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# ASEAN agrees on new brand

## More dollars for revised Feel the Warmth campaign

By Sirima Eamtako

**BANGKOK** NTOs in the 10-member grouping will begin promoting the region under the ASEAN, South East Asia: Feel the Warmth banner from October, after reaching an agreement to incorporate the word 'ASEAN' into the logo and for members to double their annual contribution to US\$200,000 each.

The idea for the new brand had been mooted since 2009, but its execution had been plagued by issues ranging from the wording used to funding.

While the full marketing plan will only be finalised at the NTOs' next meeting in October and endorsed by tourism ministers in January, initial promotional activities have received the green light.

The region would collaborate on an exhibition booth for the debut of its brand at the China International Travel Mart, said Sansern Ngaorungsi, deputy governor, international marketing, Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand.

As a start, ASEAN would participate in tradeshows held in its dialogue-partner countries, including China, Japan, South Korea and India, he added. It is also looking to engage new dialogue partner Bahrain to tap the Middle East market.

ASEAN would be able to do more from 2012, when the NTOs' increases in contribution kicked off, explained Sansern.

He said: "The existing sum is long overdue for a review, and inadequate in starting any effective marketing initiatives."

For now, some US\$23,000 of the entire budget will be set aside to evaluate ASEAN's tourism marketing strategy under the new campaign, while US\$5,000 will be used for a video production with the theme ASEAN: A World of Wonders and Diversity. The existing [www.south-eastasia.org](http://www.south-eastasia.org) website will also continue to be used as a marketing tool.

Culture, nature, cruises and community-based tourism will be emphasised as key products. Sports, health and wellness, and MICE will also be highlighted.

Sansern said the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA) was expected to revert with its recommendations in two months. ASEANTA will be involved in joint publicity and tradeshows, as well as the creation of tour packages.

Former ASEANTA president Elly Hutabarat said: "Whatever the branding is, having good tourism products and a good marketing strategy are more important."

She explained that the multiple changes in branding over the years had not been beneficial for the region.

"We can't argue forever; we should just start with the marketing immediately," said Elly. — **Additional reporting by Mimi Hudoyo and Ellen Chen**

### Viewpoint

## What do you think of the new brand?



**Dato Mohd Khalid Harun**  
President  
Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents

"It reflects the warmth and hospitality of the people in the region. But individual businesses have to decide if it is more beneficial to use their national branding or ASEAN's."



**Luzi Matzig**  
CEO  
Asian Trails

"It's a bit long, but still a fair compromise for 10 countries working together. Any promotional efforts will be worthwhile. However, programmes should be left to the experts."

