

# TTG THE OFFICIAL Show Daily



Issue

# 2



ATF 2018  
January 24, 2018  
Chiang Mai, Thailand

# Open to the New Shades

## A MILLION SHADES OF THAILAND

The diversity within Thailand is amazing. So, abandon any preconceptions that you may have about this incredible kingdom and urge your clients to open their eyes and their hearts to discover a million shades of Thailand. What they see and feel will amaze and invigorate them in equal measure. Prepare to be dazzled.





# Open to the New Shades

## New Shades Of Thai Beaches

Thai beaches are open to everybody and have diverse shades for everyone to indulge in. Every beach has its own uniqueness.

Separated sea and nail-shaped islands or, here at Koh Talu, you will enjoy an assorted mix of sceneries including the rainforests, high cliffs and shallow coral reefs that are nature's mesmerizing creations.

There are a million shades of Thailand waiting for you to discover.  
We are open, are you?



ATF 2018  
January 24, 2018  
Chiang Mai, Thailand



## TCEB leads business events push at ATF

ASEAN MICE Conference kicks off today with prominent industry speakers and thought-leaders from around the world

By Karen Yue

With ASEAN Tourism Forum taking place on home ground this year, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is taking the opportunity to elevate its yearly effort to connect South-east Asia's business events stakeholders by launching the ASEAN MICE Conference.

The one-day event taking place today at Shangri-La Hotel, Chiang Mai, features prominent speakers from across Thailand and beyond who will share intelligence, ideas, perspectives and projections of business events development across the South-east Asia region.

Speakers include notable individuals such as Paul Vallee, managing director of BestCities Global Alliance; Pairach Pi-boonrungrroj, director of MICE

Excellence Centre, Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University; Amelia Roziman, CEO of Sarawak Convention Bureau; and Yungho Park, executive director of Gyeongju Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Supawan Teerarat, senior vice president, strategic business development & innovation with TCEB, said the programme content was carefully curated to offer attendees "valuable learning opportunities and a global perspective" on how their country and the region in general can grow as a destination for business events.

Prior to the debut of ASEAN MICE Conference, TCEB organises an annual networking event in Thailand that brings together NTO officers and business events stakeholders from across the region.

"We've been doing that since 2014, but it is a small gathering. When Thailand started planning for ATF 2018, TCEB approached the Ministry of Tourism and Sports through minister Kobkarn (Wattanavrangkul, the former minister) and asked if we could do more for the business events community. The conference was hence born," explained Supawan.

She added that it was imperative to facilitate deeper conversations among ASEAN members on the development of the region's business events capability because "there are countries that are not as active as others in attracting business events (and they can benefit from knowledge and best practices shared by) the forerunners, the strong and leading destinations".

The programme has also brought in CVB heads of successful second- and third-tier cities in Asia for this purpose of learning from the best.

"We want to convey the critical message that it is not only the capital cities that can welcome business events. Second- and third-tier cities can too, as long as the infrastructure and community are ready," she said.

When asked by *TTG Show Daily* if the conference would be hosted at future editions of ATF, Supawan said: "We have not started that discussion, and on whether TCEB would support (future editions). But we certainly hope something will happen and that the conference will be continued, at least in cities that are strong in business events."

Second- and third-tier cities can (welcome business events) too, as long as the infrastructure and community are ready.

**Supawan Teerarat**  
Senior vice president, strategic business development & innovation  
Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau



## Read and win Rugby 7s tickets

ATF delegates, here's your chance to win a pair of premium tickets to the HSBC Singapore Rugby 7s worth S\$440 (US\$333). Simply answer this question: *How many tournaments are played in the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series?*

Pick up a contest form at TTG Booth No. 5, answer the above question, fill it up with your particulars, and hand it over to one of our friendly staff.

Need a hint? The answer is on page 2 of *TTG Show Daily's Day 2* (January 24) issue.



## Beautiful blooms

Photos by Yingyong Unanongrak



Want to see more? Visit our Gallery at [www.ttgasia.com](http://www.ttgasia.com).

## Curtains to rise on new film festival that spotlights Mekong

By S Puvaneswary

The Mekong Mini Movie Festival will make its debut at TRAVEX this Friday as a year-long event to celebrate the many faces and experiences of the Greater Mekong Subregion, promote the region as a single tourist destination, and attract business.

Jens Thraenhart, Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO), executive director, said the festival is a public-private partnership initiated by Destination Mekong, an organisation set up this month and comprising the NTOs of Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, MTCO and private sectors in the six countries.

To achieve its objectives, the festival will attract both amateur and professional moviemakers to create short films – running no more than 60 seconds – of any one destination or up to three in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

Videos must first be registered at [MekongMoments.com](http://MekongMoments.com), and then be posted on the creator's own Twitter, Instagram or YouTube accounts, bearing the hashtags #MekongMoments, #Minis and the country being showcased.

The organisers will shortlist some of the best submissions, before three winners in the single-des-

tinuation category are announced at the Mekong Tourism Forum in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand this June 27 to 28, and another three in the multi-destination category are awarded at ATF 2019 in Vietnam.

Thraenhart told *TTG Show Daily*: "We hope to create a large amount of inspiring content for the region with promotions and screenings internationally. We also hope this will become an annual campaign."

The festival will be promoted through the MTCO website and social media, as well as the online and offline channels belonging to NTOs and DMOs of the Greater Mekong Subregion, and participating media owners and private sector.



**Thraenhart: destination promotion through films**

## News

# A closer regional partnership

ASEANTA brings stakeholders together to address tourism industry issues

By Mimi Hudoyo

The ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA) has made an unusual move to bring together several travel industry associations at ATF 2018, to facilitate a more coordinated approach to resolving issues such as market penetration and courtship of Muslim travellers.

Cheah Swee Hee, ASEANTA president, pointed out that this decision has resulted

in a “merrier” ASEAN airlines meeting on Monday, as three member airlines – Thai Airways, AirAsia, and Philippine Airlines – are joined by NTO representatives from Indonesia and Thailand as well as ASEANTA board members.

Explaining the benefit of bringing all parties together, Cheah said: “Member airlines target different market segments and can contribute to our plans. Philippine Airlines, for example, is strong in North America, so we can work with it should we hope to grow that market.”

He added that NTO presence was also invaluable as they were the ones to bring travellers into their destination and garner critical support from their government and airport authorities to expand an airline’s network.

Airline, NTO and ASEANTA board members also discussed on Monday ways to improve intra-ASEAN travel for Muslims, an increasingly attractive segment in the region.

Desiree Bandal, Philippines AirAsia’s head of government policy & ASEAN, told *TTG Show Daily*: “AirAsia hopes for the tourism industry in South-east Asia to create increased awareness about Halal-compliant products and services, and

make them more readily available across the region.

“South-east Asia’s population comprises around 40 per cent Muslims, with Malaysia and Indonesia being the biggest tourist source markets. As we continue to promote intra-ASEAN travel, it is important that the needs of Muslim tourists from the region are met.”

Cheah is engaging his peers from the ASEAN Hotel & Restaurant Association (AHRA) and the Federation of ASEAN Travel Associations as well, through separate meetings during ATF 2018.

He noted that stakeholders within South-east Asia’s tourism sector were dependent on each other and only by helping each other – such as through the sharing of business information – would they meet their business objectives.

For example, he believes that the ASEANTA Board can share knowledge on Halal tourism with AHRA members to enable more hotels to be Muslim-friendly.

Cheah acknowledged that a single meeting would not bring about immediate solutions, so numerous and regular meetings with various travel industry associations in this region would be arranged going forward.



Cheah: small group talks allow for better focus

## Visa-free access to Europe, official annual convention: FATA

By Pamela Chow

At its annual general meeting on Monday in Chiang Mai, the Federation of ASEAN Travel Associations (FATA) re-elected Hamzah Rahmat of the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents as president for the second consecutive term.

Following the announcement, Hamzah told *TTG Show Daily* that he has two ambitions at the top of his mind: eradicating visa requirements for South-east Asians travelling to European Union (EU) countries, and increasing the number of FATA conventions.

“Almost all European nationals can access South-east Asia (without visas), so we should have the same (accessibility) for all South-east Asians there,” said Hamzah.

