barcelona.

These obstacles aside, Spain Tourism Board believes that the destination's strong selling points will draw Asians in.

As to what these strong selling points were, the spokesperson pointed to the weather and climate, where the sun can be felt even during winter time; and that the

country was a shopping haven, offering the best value for every euro spent.

In addition, the country has a wealth of history and culture, which the spokesperson said was akin to “walking inside a history book” as Spain has experienced many different periods of the world's civilisations, from the Gothics to the Romans.

As such, promotional campaigns and other marketing efforts to Asia are well underway, but details are still under wraps.

What the spokesperson could reveal was Spain Tourism Board's business event-focused efforts in South-east Asia. It recently did a series of presentations for business events specialist travel companies, together with the Barcelona Convention Bureau, in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

### Destination in numbers

#### 6 days

The average length of stay among Asian travellers in Spain

#### 350 euros

The average daily expenditure – equivalent to US\$419 – made by South-east Asian travellers in Spain

#### 230,000

The number of South-east Asian visitors that flew into Barcelona in 2016

### Hot stuff

#### Ferrari Land

PortAventura World has opened to the public its newest expansion, the 60,000m<sup>2</sup> Ferrari Land. This is the largest single expansion in the resort's history, so much so Ferrari Land comes with its own gate and requires a separate entrance ticket.

Ferrari Land boasts 11 attractions such as the Red Force that reaches up to a height of 112 metres and going from 0 to 180 km in five seconds, two free fall towers more than 55m-high, and two simulator attractions Flying Dreams and Racing Legends. There's also a reproduction of a Renaissance Italian town, complete with piazzas and a bell tower.

#### Almanac Hotel Barcelona

Located steps away from Passeig de Gràcia, one of the major avenues in Barcelona, is Almanac Hotel Barcelona. Opening on November 1, the property features 61 rooms and 30 suites decked out in warm oak tones and gold accents, and baths made of Ibiza marble. Recreational facilities include a spa, rooftop pool and lounge,

fitness centre, and a sauna and steam room. For meeting planners, there are five function spaces. Curated experiences with a mixologist or master perfumer can also be arranged.

#### Casa Vicens

The first house that Antonio Gaudí designed, Casa Vicens, is now open to the public after functioning as a private residence for more than 130 years.

Dating back to 1883-1888, it is the eighth building in Barcelona to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Refurbishment began last year to convert the brightly-coloured building into a museum featuring some of Gaudí's best work.

Tours of the house will be complemented by a permanent exhibition which will revolve around the history of Casa Vicens; Casa Vicens as an essential expression of Gaudí's oeuvre; and the house within its social, cultural and artistic context. There will also be a series of temporary exhibitions and cultural and educational activities for all audiences.



From left: Casa Vicens; Ferrari Land



#### Casa de les Punxes

Casa Terradas, better known as the Casa de les Punxes because of its six spiky towers, opened its doors to the public this summer.

Declared a Historical National Monument in 1975, and after more than a hundred years of being closed to the public, three parts of the attraction can now be visited.

The main floor is the area where the legend of Sant Jordi will be narrated – a recurrent theme in modernism – via an audio-visual representation. Meanwhile, the ground is home to a shop and a bar, while the terrace, will be home to a museum that explores the work of architect Josep Puig i Cadafalch, the history of Casa de les Punxes, as well as modernism.



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# TTG Show Daily pictorial special

Take a closer look at all the show's happenings in this three-page spread photographed by *TTG Show Daily's* lensmen, [Fandy Razak](#)



## Gallery

# Open for business

Photos by Fandy Razak



Furama Hotels International Management Singapore's Gerard Lim, ITC Bangkok's Thanabordee Vajarasthira and Furama Hotels & Resorts International Management (Thailand)'s Anan Phongsuriyahchote



International Caravan Travel Service Uzbekistan's Nikolay Savelev and Aleksandr Khurramov, and Rossi Tour Russia's Ekaterina Zelenova



The Hotels Network Thailand's Ivan Cintado, Transfer & Activity Bank Thailand's Leo Lopez and Amara Bangkok's Patrick Eger



Grand Luley Manado Indonesia's Arief Ali and Andreas Rizky, Hoa & Le Communications Vietnam's Le Minh Phuong and Grand Luley Manado Indonesia's Anwar Pataria



Shanghai C&D Wanda International Travel & MICE Service's Sheila Wang and Luxury Tours & Travel Singapore's Sherry Bao