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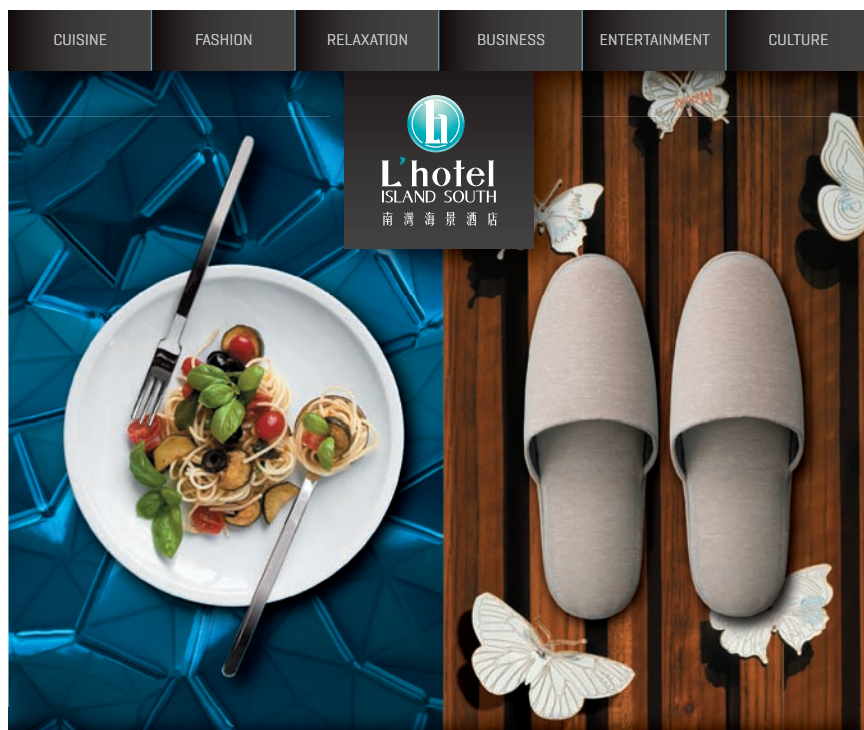
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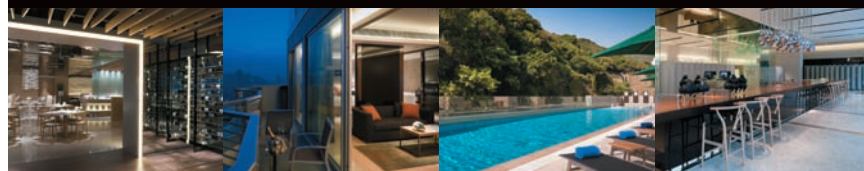
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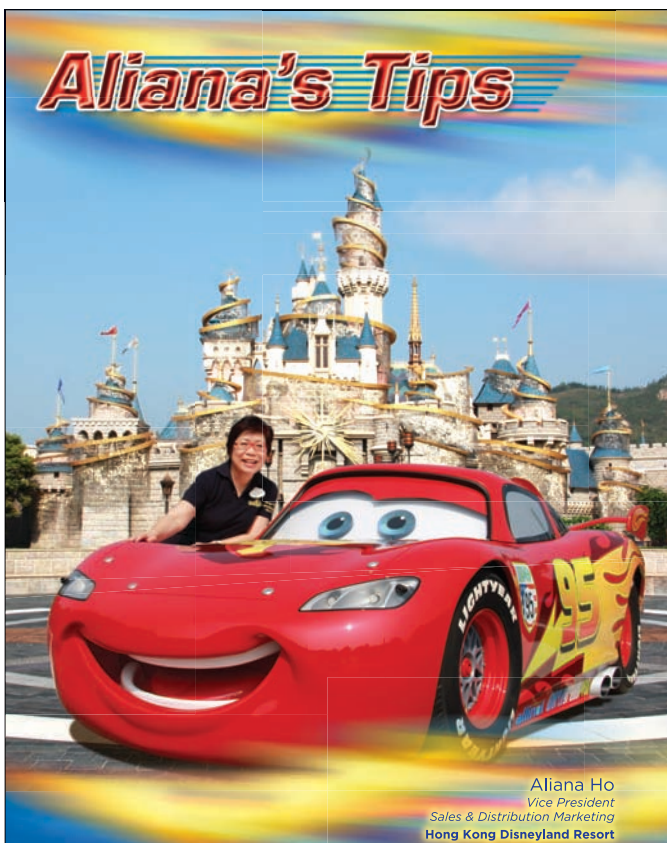
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## Aliana's Tips



Aliana Ho  
Vice President  
Sales & Distribution Marketing  
Hong Kong Disneyland Resort

This summer, we invite you and your Guests to join the coolest party with the hottest attractions as Hong Kong Disneyland hosts the ultimate summer bash. For the very first time, race car **Lightning McQueen** from the Disney/Pixar movie *Cars 2* is making his debut at the Resort to meet his fans in the all-new **Lightning McQueen "LIVE"!**

To excite the racing car fans, the Resort is transforming into a World Grand Prix race track setting where Guests can race around the world, trying our scrumptious international foods at pit stops along their way. The excitement of this adventure is further accelerated as Guests are invited to take part in an interactive **Secret Mission Challenge** as part of their journey. Guests can also bring home the coolest collection of Disney/Pixar *Cars 2* souvenirs, exclusive to Hong Kong Disneyland for a limited time only.