He explained that South-east Asian nations have large outbound numbers – he estimates some two million travellers – that are “friendly” and “law-abiding”, and are welcomed by countries such as Japan and Taiwan which have relaxed their visa laws.

He added: “We will be writing to the EU minister-in-charge while copying the ASEAN foreign offices involved. We look forward to (our hospitality) being reciprocated.”

Another task on the agenda is introducing an official FATA convention that encourages interaction and cross-selling among its members.

Elly Hutabarat, president of Indonesia Ticketing Agents Association’s national board, noted that the role of FATA is becoming increasingly crucial as a mouthpiece for South-east Asian tourism players among international associations.

“There are so many issues to be raised and decided here,” she said, adding that it is also very important for the region to have visibility in the global space.

One concern that tops the list is how FATA can help countries like Cambodia and Myanmar benefit from the strong Thai outbound tourism traffic which numbers at least 150 million, Hamzah shared.



Hamzah: more interaction

## From a serious sport to lifestyle event

By Pamela Chow

The HSBC World Rugby Singapore Sevens is pushing beyond its sporting roots into a family-friendly festival that hopes to pull in travellers from around Asia.

Supported by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and government agency Sport Singapore, event organiser Rugby Singapore has been increasing outreach efforts to tie up with attractions and travel agents.

“We see the Singapore Sevens as one of the tentpole events that can bring fans and people from around the world to Singapore. We are currently in talks with agents, family-friendly attractions and retail options for partnerships”, shared David Lim, chairman of the board, Rugby Singapore.

He added that there has been a “rise in popularity” for rugby in Asia, particularly

driven by Japan’s recent victories in the sport. Last year, 24 per cent of Singapore Sevens attendees were foreign visitors, and the event generated a total economic impact of S\$23.5 million (US\$18 million).

Jean Ng, director, sports, STB, told *TTG Show Daily* that as the only South-east Asian host in the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series, Singapore aims to “draw more visitors from proximity markets such as Malaysia and Indonesia”, by delivering a memorable fan experience that differs yearly.

For the third edition this year, Rugby Singapore is stepping up the programme with the Singapore Rugby Carnival, an event with activities such as face painting, themed challenges, inflatable stations, photo booths, local bands and food.

“We want that diverse variety of ac-

tivities – not just sports – that will engage and bring people (together) here. This is something we want to use to distinguish ourselves from every other stop in the World Series,” explained Lim.

The Singapore Sevens is the eighth leg – out of ten – in the Series, and is one stop after the sell-out Hong Kong Sevens.

Agents feel that having the event as a destination lure is a plus for Singapore. General manager of Diethelm Travel, Judy Lum, described the initiative as “good news”. She said: “The organiser should consider having a dialogue with local DMCs. I am sure there are some of us who can help to promote it to overseas tour operators.”

Samson Tan, founder/CEO of GTMC Travel, suggested maximising marketing distribution by using the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore as a communication platform with agents.

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Travel Trade

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## IN BRIEF

### Eurowings links with Bangkok

German low-cost airline Eurowings will begin twice-weekly flights – on Mondays and Saturdays – between Bangkok and Munich starting on June 15 this year.

### Avani to make Laotian debut

Come March 2018, Avani Hotels & Resorts will open the 53-room Avani Luang Prabang. Guestrooms feature French-style louvred wooden doors that open out to a balcony overlooking either the pool or a private courtyard. Amenities include a bistro, bar, spa with four treatment rooms, gym, 25m-long swimming pool, and 60m<sup>2</sup> sheltered outdoor Pavilion for events.

### World’s first tourist tax refund app

Visitors to Singapore can now process and track their tax refunds in the city-state. Tourego migrates the paper-based process onto the eponymous app, on which users can also receive and store their refund tickets in an e-wallet, and access the latest shopping, food and travel tips about Singapore.

### Pandaw extends cruising itinerary

Pandaw River Expeditions has developed an extended cruise of Myanmar’s Mergui Archipelago after receiving positive response to the original seven-night version of the itinerary.

Onboard the *Andaman Explorer*, the 10-night Burma Coastal Voyage will depart from Yangon. Once in the Mergui Archipelago, the new itinerary will visit a number of islands not included in the seven-night sailing. Prices for the Burma Coastal Voyage start from US\$4,450 per person, based on twin occupancy and US\$6,350 for single occupancy.

## News

# Triponyu.com steps beyond consumer zone

Online marketplace targets trade partners, expands offerings

By Mimi Hudoyo

Indonesian peer-to-peer marketplace Triponyu.com, which connects savvy independent travellers with local hosts of travel experiences in the country, is now looking to expand its market reach through partnerships with tour operators and participation in travel marts.

Triponyu.com was established by four millennials from Solo, Central Java, in 2016, and officially launched in mid-2017.

Augustinus Adhitya, CEO of Triponyu.com, said a system to incorporate the B2B component is in development and will "launch soon".

He said his business is all about "empowering the local community, which used to be a spectator of the tourism growth around them, to become active players (themselves)".

"The trips we offer are created by the locals (who) develop interesting and unconventional products," he added.

Programmes are mostly day tours that run for four to five hours.

Citing examples, Augustinus pointed to a culinary tour in Solo that takes tourists beyond sampling local food, and instead also imparts the philosophy behind traditional cuisine, history of the eateries and knowledge of food preparation.

Another example is a batik tour that throws in tips on how to determine the quality of a batik cloth and lessons on batik production.

Experience hosts join Triponyu.com for free and determine the price of their own programmes. To ensure quality of experiences, Triponyu.co verifies and approves content, and also

guides local hosts on package creation and pricing.

In return, the company draws seven per cent of sales takings as commission.

Since its launch, Triponyu.co has quickly expanded its product range to include experiences in other parts of Indonesia such as Bali and Lombok. Initially, only Solo and Java were covered. As well, Triponyu.co offers home-stays and car rental services too.

Augustinus believes there is good growth potential for experiential tours, as "the trend today is for people to travel individually rather than in groups", as well as a growing desire for adventure and travel flexibility.

"(Independent travellers today don't want to) come to a destination clutching tickets and accommodation vouchers. They want to look for things to do after they have arrived and they prefer value-for-money products found on the Internet," he said.



Augustinus: local participation

## STB partners Grab on e-payment, transportation initiatives

Keen to position itself beyond a ride-hailing company, Grab has entered into a three-year MoU with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) to collaborate on a range of initiatives, from rolling out its cashless payment solution at tourist hotspots to mobility services for STB's business events industry partners.

In line with the national push to go cashless, Grab and STB will roll out GrabPay at locations including hawker centres, dining establishments, cultural and lifestyle precincts, shopping centres and tourist attractions.

The cashless payment solution will also allow visitors to redeem GrabRewards points through the Grab app to discover other experiences and events.

Grab will also offer a range of its services, from GrabCoach to GrabCar Premium, to STB's partners in Singapore's business events industry.