Philippine Department of Tourism Singapore's Charles Leong, Tourism Promotions Board Philippines' Leah Marie, Philippine Airlines Singapore's Marie Jemma Saranillo, and team



Jeju CVB's Jasmine Kang, Nora Jeong and Suzie Kim



Penang Global Tourism's Ooi Chok Yan and Tour & Incentive Travel Malaysia's Lawrence Koay



Neva Seasons Russia's Kirill Sokolov and Tatyana Kondratueva



Frozen Lime Asia Singapore's Pow Zhi Hoe and Kenji Chen



Swingaporegolf Singapore's Vince Acors, Ian Laird and Tristan Miles



Peakwork AG Singapore's Jason Ong and Lucky Trip China's Zhang Qing



Right: Sunpath Mongolia Tour Agency's Darambazar Amgalan and Batjargal Ulziibuyan



Snaeland Grimsson Iceland's Hallgrimir Larusson and Teitur Travel Iceland's Gunnar Valdimarsson

Below: FuramaXclusive Villas & Spa Ubud, Bali's I Wayan Sumandia (fourth from left), Furama Hotels International Management Singapore's Shirlena Tan (third from right), and team





Best Western Hotels & Resorts Thailand's Olivier Berrivin (fourth from left) with team



Tokoriki Island Resort Fiji's Joel Ross, The Pearl Resort Fiji's Natalie Marletta, Tourism Fiji Singapore's Janie Long, Mana Island Resort & Spa Fiji's Abdul Kalaam and Hiroshi Matsumoto



Visit Greece's Angela Fotopoulou, Imini Valsamaki and Dimitra Tsiourou



Value Retail England's Andrew Strickland, Madrid Destino's Javier Luengo, Tourist Office of Spain Singapore's Gemma Luengo and Vien Cortes, Embassy of Tourism in Singapore's Eva Maria Riesgo Ramos, Palladium Hotel Group Spain's Sandra Polo and Elcorteingles Spain's Alvaro Macarro



Santhini Bali Corporate Indonesia's IG N Wiarsa and the Lokha Ubud's IG Agung Sudhajnendra



Rediscover India's Hilal Kolu, Chariot India Travel Services's Prabodh Badoni, Aayan Journeys India's R Kumara Guru, India Tourism Singapore's R K Suman, Swagatam Tours India's Vinod Chembala, Love India Travel's S Radhakrishnan and Jetspeed Travel Singapore's Satish G



Carlton City Hotel Singapore's Joanne Chan (middle)



Shanghai Skysea Cruise Travel's Dong Yang



Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories Israel's Inbal Haymovich, Nazarene Tours Israel's Alaa Affi, Vered Hasharon Israel's Jack Peretz, Amiel Israel's Lilach Ben Ari, Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center Israel's Luai Jaouni, Diamond Mines Group Israel's Eyal Kenan and Benny Berish



Chan's World Holidays Singapore's Chris Lim and Twiga Tours' Shahzia Manji and Rahim Manji



V Hotel Management Singapore's Rodney Yee



Sundance Helicopters US' Al Santos, Visit Las Vegas China's Peter Phang and Grand Canyon Scenic Airlines US' Sherwin Mercado



Ink Global Singapore's Priyanka Sridhar and Melanie Chua



Asiana Tech Malaysia's Aida Nur Ariza and Halal Navi Malaysia's Nur Aqalili



Wakanow UK's Funmi Le Moign and Wakanow Nigeria's Obinna Ekezie





Innovation Norway's Per Holte, VisitNorway Japan's Kjell Ellefsen, Hotel Union Norway's Tone Nordvik, Hotel Alexandra Norway's Elizabeth Bakken, Innovation Norway's Torunn Aass Taralrud, Bennett of Norway's Iver Holter-Andersen and Avinor Hong Kong's Ulv Elbirk

# Albay

Perfect cone, spicy toppings



 Immerse yourself in the sights and tastes of Albay. See the world-famous perfection of Mayon Volcano from an ATV. Then sample the region's signature red-hot dishes.

 **Getting There:** Accessible via air from Manila and Cebu through Legazpi Airport

 **More Things to Do:**

- Visit Porteria Church and the ruins of Cagsawa Church.
- Explore endless caves, springs, and waterfalls.
- Hit stunning volcanic black sand beaches.
- Lounge on white sand Subic Beach in the nearby province of Sorsogon
- Swim with whale sharks in Donsol, Sorsogon from November to June.

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