All our summer fun is presented against the backdrop of **Celebration in the Air**, our year-long 5th anniversary spectacular. Millions have already been delighted by our Magic, magnified by our anniversary celebrations that occur only once every five years. The world exclusive **Flights of Fantasy Parade** is especially well received by guests, featuring unique aerial acrobatics reaching 40 feet above the ground.

Get your motors running and whiz your Guests over to the starting line of a magical summer! For more details on our summer event and Celebration in the Air festivities, please visit [www.hkdtravelagents.com](http://www.hkdtravelagents.com).



# New Indian wave

## IndiGo's overseas expansion set to trigger fresh outbound

By Shekhar Niyogi

**KOLKATA** Overseas expansion by India's largest low-cost carrier (LCC) IndiGo (*TTG e-Daily*, June 15) is expected to create a new swell of travellers from the continent, with destinations in South-east Asia and the Gulf poised to benefit the most.

Until now, the only Indian LCCs flying overseas were the state-owned Air India Express, which operates flights to Singapore, and JetLite, which covers south Asian destinations like Kathmandu and Colombo.

IndiGo will launch daily services from New Delhi to Dubai, Bangkok and Singapore from September, Mumbai to Bangkok and Dubai in October, and has applied for rights to fly to Bangkok and Dhaka from Kolkata.

Its plan to sell 25,000 seats in the new sectors for 9,999 rupees (US\$220) roundtrip, including taxes and 20kg baggage allowance, smacks of a price war, and outbound agents are already salivating at the prospect of more affluent but price-sensitive middle-class Indians venturing abroad.

Rajat Sawhney, managing director, Rave Travels, New Delhi, explained: "First-time outbound Indian travellers will inevitably be lured away from domestic holidays to destinations farther afield like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sri

Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal by budget airline offers."

Jaiprakash Kumar, assistant manager (tours), Spring Travels, Kolkata, said agents would be able to sell these additions easily since "domestic airfares are comparatively more expensive than the fares offered by the LCCs to overseas destinations".

Go IndiGo

# 180

New A320s ordered – more overseas growth by IndiGo in the offing

A roundtrip ticket from New Delhi to Goa costs 14,000 rupees, compared with IndiGo's 9,999 rupees offer.

According to Panithan Vongkerd, CEO, Gen-Y Travels, Bangkok, first-time Indian tourists are more inclined to purchase LCC tickets when they "are sold together with affordable tour packages to shorthaul destinations like Thailand", where hotel tariffs add to the price advantage.

This is especially when many first-time Indian travellers generally like to travel with their families.

IndiGo is also scheduled to launch New Delhi-Kathmandu and Mumbai-Muscat flights shortly. With 100 Airbus A320s ordered in 2005 being delivered in phases by 2015 and an additional 180 Airbus A320s ordered in a US\$15.6 billion deal in January this year – slated to join the fleet from 2016 onwards – its expansion spree is anticipated to extend.

Said IndiGo president, Aditya Ghosh: "Since only 34 per cent of rights for flying overseas are currently utilised, there is huge scope for Indian LCCs."

IndiGo has a domestic market share of nearly 20 per cent and is currently ranked third among Indian domestic carriers, marginally behind Kingfisher Airlines.

Meanwhile, another Indian LCC to watch is SpiceJet, which is planning to expand to several destinations in west and central Asia and the former USSR.

SpiceJet believes that there is a lot of untapped demand for low-cost flights not only in India, but in frontier cities in Asia such as Dhaka and Colombo, where a lack of competition has meant that fares have stayed stubbornly high.



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## Ask the Expert



Now in session

**David Chambers**, based in Singapore, has been doing business with Asian airlines for the last 15 years. He is the expert to turn to for airline trends – and how these trends are shaping business for both airline and travel agency readers.

**Q** Why can't an airline sell a ticket at the airport within 24 hours of departure?

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## Hot Deals

Kirimaya and Muthi Maya are offering travel industry rates; DoubleTree by Hilton, KL is giving away room & dining vouchers on its first anniversary; Carlson Hotels launches Asia-Pacific discounts.



# BWI in Iraq milestone

By Sirima Eamtako

**BANGKOK** Best Western International (BWI) is now the first US hotel chain to set foot in Iraq, after it signed a contract to manage the upscale Best Western Premier Erbil.