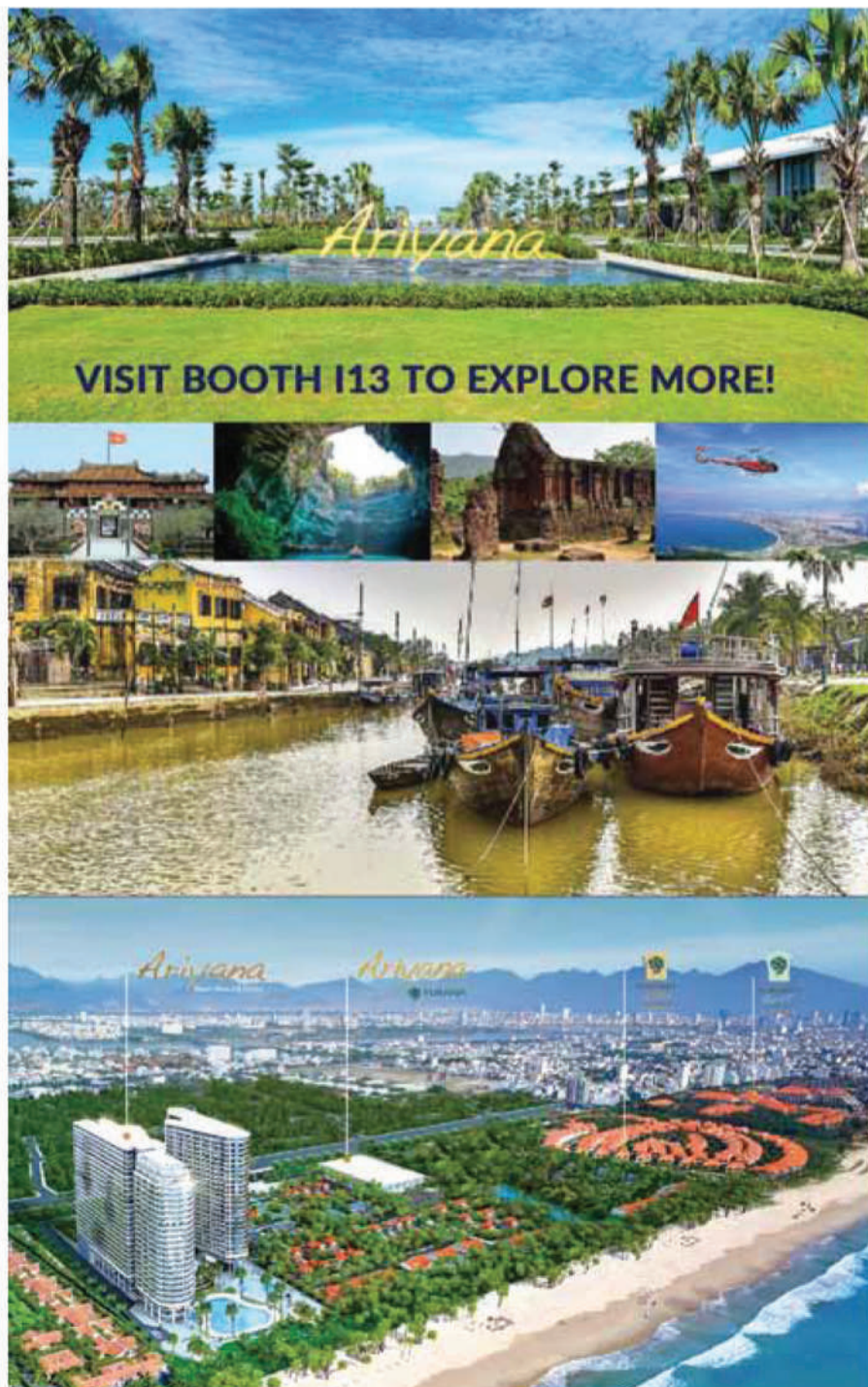
To proliferate the adoption of cashless payments in a more targeted manner, Grab and STB will exchange insights on visitor preferences, and will launch a joint study to better understand



visitors' behavioural patterns and preferences for transport modes around Singapore.

Grab will also be sharing its booking APIs in phases through STB's Tourism Information & Services Hub, allowing select tourism businesses to integrate Grab's various tools into their own digital platforms.

Commenting on the partnership, Quek Choon Yang, chief technology officer, STB, said: "With Grab's extensive presence in the South-east Asian region, which contributes a very large share of our visitors, we are confident of reaching a sizable audience through the multifaceted touch points offered through the Grab app."



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## Features **NTO chief showcase**

# A forward-looking vision

Top honchos tell *TTG Show Daily* what new programmes they have up their sleeves in this second edition



## SINGAPORE

### Lionel Yeo

Chief executive, Singapore Tourism Board (STB)

#### How did STB leverage on the ASEAN@50 celebrations to reel in more tourist arrivals, and what has been the result so far?

STB supported the ASEAN community's efforts on three fronts: marketing the region through the *Visit ASEAN@50* campaign, continued advocacy for cruise terminal and destination infrastructure development, and building capabilities for South-east Asia's tourism

through the launch of ASEAN Tourism Research Association's scholarships.

On the marketing front, STB worked closely with ASEAN member states and the industry to jointly promote Singapore and the region. Such efforts include curating *Visit ASEAN@50* tour packages, promoting Cruise South-east Asia at Seatrade Cruise Global, offering hotel deals through the Singapore Hotel Association, and having exclusive promotions to South-east Asia under Singapore Airlines.

From January to August 2017, Singapore saw good growth, with South-east Asian visitor arrivals increasing 2.4 per cent year-on-year. More international travellers are also visiting both Singapore and regional destinations via cruise holidays, with a 16 per cent increase (year-on-year) in passenger throughput observed for 2016.

In 2017, cruise lines had extended seasons and ship calls to Singapore, including *Genting Dream's* year-round deployment from November 2017 onwards.

#### What new things will be done in 2018 to keep up the momentum STB has achieved?

2018 will be another exciting year for STB. Having launched our new brand *Passion Made Possible* successfully in 2017, we will work towards entrenching it further in the minds of both travellers and Singaporeans.

(With this) brand that goes beyond our tourism offerings, we will continue sharing with the world the authentic story of Singapore (as) a place shaped by people and their passions to never settle and pursue new possibilities for progress.

STB will continue to forge digital partnerships in key markets for customised and relevant content on Singapore to be shared with target audiences. Our aim is to leverage even more digital platforms and partners to enhance the overall visitor experience, from pre- to post-arrival.

Since 2015, STB has signed MoUs with major digital players in China and South Korea, including Tencent, Baidu and Kakao, and most recently with Alipay in September 2017.

On the entertainment front, our three-year collaboration with The Walt Disney Company South-east Asia (Disney) will continue in 2018 with a series of events featuring the popular Marvel franchise. Just like the Star Wars-themed activations in 2017, we expect these new events to draw Marvel fans of all ages from the South-east Asia region and beyond to Singapore.

We will also continue to improve on and promote our existing slate of world-class events such as the Singapore Airlines F1 Singapore Grand Prix, the International Champions Cup tournament and the WTA Finals.

On the business events front, STB has secured anchor events for 2018 and beyond, including TFWA Asia-Pacific (2018-2020), the Global Leadership Conference & YPO Edge, APAIE and World Credit Union Conference.

#### What is the one thing you wish the ASEAN tourism community could collectively achieve in 2018?

With an ASEAN Declaration on Cruise Tourism to be endorsed at the coming ATF 2018, we believe it is timely to pursue further opportunities to drive cruise tourism in 2018 and beyond.

While cruise tourism is still a nascent travel product in South-east Asia, it holds much potential, with approximately 4.5 million cruise passengers expected by 2035. The region has many natural attributes that make it an ideal cruising playground, and diverse destinations within short sailing distances of each other.

Looking forward to 2018 and ahead, as the lead cruise coordinator for ASEAN, STB hopes to continue collaborations with the ASEAN tourism community to develop and enhance cruise infrastructure, and promote Cruise South-east Asia. – **Pamela Chow**



## THAILAND

### Santi Chudintra

Deputy governor, international marketing Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)

#### How did TAT leverage the ASEAN@50 celebration to reel in more tourist arrivals and what was the result so far?

In celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN, Thailand has taken this remarkable opportunity to promote South-east Asia as a single destination, while highlighting Thailand's potential as a regional hub and gateway.

To reinforce Thailand's image and attract both inter- and intra-ASEAN tourist arrivals, we have enhanced consumer engagement by conducting a social media campaign called ASEAN Photowalk which uses South-east Asia travel bloggers to promote regional destinations, while encouraging their followers to post their pictures at attraction sites to win a prize – this created more than 1.5 million impressions.

Thailand has also successfully organised agent and media fam trips. The latest was Experience Thailand and More, where we introduced four new itinerary programmes of multi-country travel routes in South-east Asia to longhaul media and travel agents. The four programmes are: A Journey of ASEAN Ancient Kingdoms (Lamphun-Chiang Mai-Mandalay), ASEAN World Heritage Cities (Sukhothai-Luang Prabang), ASEAN Romantic Treasures (Ko Samet-Siem Reap-Ho Chi Minh City-Phu Quoc) and ASEAN Gastronomy Local Experience (Ayutthaya-Kuala Lumpur-Malacca).

There were 130 participants with 36 media and agents who attended the trade meet, which led to increased awareness and about 150 packages being sold.

#### What new things will be done in 2018 to keep up the momentum TAT has achieved?

Our 2018 tourism marketing plan is designed to shift the structure and direction of the national tourism industry towards a new value-based offer in order to position Thailand as a quality leisure destination. This is aligned with the national reform plan of the Royal Thai Government and its slogan, *Stability, Prosperity, and Sustainability*.

The goal now is to focus on the *Open to the New Shades of Thailand* campaign to open new viewpoints and memorable experiences to quality tourists by creating valuable tourism products. This will mean greater emphasis on promoting Thailand through Thai culture, experiences and way of life.

We will also develop a broad range of marketing communications materials in line with the objectives to give greater prominence to the diversified experiences featuring "Thainess" on the world stage. The Amazing Thailand brand will remain in place, but is supported by the *Open to the New Shades of Thailand* power narrative.

As part of our quality over quantity approach, we are focusing more of our marketing efforts on niche markets and specific products.

#### What is the one thing you wish the ASEAN tourism community will achieve in 2018?

Currently, South-east Asian nations have been working under the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025, which has the vision that by 2025, the region will be a quality tourism destination offering a unique and diverse experience, and will be committed to responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development.

From 2016-2017, many programmes have been carried out to pave the way to our goal, such as the *Visit ASEAN@50* campaign, the implementation of ASEAN mutual recognition arrangement on tourism professionals and ASEAN Tourism Standards.

We hope 2018 will be the year of the ASEAN tourism community's greatest achievements starting with ATF 2018 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

As host country, Thailand believes this regional event will be a good platform to bring the private and public sectors together. The trade gets to better understand policy directions, be brought up to speed with new products, attractions and destinations, and do business with 10 nations in the region.

There will also be some 150 media across the globe that will join ATF 2018, which will generate a high level of recognition of South-east Asia as a single destination, and help drive more travellers to this region. – **Siriarpa Kamjan**

# INSPIRED BALINESE ELEGANCE ON KUTA BEACH



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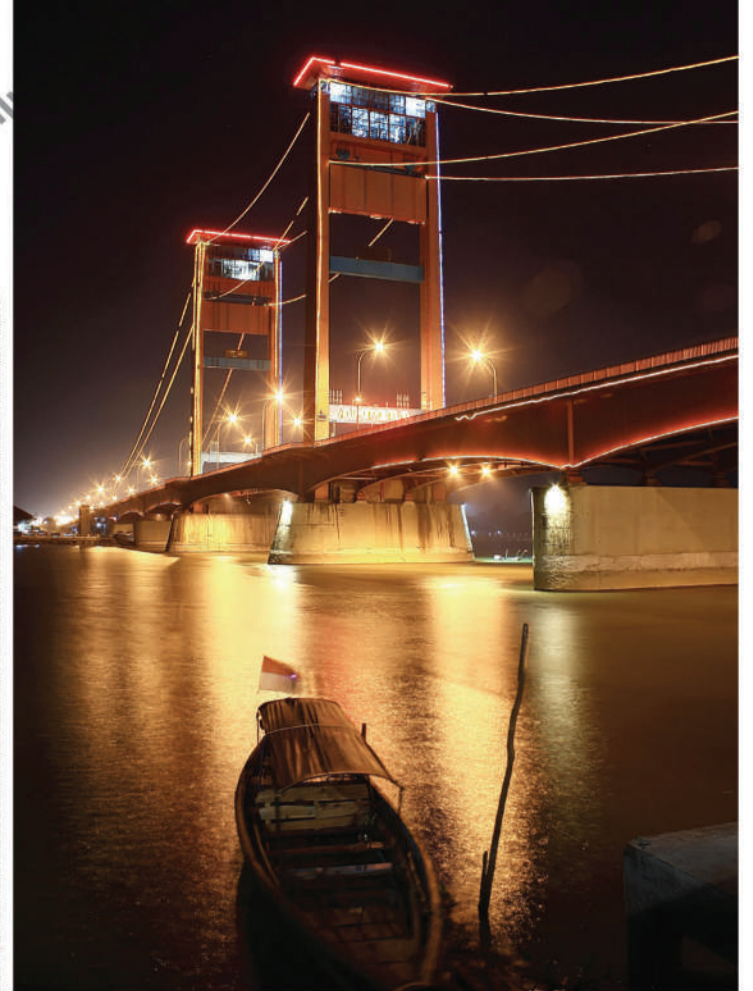
THE ANVAYA  
BEACH RESORT - BALI

## Marketplace

### Santika Indonesia Hotels and Resorts welcomes guests to Bali

Despite the recent eruption of Mount Agung, none of Santika Indonesia Hotels & Resorts' 13 hotels in Bali, including The Samaya, The Kayana, The Anvaya, Hotel Santika and Amaris Hotel, are affected. All of these hotels continue to offer a warm and friendly welcome. The group currently manages 106 hotels under five main brands: five-star Anvaya Beach Resorts, four-star Hotel Santika Premiere, three-star Hotel Santika, smart hotel brand Amaris, and boutique villas known as The Royal Collection. Each has its own unique service standards, offering comprehensive facilities in beautiful surroundings.

Website: <http://santika.com>



### Indonesia set to welcome two major events in 2018

Indonesia is proud to host two major events this year, the Asian Games from August 18 to September 2 in Jakarta and Palembang; and the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) from October 10 to 14 in Nusa Dua, Bali.

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) has appointed these cities as the host of the Games as they both have met all OCA's venue requirements, which included the ability to accommodate around 15,000 athletes and distinguished delegations from 45 OCA member nations.

Meanwhile the move to hold the high-profile IMF and WB meetings in Bali is set to place Indonesia – South-east Asia's largest economy – on a global stage.

Website: <http://indonesia.travel>

### V Hotel Management and Hotel 81 Management now under Worldwide Hotels

V Hotel Management and Hotel 81 Management have come under the umbrella of Worldwide Hotels, as of January 2018. As custodian of both business entities, the group will own and manage six hotel brands namely, Hotel Boss, V Hotel, Hotel Mi, Value Hotel, Venue Hotel and Hotel 81.

With a current combined total of 38 hotels islandwide and over 6,500 rooms, Worldwide Hotels is now Singapore's largest provider of tourist class hotels. The group is geared for expansion not only within Singapore but also around the Asia Pacific region and beyond in 2018.

Email: [rodneyyee@wwhotels.com](mailto:rodneyyee@wwhotels.com)

### Bintan Lagoon Resort revives *kampung* spirit

A touch of nostalgia has come upon Bintan Lagoon Resort with the new Satay Club, transporting visitors back to the good old days of casual open dining in Singapore.

The resort has set up stalls serving a variety of satay sticks at the outdoor area of Fiesta Restaurant, where fragrance of grilled Indonesian-styled meat waft through the air in the evenings.

"We want to bring back the friendly *kampung* spirit of dining out in the open and savouring freshly barbecued meat. By sharing this experience with our guests, we hope they can take back precious memories of our culture," said Gerald A Henrick, general manager and senior vice president of Bintan Lagoon Resort.

Bintan Lagoon Resort boasts 13 other food and beverage options including a night club and a karaoke lounge. The resort offers 450 rooms/suites and villas, and facilities include two large swimming pools, a spa, the Nutty Bunch Club and Jungle Gym for kids, as well as two 18-hole golf courses.

Website: <http://bintanlagoon.com>



### Danang's new Ariyana Convention Centre to get more accommodation support

Vietnamese company Sovico Holdings is transforming the landscape of Danang's beachfront with the expansion of Ariyana Tourism Complex, which will in two years' time welcome a 1,400-key luxury resort to support its new Ariyana Convention Centre.

Ariyana Tourism Complex also comprises the luxury Furama Resort Danang, Furama Villas Danang and the International Convention Palace. The three-storey beachfront Ariyana Convention Centre, opened in mid-October, takes in 12 multi-functional rooms, three of which can be split into multiple spaces. The largest facility is the Ariyana Grand Ballroom, a massive 2,079m<sup>2</sup> pillarless hall with a nine-metre-high ceiling that can seat 2,500 people in a theatre setting, and be divided into four smaller spaces.

Website: <http://ariyanacentre.com>



### Multi-park destination in Sunway Theme Parks

Sunway Theme Parks is home to two award-winning theme park attractions in Malaysia. First of which is the internationally acclaimed Sunway Lagoon which spans some 88 acres and currently boasts more than 90 attractions spread across six uniquely designed parks, featuring Asia's first Nickelodeon-themed attraction.