The property is also Erbil's first internationally-run accommodation.

Slated to open in 2014, the hotel will feature 160 rooms in four categories, standard, junior suite, deluxe suite and executive suite; a restaurant; lobby lounge; spa; casino; and meeting and conference facilities.

Construction is expected to start in September, in a prime location close to the airport.

BWI's vice-president international operations-Asia and the Middle East, Glenn de Souza, said the hotel's developer Golden Mountains Company was expecting to drive demand from both international leisure and business travellers as Erbil welcomed an increasing number of residential and real estate development and foreign investment.

He said the northern Iraqi city was seeing an influx of foreign businessmen from Turkey,

the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Asia, specifically the South Korean and Japanese automotive industry.

However, the city suffers from a lack of international quality accommodation to cope with the demand and higher expectations of international travellers.



de Souza:  
new ground

He added: "Visitors opt for sub-standard local hotels which charge high rates for their stay."

Currently, local providers dominate Erbil's accommodation sector.

In January, regional hotel management company Abu Dhabi-based Rotana made its mark in the city with the opening of its 201-room Erbil Rotana.

Erbil is the fourth largest city in Iraq after Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. In September last year, the city opened its US\$300 million international airport with a capacity of three million passengers per year. It caters to 11 carriers flying to 23 destinations.

A further US\$4.8 million was spent on renovating the runway, making it the largest civilian runway in the Middle East and the fifth longest in the world at 4.8km long and 90m wide.



# Philippines guns for North Asians, overseas Filipinos

By Marianne Carandang

**MANILA** The Philippines' top markets – South Korea, Japan and China – will receive the bulk of this year's tourism promotional budget of US\$10.3 million, while its other key market, the US, will largely be served by a new campaign targeting overseas Filipinos.

Fam trips and roadshows will be the focus for its biggest markets. There would also be investments into the emerging markets of India, Australia, Canada, Singapore and Malaysia, said Department of Tourism (DoT) undersecretary, tourism planning and promotions, Daniel Corpuz.

He added that DoT was also aiming to launch a new country brand by next January, having set aside some US\$280,000 just for the slogan. Bidding by agencies will begin this month.

Its previous Pilipinas Kay Ganda campaign was withdrawn disgracefully days after its launch last November.

Said Corpuz: "The media campaign will be worked out with the (new) branding council and stakeholders of the tourism industry."

In the interim, the Philippine Tour Operators Association would use its own slogan, Your Best Friend in Asia, said president Cesar Cruz.

For now, the DoT is also channelling its marketing efforts towards its six-year Pinoy Homecoming Campaign, which saw DoT secretary Alberto Lim and Philippine Tourism Promotions Board overall-in-charge Domingo Enerio III going on a 12-day, six-city tour around North America last month to jumpstart the promotions.

Lim said: "We must sell to the second- and third-generation of Filipinos abroad as if they were foreigners."

"We will encourage them to take advantage of our beaches and water sports, and invite them to conduct social missions, as well as invest in the Philippines."

The overseas Filipino market is a significant one, with arrivals growing by 15 per cent from 2009 to 2010.

The campaign includes a website featuring tours handled by an agency consortium; TVCs; a loyalty discount programme; and special welcome packs.

# Cheap travel from China

Jetstar's expansion paves the way for incoming low-cost traffic

By Linda Haden

**SINGAPORE** Low-cost carrier (LCC) Jetstar is soaring ahead of its rivals in making inroads into China, opening opportunities for agents and tour operators in Singapore, the hub for its Asia network growth.

Last week, the LCC announced Beijing would become its ninth destination in the Greater China region beginning November 24, a few days after it revealed new Ningbo flights starting September 9.

The route to the Chinese capital is an extension of Jetstar's Melbourne-Singapore service, making it the first no-frills operator to fly to all three cities. It is also the first low-cost option from Singapore to Beijing.

Jetstar Group CEO, Bruce Buchanan, said: "This is the decade for North Asia, and China is an extremely important market for us. Besides being a massive untapped market, it also has a growing middle class and many are flying for the first time."