The other park – Sunway Lost World of Tambun – is located in the historic town of Ipoh, Perak, and is landscaped with lush tropical flora and fauna, majestic limestone hills of 400 million years of age and complemented by seven amazing parks including Malaysia's best night park.

Websites: <http://sunwaylostworldoftambun.com>; <http://sunwaylagoon.com>



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## Features Airlines

# A region far more accessible

International and regional airlines come together to bring better access to the South-east Asian destinations of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Myanmar. *TTG Show Daily* reporters pick out top developments of 2017



### BRUNEI

#### Royal Brunei Airlines, Turkish Airlines

A code share agreement between Royal Brunei Airlines and Turkish Airlines was enhanced last year, allowing Turkish Airlines to operate flights from Singapore to Istanbul and return, and Royal Brunei Airlines to operate flights between Bandar Seri Begawan and Singapore. The changes were effective May 1. This was an improvement on the first agreement inked in February 2016, which allowed passengers to connect seamlessly from Bandar Seri Begawan to Istanbul via Dubai and vice versa.

#### Royal Brunei Airlines, Bandar Seri Begawan-Beijing

The flag carrier had in September announced plans to resume direct flights to Beijing, subject to governmental approval and the airline's ability to acquire landing slots in the Chinese capital. The service was suspended in 1987. According to a report in *Aviation Tribune*, the service will start twice a week utilising A320 and then expand to a thrice-weekly service at the earliest opportunity. While sale of this service was still not on at press time in early-November, hopes are up for this new service to improve inbound tourism for Brunei from China, which is currently the top mid-haul market for the Sultanate.

#### Lucky Air, Nanning-Bandar Seri Begawan

Kunming-based low-cost carrier, Lucky Air, commenced twice-weekly charter services from Nanning to Bandar Seri Begawan on July 15. It will run for 12 months. It joins the carrier's twice-weekly scheduled flights between Kunming and Bandar Seri Begawan which was launched three days later. The airline has a monopoly on both routes and provides a welcome option for travellers from the two populous Chinese cities to fly direct to Brunei. As well, the services provide inbound agents in Brunei with two new source markets in China.



### CAMBODIA

#### Emirates, Phnom Penh and Yangon

In July, Emirates launched daily flights from Dubai to Phnom Penh and Yangon. This is the first direct link between Phnom Penh and Yangon since 2014. The service makes it easier for leisure and business travellers from Europe, the Middle East and the US to access both Cambodia and Myanmar through these gateways.

#### AirAsia, Kuala Lumpur-Sihanoukville

In August, AirAsia connected Kuala Lumpur with Cambodia's Sihanoukville. As the popularity of Sihanoukville as a seaside destination soars, AirAsia says it is catering to growing demand with its four-weekly flights. Traffic at Sihanouk International Airport grew by 118 per cent in 2016.



#### JC International Airlines, Siem Reap-Chongqing

In October, JC International Airlines – which launched in Cambodia in March – started a thrice-weekly flight connecting Siem Reap and Chongqing, China to capitalise on the growing number of Chinese visitors to the Kingdom. Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism aims to attract two million Chinese tourists by 2020.

#### Cambodia Angkor Air, Siem Reap-Hong Kong

In the same month, Cambodia's flag carrier, Cambodia Angkor Air launched a service connecting Siem Reap and Hong Kong. The twice-weekly flight aims to bridge trade and tourism between the two countries, while increasing visitors from China and Europe, who connect through Hong Kong International Airport.



### INDONESIA

#### Indonesia AirAsia, Jogjakarta, Lombok and Pekanbaru

Encouraged by a 90 per cent load factor on its flights from Kuala Lumpur to the Indonesian destinations of Jogjakarta, Lombok and Pekanbaru, Indonesia AirAsia moved to up the frequencies on these routes. With effect from January 26, services to Lombok and Jogjakarta were raised to 21 per week from 14, while Kuala Lumpur-Pekanbaru services were raised to 17 per week from 10.

#### Indonesia AirAsia, Bali-Tokyo

Indonesia AirAsia X's new Bali-Tokyo (Narita) service, launched May 27, is expected to boost Japanese arrivals to the Indonesian resort island. The four-weekly flights are operated by an Airbus 330-300 aircraft with 377 seats, including 12 Premium Flatbeds.

#### Qatar Airways, Doha-Bali

Qatar Airways now flies more frequently to the popular leisure island of Bali. A third daily non-stop service from Doha to Bali was launched on May 7. The airline

first offered this service in 2014 and later enhanced it to a twice daily frequency.

#### Emirates, Dubai-Bali

Not to be outdone by fellow Middle-Eastern competitor, Emirates made a move on July 2 to add a second daily service between Dubai and Bali. This service connects seamlessly with a number of destinations across Europe, and enables passengers to connect domestically to the nearby Indonesian cities of Surabaya, Makassar and Lombok.

#### Lion Air, Manado-Shanghai

Lion Air launched a thrice-weekly service between Shanghai and Manado, using Boeing 737-800/900 as well as the newest aircraft in its fleet – Boeing 737-MAX-8. This service joins the airline's network in China, which includes Changsha, Shenzhen and Guangzhou, with connections to Bali and Batam, all on charter basis. The airline said its decision was made in response to the Indonesian government's aggressive destination marketing and promotions to Chinese travellers.

#### Indonesia AirAsia, Bali-Kolkata

AirAsia Indonesia debuted a new Bali-Kolkata service on October 1. This is the second Indian city the carrier serves, after Mumbai. The airline explained that high traffic between the two points prompted the launch of the new service. Indian arrivals to Bali rose 40 per cent in the first semester of 2017.

#### Garuda Indonesia, Silangit-Singapore

The Indonesia flag carrier commenced Silangit-Singapore services on October 27, marking the start of international operations at Silangit Airport which is a gateway to popular Lake Toba, North Sumatra. The thrice-weekly flight is served by a Bombardier CRJ 1000 aircraft with capacity for 96 passengers. Previously, travellers wishing to access Lake Toba had to take a six- to eight-hour bus ride from Medan.

#### Malaysia Airlines, Surabaya-Singapore

Malaysia Airlines started flying between Singapore and Surabaya in Indonesia's East Java on October 29. Operated four

times a week with a Boeing 738-800 aircraft, the service is inspiring Indonesian inbound agents to expect more demand for up-market golf holidays.

#### Garuda Indonesia, Jakarta-London Heathrow

On October 31 Garuda Indonesia kicked off thrice-weekly direct flights from Jakarta to London Heathrow. This makes it the only airline offering a direct connection between the UK and Indonesia. The previous option required a fuel stop in Singapore.



### LAOS

#### Lao Airlines, Vientiane-Singapore

National carrier Lao Airlines re-launched direct flights from Vientiane's Wattay International Airport to Singapore's Changi International Airport in October. The route is expected to boost Laos' economic development by offering easier access to tourists and investors. In 2016, two-way trade between the countries hit US\$30 million, more than doubling from US\$13 million in 2015.

#### China Southern Airlines, Vientiane-Guangzhou

In October, China Southern Airlines launched a direct flight between Vientiane and Guangzhou as part of a scheme to support China's Belt and Road Initiative. It is also believed the route will lure more Chinese travellers to Laos.



### MYANMAR

#### Nok Air, Mae Sot-Yangon

In October, Thai low-cost carrier Nok Air launched a direct flight connecting Mae Sot in western Thailand with Myanmar's Yangon. It aims to boost connectivity between the commercial capital of Myanmar and the trade hub on the Thai border. It also adds extra travel options for leisure tourists visiting both countries.

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## Destination Indonesia

Closing ceremony of the Erau International Folk & Art Festival, which takes place annually in Tenggarong



# An exuberant invitation

Indonesia calls attention to its vibrant tapestry of events and cultural celebrations, with the NTO highlighting 100 "Prime Events" and travel players plugging tour packages with festival components, reports [Mimi Hudoyo](#)

Home to over 300 ethnic groups and 1,340 tribes, Indonesia wants to be recognised as a destination rife with cultural and religious celebrations, which number in the thousands every year.

To boost arrivals in 2018, the country's Ministry of Tourism is focusing on promoting events – both cultural and urban – and has formed a team of curators to select 100 "Prime Events" for its 2018 calendar.

Arief Yahya, Indonesia's tourism minister elaborated that the 100 events cover every province in the country, and were selected with consideration given to event preparation, performance standard, choreography and post-event publication.

Events also have to be organised on the same date every year and be in line with the tourism development strategy, he continued.

Taufik Rahzen, a member of the curator team, said another criteria is accessibility of the destination and adequacy of

supporting amenities.

Selected events include national festivals like Indonesia's Independence Carnival, Sail Indonesia and Festival Keraton Nusantara (the Palaces of the Archipelago Festival); and regional festivals such as the Aceh Culinary Festival, Solo Batik Carnival, Borobudur Marathon, Dieng Cultural Festival, Erau Festival in East Kalimantan, Wola Padu in Sumba and Sekaten in Yogyakarta.

On how the ministry plans to bring these events to the attention of the international community, I Gde Pitana, deputy minister for international promotion development, said: "The overseas promotion will be using the pre-, on-, and post-event approach.

"Three months before the day of the event, for example, we can promote the events offline, such as through travel mart and sales mission, and online such as through Google, Tripadvisor and Baidu."

Moreover, the ministry is looking to leverage events to boost cross-border traffic, with 214 events set to be staged in 29 cross-border areas this year.

Arief said: "We are applying the proximity approach here. The territorial and cultural proximity (between the people living around the cross border areas) can be maximised to attract travellers."

Citing examples of countries successful in attracting cross-border visitors, Arief said: "The Netherlands' cross border traffic is 93 per cent of its total arrivals, Malaysia's is 65 per cent and Singapore's 61 per cent.

"In Indonesia, the cross border traffic is still small, making up just 20 per cent of total arrivals (around 3.2 million). Of these visitors, 90 per cent visit Riau Islands (Batam and Bintan particularly)."

The minister said Indonesia had potential to grow cross-border traffic with many countries, including Malaysia, Timor Leste, and Papua over land and sea borders.

The government's efforts have also received support from the private sector. As part of the private-sector driven *Visit Wonderful Indonesia 2018* (VIWI), the steering committee has created Colours of Indonesia: Events & Festivals, which comprise tour packages that include event tickets during low seasons.

The 3D2N Cap Go Meh Festival package running in February 2018, for example, will bundle festival participation in Singkawang, South Kalimantan, with a city tour in Pontianak. The price per person is 1.98 million rupiah (US\$138.60).

In addition, the 4D3N Vesak Day Celebrations programme in May includes a guided tour, ceremony and processions at the Mendut and Borobudur Temples in Central Java. The price starts from 3.49 million rupiah per person including accommodation, local transport, guide, entrance fee, refreshments and insurance.

Visitors wanting to experience the Erau Festival in East Kalimantan in July may join the Mahakam Holiday and Dayak at US\$550 per person (full board). They will be taken on a house boat down the Mahakam River from Muara Muntai to Tenggarong, where they will be able to experience Erau Festival processions and performances. The package also includes a stop at Mancong for a taste of Dayak hospitality at a long house.

At press time, the products were being uploaded to [www.indonesia.travel](http://www.indonesia.travel), expected to be up and running by January 2018.

Sadewa, deputy chairman I, organis-

### Destination in numbers

#### 17 million

Indonesia's 2018 arrivals target, an approximate 13 per cent increase over the 2017 target of 15 million

#### 24

The percentage increase in tourist arrivals to Indonesia in the January-October 2017 period, bringing the number to 11.6 million from 9.4 million in the corresponding 2016 period

#### 27

The number of new routes to China that Lion Air Group intends to open in 2018. The flights will connect with Bali, Jakarta, Lombok and Batam. Sriwijaya Air is also planning to open new routes from eight Chinese cities to Bintan



Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia

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So, come with your friends or family to Sunway Lagoon and let your best day ever begin.

It's non-stop fun from morning to night at Sunway Lost World Of Tambun, the ultimate family getaway in Ipoh. Featuring the longest Adventure River in Malaysia to the thrilling Tiger Valley where you can see Siberian tigers run, jump and feed, it's a day of memorable sights and unforgettable experiences. Kids will love the Petting Zoo, where they can interact with a large variety of adorable animals in their natural habitats or gambol around the Amusement Park, full of kid-friendly attractions like the Adventure Express, a train ride through the wilderness and Lupe's Adventure, the first roller coaster in the state.

Once the sun sets, Sunway Lost World Of Tambun vibrates with a different sensation of fun. The biggest draw is the Hot Springs and Spa, where you can soak in 100% natural mineral hot springs sourced from deep caverns underground or pamper yourself at the Crystal Spa, featuring a menu of invigorating therapies. Or simply take in the carnival atmosphere with the Flaming Percussion, featuring fire eaters, jugglers and other photo-worthy performances. Take in the beauty of the enchanting Luminous Forest, a new and exciting attraction opening soon. So, book your holiday now to Sunway Lost World Of Tambun, always more than just a theme park.

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# Destination Indonesia

## Viewpoints

What is needed for Indonesia to reach its full potential in tourism?

### Umberto Cadamuro

COO inbound,  
PACTO



With arrivals now seeing a stable growth pattern, I would like to see marketing focus shift to origin countries with long average stay, so as to optimise the (strained) seat capacity. And by welcoming full service carriers such as Etihad Airways and Oman Air to Bali, we can attract higher spenders.

### Koen Ruisch

Country manager  
Indonesia,  
Happy Trails Asia



We have seen steady growth in tourist numbers. Sumatra and Flores are especially gaining popularity in German and UK markets. The better flight connectivity to Bali, as well as the increased domestic services around the country have opened new possibilities.

I believe a lot is already being done. The ministry has a large focus on promoting Indonesia in collaboration with various stakeholders. This makes a successful formula which we are happy to be a part of.

## Surprising theme



Mangunan Yogyakarta

### Adventure in nature

Yogyakarta is well-known for its culture and historic sites, while demand for nature and soft adventure is growing. Visit Mangunan fruit garden in Imogiri District to discover the beautiful scenery. Hike up the hill to a terrace and take in a majestic view of the surrounding hills and the Oyo River at the bottom of the valley. The best time to visit is early in the morning when the sun rises behind the cloudy, misty air, or in the late afternoon when the sun is setting.

## Hot stuff

### Swiss-Belinn Airport Surabaya

Swiss-Belhotel International launched its three-star property in Indonesia, the Swiss-Belinn Airport Surabaya, on September 9, 2017.

The hotel features 120 deluxe rooms, nine grand deluxe rooms and four suites. Ranging from 24m<sup>2</sup> to 48m<sup>2</sup> in size, each guestroom and suite comes with Wi-Fi access, laptop-sized in-room safes, mini refrigerators and 40" LCD TV with cable channels.

Facilities include an all-day dining restaurant and lounge in the lobby, a barbecue area, seven meeting rooms, a swimming pool and gym. Guests will also appreciate the convenience of an in-room massage service.

### Ulu Cliffhouse

The Ulu Cliffhouse beach club debuted in Uluwatu, Bali on September 23, 2017, boasting a 25m-long infinity pool, a music recording studio, an art space, an open-air restaurant and a cliff-side rock bar hanging over the waves.

The restaurant and the bar, with a capacity of 80 and 100 respectively, feature timber and rattan pavilions overlooking the Indian Ocean. The kitchen is helmed by world-renowned Peruvian chef Diego Muñoz, who led Astrid & Gaston to 14<sup>th</sup> spot in *The World's 50 Best Restaurants List*. Menus will feature dishes influenced by Muñoz's travels around the world as well as Bali's local environment.

### Henshin

Jakarta's dining scene has welcomed Henshin at the rooftop of The Westin Jakarta. The fine-dining restaurant specialises in Nikkei cuisine – a Japanese-Peruvian fusion – and is helmed by chef Hajime Kasuga.

Spread across three levels, the restaurant's 90-seater alfresco bar and lounge occupies the 67<sup>th</sup> floor, while the 68<sup>th</sup> and 69<sup>th</sup> floors house an open-kitchen dining area. Two private rooms are located on the 69<sup>th</sup> floor, one accommodating 20 guests and the other 12.