He added that Jetstar had not started serving China out of its Australia and Vietnam bases.



Lum: stopover business

Sobie, chief representative, South-east Asia, Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation.

He said: "The (Singapore) stop is nearly 12 hours on the return leg. It generally doesn't connect well with the Qantas Group's Singapore-Australia schedule."

"There is increasing demand in the China-Singapore market, in particular from the China side, as more Chinese look to holiday in Singapore."

Judy Lum, group vice president, sales and marketing, Tour East Singapore, said the extended transit time was also an opportunity for groundhandlers to introduce stopover tours.

However, she said these had to be developed in collaboration with Jetstar to be successful.

"Fewer passengers will choose

The budget airline's latest move could be an attempt to tap the China-Singapore market rather than the China-Australia one, surmised Brendan

to go (on a stopover tour) since Jetstar normally does not cover ancillary services in goodwill unlike legacy carriers," said Lum.

Daniel Tan, head of corporate travel management, Bonvo, added that for such stopover itineraries to be possible, special arrangements also had to be negotiated with Singapore's authorities since Chinese visitors were required to have visas.

Outbound agent, Chan Brothers, on the other hand, was looking forward to more growth from the Singapore market.

Spokesperson Jane Chang said: "The launch of the Singapore-Beijing flight would certainly be welcomed by leisure travellers and budget business travellers. However, as Singapore is more a transit point, seat availability could pose a problem, especially for families or groups."

"Nonetheless, Jetstar's new service is definitely a boon for our inbound Chinese incentive groups, especially for those on educational tours, who tend to be more price sensitive," she said.

– Additional reporting by Sim Kok Chwee



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## Sino-America's service woes

SA TOURS' ongoing spat with a Shanghai-bound tour group is the hottest topic at the moment. Kathmandu's Bijaya Pradhan was of the opinion that the Singapore-based travel agency should unreservedly admit its service failure and move on from the issue. "The SA Tours representative should take full responsibility, and the office should take necessary departmental actions," he advised.

## Reader rips into Tiger Airways

TIGER Airways' Australia operations, recently suspended by local aviation authorities for safety lapses, have come under a storm of criticism. Sri Lanka's Roshini Galappatti shared a personal experience of the airline's "lack of safety and overall dismal service" while on a flight from the Gold Coast to Melbourne last year.

He supported the action taken: "Tiger deserves to be investigated because it is apparent that their approach to safety is one of lackadaisical indifference!"

# CITS cuts a deal with TTG's show

CITS Shanghai, through its MICE division, has acquired a stake in Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings China (IT&CM China), the pioneer MICE and corporate travel trade show in China owned and organised by TTG Asia Media and its partner, MP International.

The move marks a new chapter for the five-year-old show, which can leverage on CITS Shanghai's knowledge and network of the China market to bolster the participation of Chinese buyers and exhibitors. A signing ceremony last Friday was attended by 100 industry stakeholders ranging from hotel representatives to government officials.

"CITS is among the top 100 companies in China delivering one of the largest domestic and outbound leisure, corporate and MICE business in the country.

"I see the tripartite partnership as taking IT&CM China to a higher plane as we leverage on the synergies of CITS' unparalleled access to these buyers and exhibitors, MP International's operational strength and TTG Asia Media's foothold on the international front.

"The fit could not have been



From left: James Chia, chairman of MP International; Connie Chen, vice chairman of Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration; Darren Ng, managing director of TTG Asia Media; Gu Hanxing, chairman of CITS MICE; and Li Zhuyuan, general manager of CITS MICE Beijing

better," said Darren Ng, managing director, TTG Asia Media.

CITS Shanghai, on the other hand, sees MICE and corporate travel as one of the fastest-growing markets in China and IT&CM China as the "best" platform to engage industry players.

"We hope our involvement will expand the MICE market in China further, thereby growing the pie for everyone. We intend to leverage on our existing relationships with buyers, exhibitors and the government to help bring the event to the next level

and promote both China MICE inbound and outbound," said Ike Zhang, general manager - partner relations, American Express China of CITS MICE.

He added: "We are committed to investing in various resources to deliver this promise. For example, new staff who are well-versed in MICE and corporate travel have already been employed and are ready to work the market."