### JimBARan Living Room

The JimBARan Living Room, located within the atrium lounge of Ayana Mid-



From above: Ulu Cliffhouse in Bali; Henshin's rooftop bar in The Westin Jakarta

plaza Jakarta, is a new gathering space for a range of needs from business luncheons to afternoon teas.

It is divided into semi-private living spaces and features a bar, with the entire venue seating up to 94 guests or accommodating up to 150 pax for standing parties. Larger gatherings can utilise the JimBARan Lounge and Garden, which stretches capacity to 300 pax. The venue is available for private event hire.

### Vasa Hotel Surabaya

Indonesian hotel management company Tanly Hospitality has launched Vasa Hotel Surabaya, a 384-room luxury hotel located in a prestigious area of Surabaya.

It features eight F&B venues, a swimming pool, a spa, eight function and meeting facilities that can accommodate up to 2,000 people in all, a VIP holding room and an exclusive helipad.



### Teras Bromo

Plataran Indonesia's latest restaurant is Teras Bromo, just 5km from Mount Bromo in East Java and in an agricultural area. Leveraging its location, Teras Bromo specialises in

Indonesian-Asian dishes made with local produce. Moreover, its location on Plataran Hill Sunset Point means visitors can enjoy sunset views while being surrounded by lush gardens.



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Destination **Malaysia**

# Malaysia's magnetic pull



Clockwise from above: A farmer looks over his tea plantation in Malaysia; ethnic Iban ladies of Borneo working on a traditional hat at the Sarawak Culture Village; entrance of Legoland Malaysia

A timeless destination campaign and 2017 SEA Games hosting work in Malaysia's favour. By **S Puvaneswary**

**T**he *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 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 desti-

nation 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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. In 2017 alone, Malaysia Airlines 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.

# Destination Malaysia

## Viewpoints

What is needed for Malaysia to reach its full potential in tourism?

### Andy Yow

Director of sales & marketing, Vivanta by Taj - Rebak Island Langkawi



Tourism Malaysia should increase their advertising and promotional funding especially to markets that show potential for further growth and improvement in arrivals such as China, India, Japan and Vietnam.

The government should also incentivise our local airlines to fly to secondary cities in these markets. The government and private sector should also jointly explore ways to make the travel experience – from their arrival to their accommodation – seamless and hassle free for tourists.

### Ally Bhoonee

Executive director, World Avenues



Malaysia must play on its natural beauty, such as beaches, rainforest, mountains, while developing more signature events that will attract more international tourists.

Tourism Malaysia must also be more aggressive in marketing the destination overseas, and informing agents overseas of all the new products available in the country. When Tourism Malaysia organises fam trips for overseas travel agents to visit Malaysia, they must ensure that only decision makers attend the trip and not junior staff.

## Surprising theme



Kinabalu National Park

### Adventure in nature

Malaysia is home to many majestic land formations which allow courageous travellers to climb a mountain or explore the mysterious depths of caves. Kinabalu National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage site. While its tourist trails are well-worn, the majority of the park is an unspoilt paradise for rare flora and fauna. For those who are not keen on testing themselves on Mt Kinabalu's slopes, there is still much to learn from a visit to the park.

Another UNESCO World Heritage Site worth exploring is Mulu Caves National Park in Sarawak, especially great for those who love adventure caving. As well, at Taman Negara National Park in West Malaysia are trekking trails, whitewater rafting opportunities, and wildlife observation with an experienced guide.

## Destination in numbers

### 5.9 nights

The average stay of tourists in Malaysia in 2016

### 20.3 million

The number of tourists from South-east in 2016, out of a total of 26.7 million

### RM1.1 billion

Revenue generated from the health tourism sector in 2016, equivalent to US\$275 million, up from RM914 million in 2015

### RM5.4 billion

The total tourist expenditure on shopping in 1Q2017, equivalent to US\$1.3 billion, an increase of 6.3 per cent year-on-year

## Hot stuff

### Trace

Situated 40 floors above ground in Element Kuala Lumpur, Trace restaurant and bar opened in May 2017, offering a stunning bird's-eye view of the city. It is the perfect place to catch the sunrise or sunset, while feasting on local and western-fusion cuisine. 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, and serves a breakfast buffet, lunch, dinner and cocktails.

### Genting Highlands Premium Outlets

Opened in June last year, Genting Highlands Premium Outlets 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, 2017, within Sunway Velocity Kuala Lumpur, a 9.3ha self-contained integrated mixed development.

Facilities include an all-day café, and infinity 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 last year 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 tastefully decorated and comes with its own private dip pool and steam room.

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, recently opened its gates.

Sprawled over 21 hectares of land, it features 23 interactive attractions and 15 thrilling rides in six themed zones.

It houses both international and home-grown Intellectual Properties (IPs) including DreamWorks characters, The Smurfs and The Home of BoBoiBoy. Attractions include South-east Asia's first car and bike stunt show, *Stunt Legends*, themed restaurants and Malaysia's biggest drop tower, Mega-

mind Megadrop.

Operating hours are from 10.00 to 18.00 daily.

### Setia SPICE Convention Centre

Opened in March last year, Setia SPICE Convention Centre in Penang is one of five key components of The Subterranean Penang International Convention 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.



From left: Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson; Setia Spice Convention Centre in Penang



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## Analysis

# The prize and price of mobile

In an age of rapid digitisation, Pamela Chow examines why some agencies have successfully made strides into the mobile space while others prefer traditional means

As travel bookings on mobile continue to grow as a popular channel for consumers worldwide, Travelport projects that 76 per cent of the growth of online travel will originate from mobile apps by 2020.

Mobile is hence a space where brick-and-mortar travel agencies can carve a share in, advised Travelport president and CEO Gordon Wilson, especially as an ageing global population – which has a higher spending power, and values personal interaction and trust more – becomes a key market.

He told *TTG Show Daily*: “(Traditional) travel agencies are still growing. There is a market for cash-rich but time-poor people who want full service. (They may) want however, to experience engagement with the agency on their mobile. It can become a supplement to the traditional way of doing things.”

### Costs a heavy burden

Despite the country's high Internet and mobile penetration levels, some travel agencies in Singapore remain reluctant to adopt mobile solutions, citing cost as the main deterrent.

“It's definitely expensive. We dare not even think about it,” said Focal Travel's founder and advisor Wilson Tee. Although his agency has established a website and social media presence, as well as partnerships with online travel platforms such as Tripzilla, Tee believes that the payoff from developing mobile solutions is not worth the “high cost”.

According to Travelport product manager Daniel Rowley, an agent would have to fork out at least A\$1-1.5 million (US\$0.8-1.2 million) to develop a travel app, excluding expertise and training.

The costs extend past the development and adoption stages. Travel Star, which had previously dipped its toes into mobile app, found constant upkeep a challenge.

It was rather tedious to keep a mobile app updated. It required high maintenance, and we didn't have an in-house IT team.

Zheng Lingna  
Marketing & HR manager, Travel Star



“It was rather tedious to keep a mobile app updated. It required high maintenance, and we didn't have an in-house IT team,” said marketing & HR manager Zheng Lingna. Travel Star has since shut down its app to focus on its website.

Tee also opined that spending more money in the digital space does not necessarily translate into higher visibility.

Instead, Focal Travel subscribes to the “bigger is better” approach to maximising its marketing budget. Tee explained: “If I have more advertising money, I'd rather spend it on print. My ad would be bigger and more prominent, and more people can see me.”

Also keeping faith in traditional media is CS Travel, which is limiting its digital engagement to just social media marketing, said assistant general manager Alice Lai. Besides Facebook, Instagram and WeChat, the agency does not see the urgency or have the “big budget” to go mobile yet.

“We may seem outdated, but a lot of travellers still consume traditional media such as newspapers and TV,” said Lai, who believes that consumer behaviour will eventually find a new normal that incorporates offline platforms.

### The price is right

Once bitten by its mobile foray, Travel Star is not twice shy as it does not rule out developing an app again in the future if more government grants are introduced to encourage ventures into the mobile sphere, said Zheng.

The funds provided are currently channelled into maintaining the agency's website, but it would take more for them to operate an effective app, she said.

Pegasus Travel Management's managing director, Charles Tan, sees schemes such as the Singapore Tourism Board's recent Marketing Innovation Programme as opportunities for agencies to venture into the mobile landscape.

For Pegasus, the time and cost saved from digitising its processes justifies the high price. Its backend system currently runs on Travelport SmartPoint, and it has contracted Travelport TripAssist to build a customised app.

“It's very cost- and time-saving for us. Our workers don't have to key inputs manually, resulting in significant time savings,” said Pegasus Travel Management's operations manager Kennix Hong.

What made the difference, explained Hong, was Travelport's training and support, including education on how to effectively market the app to target users.

Going mobile has also created a wave among regional players such as Traveloka. Caesar Indra, senior vice president of business development, shared that bookings made on the Traveloka app account for 70 per cent of its online transactions.

“Consumers treat their mobiles as a part of their lives,” he noted, suggesting that apps are also a way for agents to go “beyond the transactional” to engage with the customer throughout their journey.

An example was introducing a feature for users to reschedule or refund their purchases on their mobile phones. This cut the processing time from 30 minutes – when done through a call centre or physical store – to just five minutes.

Indra added that the social aspect is especially important in Indonesia, where Traveloka incorporated WhatsApp as a

ONLINE  
BOOKING

(Mobile engagement) can become a supplement to the traditional way of doing things.

Gordon Wilson  
President and CEO, Travelport

function on its mobile app for users to share their itineraries on the popular messaging platform.

“This created a network effect, where people who didn't use Traveloka learnt about us through their friends sharing their itineraries,” said Indra.

An agency's mobile communication can be employed to also include ground staff such as tour providers and suppliers, advised Robin Yap, president, Asia, The Travel Corporation.

The company launched an app for its trip directors to interact with customers before their trip, allowing guides to learn about their customers' interests, feedback and requests, in order to provide more personalised service.

“This mobile app is really critical to delivering a great customer experience,” said Yap.

## Features Family travel

# On the road with their brood

Family travel is becoming more online-savvy, multigenerational, adventurous, exploratory, yet safety-conscious, a poll of inbound and outbound agents in Asia-Pacific by *TTG Show Daily* reporters



children. This is so that costs on private tours can be shared.

Visiting South-east Asian countries are most popular among the middle income group of travellers, where holidays are usually short stays with a minimum of three nights. Popular destinations are Ho Chi Minh, Bangkok and Bandung for shopping, Batam for resort stays, and Lombok and Phuket for the beach.



**Philippines**  
Lyn Galon, consultant,  
Scorpio Travel

Outbound family travel this year is a bit weak compared with the surge in 2014 and 2015.

Japan remains a strong destination – though expensive, it is perceived to be safe. There have been many enquiries about Australia, New Zealand and the Holy Land as well.

Families usually look for destinations with theme parks, not so much for beaches as we have many in the Philippines.

Multigenerational travel is common, usually with a complete family (parents and kid/infants), and an uncle or aunt thrown in. Average group sizes are usually about seven to nine pax.



**Singapore**

William Loh, operation manager, Famosa Holiday Tour

Cruises and FlyCruise packages are on the rise with families, especially multigenerational ones.

For example, bookings for sailings in February 2018 started pouring in from February 2017. It's a very hot market now. Singaporeans like new experiences, and cruises are fresh. Younger couples stick to shorter sailings around the region, while older generations are open to longer cruises.

A self-drive holiday in Australia is also popular, especially among young families who prefer to travel at their own pace. Flights to Australia are getting more affordable as well, contributing to its popularity. Interest is spread evenly across Tasmania, Melbourne, Sydney and the Sunshine and Gold Coasts.

For year-end winter destinations, South Korea is a shining destination as it's one of the most affordable winter countries with ski resorts, especially for families who have never seen snow or skied before.



**Thailand**

Mongkol Thitawannong, manager, Miracle Time Travel

This year, Thai family travel usually comprises a few generations, and they like cheap tours (up to 20,000 baht [US\$602] per person), and usually choose Asian countries. This trend will probably continue into 2018.

Hot destinations for such families include Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Japan is the top destination for Thai travellers as they perceive the country to have everything – good weather, good food, interesting tourist attractions, and it is also a perfect place for shopping.

## INBOUND



**Malaysia**

Saini Vermeulen, executive director,  
Within Earth Holidays

Middle Eastern families on holiday look for hotels and villas with private pools as they value privacy, especially for the women, and Malaysia has a growing number of such resorts to choose from.

The country also gets many repeat visitors from the Middle East region, and such visitors tend to book their transfers and tours online, and make their own travel arrangements. They may use the services of a tour operator for arrival transfers only.

However, first time visitors from the Middle East travelling with children continue to require the services of a travel agent as they are unfamiliar with the destination.

For the Middle East market, travelling with extended families, including grandparents, and doing things together, has always been the norm, especially during the summer season, where stays can extend to two to three weeks.

In Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur remains popular for shopping, while Penang and Langkawi are popular beach destinations.



**Philippines**

Gigi Jamora, operations manager,  
Blue Horizons Travel and Tours

It's always Boracay. Bohol and Cebu are also options, and the markets that we deal with always prefer top-end resorts. Families come from India, the Middle East,

Europe and China although the latter are mainly couples.

The market segments that we deal with, luckily for us, are aware how far hot spots like Mindanao are from Manila.

Depending upon the kids' age brackets, families with toddlers prefer attractions that are safe come with child-minding services and playgrounds such as the Enchanted Kingdom in Laguna and the J Waterpark in Cebu. Those with teens prefer island hopping, especially with water activities, as well as kayaking and trekking.



**Singapore**

Joseph Sze, project director, Siam Express

Families are preferring more semi-FIT packages, where they go online and research for places to visit, and hunt down these locales after they break away from the group.

Hawker centres in the heartlands such as Toa Payoh, Ang Mo Kio and Tiong Bahru are becoming popular with families during the free-and-easy portion of their visit, as well as handicraft shops in Haji Lane and Little India, where tourists can get products they cannot find in their own countries.



**Thailand**

Chotechuang Soorangura, associate  
managing director, NS Travel & Tours

Foreign tourists see Thailand as a cheap destination with great food. Families who travel to the kingdom usually choose destinations outside Bangkok for activities. Usually, a family group would consist of many generations; this is common in Indian families.

We've also seen Chinese families combine family holidays with business, where they come to Thailand to spend time with their loved ones, while taking some time to explore potential business opportunities.

The top three destinations in the country are Koh Samui, Phuket, Chiang Mai. The beaches of Thailand are famous among foreign visitors, so they prefer to spend more time in the southern part of the country as compared to the north.

## OUTBOUND



**Malaysia**

Adam Kamal, CEO,  
Olympik Holidays

There is a growing trend of Malaysians booking their seats online to save costs. In the past, the older generation of travellers used to come to us for flight bookings. But we have seen their numbers reduce over the last three years, and now they only buy ground packages (hotels and tours) from us.

There is also a growing trend where clients come to us with their own itinerary. This is especially common among millennial parents with children. They have done their research online and know which places they want to visit while on holiday, and just require us to arrange transfers and a guide. However, the older generation of travellers remain content to follow our group series departures with fixed itineraries.

There is also a growing trend where young families with children tend to go on holidays with close friends who also have

Gallery

# Future masterminds

Photos by Yingyong Unanongrak



Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism Laos' Alounny Panhyasith, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board's Syed Yahya Syed Othman, Singapore Tourism Board's Lionel Yeo, Tourism Development Department Laos' Phonemany Soukhathammavong, and Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism Laos' Sounh Manivong



ASEAN Tourism Research Association Malaysia's Sheena Prasannan, Frederic Bouchon, Neethiahnanthan Ari Ragavan and Victor Wee



ASEAN Tourism Research Association Malaysia's Victor Wee, ASEAN-Korea Centre's Kim Su-youn, and Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia's Mohd Daud Mohd Arif



Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Takerngsak Chaiyakarn and Waraporn Sornprom, and Pacific Asia Travel Association Thailand's Mario Hardy



Right: Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office's Jens Thraenhart and Singapore Tourism Board's Chang Chee Pey

# Associations all fall in

Photos by Yingyong Unanongrak



# Gallery

## A regal welcome for NTOs Photos by Yingyong Unanongrak





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