Earlier, TTG Asia Media committed to moving the show from next year onwards to the Shang-

hai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Center, which has a bigger capacity. The past five shows were held at the Shanghai Mart and the size of the event was around 4,000m<sup>2</sup>. The new venue allows for a 50 per cent increase in size to 6,000m<sup>2</sup> with an option to increase the space further by 100 per cent to 8,000m<sup>2</sup>.

IT&CM China anchors Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration's Shanghai Business Events Week. Next year's event, the sixth instalment, will be held from April 17-19.

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## Travel Hall of Fame

The Travel Hall of Fame, displayed in the Raffles Hotel Museum on the third level of Raffles Hotel Singapore, showcases accolades, artefacts and memorabilia of the region's most exceptional travel organisations.

Since 2002, luminaries who have won the prestigious TTG Travel Award at least 10 times have been conferred the title of Travel Hall of Fame Honorary.

Singapore Airlines and Singapore Changi Airport are the Travel Hall of Fame's pioneering honourees, having been voted by Asia-Pacific's travel trade as Best Airline of the Year and Best Airport of the Year respectively, for more than a decade. Hertz Asia-Pacific joined this elite family in 2005. Recently inducted were Star Cruises, Royal Cliff Beach Resort Pattaya, Abacus International and SilkAir.







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# Call of the wild

New luxury tours of less-explored Oz

**SINGAPORE** The Travel Corporation will launch next month in Asia a line of commissionable, high-end tours to the Australian outback that range from three to 20 days.

Positioned as a luxury experiential product, Inspiring Journeys takes groups of 16 to 20 travellers to destinations such as Kakadu National Park, Kings Canyon, Fraser Island and Mornington Wilderness Camp. Think luxury accommodation in retreats, lodges and resorts, transfers in custom-designed Mercedes-Benz cars, and expert narrators as guides.

It offers a different perspective of the Australian outback, explained The Travel Corporation, managing director, Singapore, Robin Yap.

“Tours are flexible and can be tailored. Travellers will not feel like they are rushed, a factor appreciated by well-travelled and high-end customers. There are also opportunities to experience the local culture and learn about the destination,” he said.

For example, the three-day Long Rainbow journey in the



**Florence Falls**

Northern Territory takes travellers to Florence Falls in Litchfield National Park, Jim Jim and Twin Falls in Kakadu National Park, and wetlands at World Heritage-listed Ubirr in Kakadu. It also features a sunset cruise down Mary River and a viewing of Aboriginal rock art at Nourlangie Rock and Ubirr.

The tours are sold through travel agents who are offered 10 per cent commission.

To help agents sell the product, The Travel Corporation will hold training sessions and support partners with sales and marketing materials.

— **Karen Yue**

## Case study

Wing On Travel introduces hotel booking portal

**WHAT** Hoping to cash in on e-business, Hong Kong's market leader Wing On Travel launched last month iWingon.com, an online hotel booking portal.

With a choice of 17,000 hotels in 500 cities within China, the new website offers a full range of properties, from budget business to luxury hotels. Rates are competitive and discounts of up to 80 per cent are dangled.

Customers get instant confirmation and only pay upon check in. They also benefit from Wing On's partnership with Ctrip's online platform and 24-hour hotline support.

Director and general manager, Jo Jo Chan said: “What makes it unique is that bookings can be cancelled anytime – even last-minute – as about 95 per cent of participating hotels don't charge any penalty fees.

“To facilitate this new move, we recruited more than 10 people to understand the software and set up a booking system supplemented with hotel pictures, room categories, prices, facilities and transportation details.”



**WHO** Established in 1964, Wing On rose from humble beginnings to become one of the leading players in town with 20 branches.

**WHY** Chan explained that the survival of traditional agents is being challenged by technology and suppliers' own direct channels.

She said: “Our brand has a well-established offline business, but given the online buying trend, we decided to invest. If you can't beat them, join them!

“Hong Kong people lead a busy life and our existing call centres and branch services may not meet their needs. Therefore, our ultimate goal is to have all products from air

tickets to package tours available online. Our physical presence also means we provide our clients an all-round service that plugs existing holes. That is an advantage that other online players can't compete with.”

Chan said the new booking portal would also be a boost to customer relationship management. As users have to sign up as members to book, this helps to build up an invaluable database.

The online business saves manpower and functions as an advertising channel, which will lower cost in the long term, added Chan.

**TARGET** Wing On hopes to be able to expand its clientele base, especially among the younger crowd. Additional hotels will be added to the system after five months.

It is also expecting the hotel portal to help direct attention to its FIT packages and air tickets, doubling business. The aim is to have a full online service incorporating air tickets and FIT packages. — **Prudence Lui**

LOTTE HOTEL SEOUL

# Mugunghwa

## The Taste of New Korea

MODERN Korean cuisine has found a new home at Lotte Hotel Seoul's Korean restaurant Mugunghwa, reborn in November 2010 after a US\$4.6 million renovation. Guests will find a sensational new personality — the restaurant has been transformed into a chic fine-dining restaurant, featuring authentic Korean cuisine with a modern twist, in a sleekly contemporary setting that reflects the sophistication of Korean arts and culture.

Lotte Hotel Seoul has undertaken this move to globalise Korean cuisine, which is gaining popularity as K-pop culture captivates a wider, global audience. Mugunghwa's opening, attended by the First Lady of Korea no less, captured the attention of the media



Traditional Korean cuisine goes international at Mugunghwa.

and made waves throughout Korea.

The restaurant is breaking new ground with its tradition with a twist concept: Its menus, which are geared towards an international audience, are flavourful without the spiciness and saltiness common in Korean food. They are inspired by the traditional table setting of *Banga* (Korean noble families) and are further enhanced by the services of the resident wine and tea sommeliers, who, together with Mugunghwa's chefs and service staff, are masters in creating exquisite dining experiences.

The course menu, comprising amuse-bouche, cold appetizer, porridge, fish dish, grilled dish and dessert, is a welcome introduction to the best of Korean cuisine. Beautifully presented, Mugunghwa's lunch and dinner course menus offer 6 to 14 courses. Vegetarian versions are available too.

The restaurant is located on the 38th floor of Lotte Hotel Seoul, with commanding views of the city. It's no surprise that Mugunghwa has quickly become one of Seoul's most fashionable restaurants for entertaining overseas business associates. Going by their enthusiastic comments, VIP guests who dined here during the G20 Summit in Seoul last year certainly appreciated Mugunghwa's new approach.



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PLUS PREMIER



# Altering the game plan

Online travel agents (OTAs) open up more opportunities in the B2B arena, reports Linda Haden

“We use OTAs to provide our customers with a wider choice of hotels.”

Isabella Hon  
Marketing manager  
City DMC

A seismic shift is occurring in the marketplace, as traditional travel agents shed old vertical distribution structures in favour of fluid, technologically-driven ones.

Once viewed with caution, online travel agents (OTAs) are becoming attractive sources of inventory for their brick-and-mortar counterparts, with players like Expedia eager to ride on this burgeoning demand with a B2B programme.

Expedia’s Travel Agent Affiliate Programme (TAAP), which launched last month in Singapore, generally give a 10 per cent commission on non-air bookings and one per cent on air bookings.

With plans for a TAAP roll-out in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia in the coming months, Expedia is the first OTA to introduce such an initiative in South-east Asia. Asiatravel.com started its agents’ portal less than a year ago, but works on a no-commission model. Other regional online players like Agoda.com do not have a dedicated programme.

Robert Rosenstein, president, Agoda.com, said: “We are very selective about which agents we work with and each arrangement is negotiated on unique terms.”



Manuel Ferrer  
Regional director  
Pacific World Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia



Magdalene Yeo  
Executive vice president of operations, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Indochina, India and Sri Lanka Asiatravel.com

Online attraction

Such partnerships with online players carry the promise of mutual benefit – traditional agents can offer a more extensive range of products to their consumers, while OTAs get the eyeballs needed to negotiate even lower rates.

Singapore-based City DMC marketing manager Isabella Hon said: “We use OTAs to provide our customers with a wider choice of hotels. Sometimes, we even make flight bookings through OTAs for individual clients as an add-on service.”

As commissions offered by suppliers shrink, the additional income to bolster the balance sheets are also welcomed by agents.

“Expedia is paying a commission and there is no cost involved in signing up. TAAP complements our proprietary online hotel reservation system,” said Singapore-based Chan Brothers spokesperson Ivy Tan.

Pacific World Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia regional director Manuel Ferrer explained that the prohibitive costs and complexities associated with developing a customised in-house online booking platform meant that many small- and medium-sized agents were relying on online channels to boost their product portfolio.

This is also one way to eliminate the hassle of negotiating directly with principals, he added.

Said Ferrer: “OTAs make it easier to track receipts and payments, especially when various currencies are involved. And because you are not dealing directly with a

person, agents do not have to grapple with language barriers.

Crowded wholesale space

With online players now becoming a force to reckon with, Asiatravel.com executive vice president of operations for Singapore, Malaysia, China, Indochina, India and Sri Lanka, Magdalene Yeo, said established B2B platforms would have to maintain their competitive advantage over OTAs.

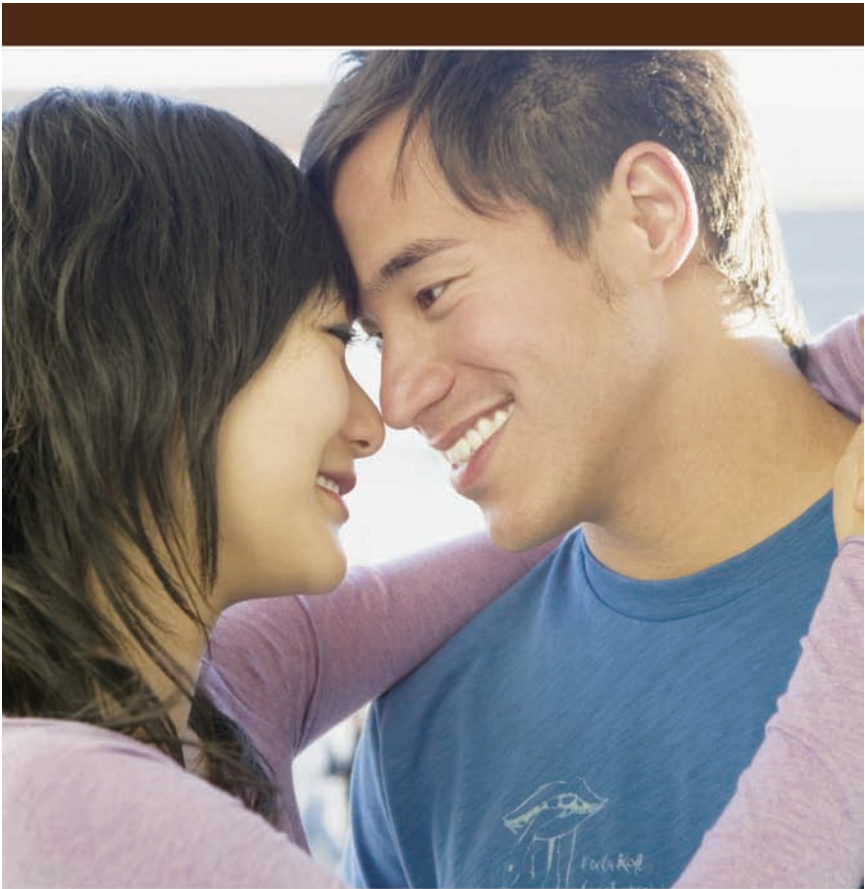
“B2B players will have to foster close relationships (with agents) and ensure that they provide a good range of products and competitive rates,” she added.

However, Julie Lim, general manager, Singapore, GTA, was unfazed by the competition. “We have such a broad range of products through our global system and are so diversified, we envision that OTAs like Expedia pose little or no threat to our business,” she said.

Indeed, the outlook for traditional B2B players remains positive. Singapore-based CTC Travel senior vice president (marketing & PR), Alicia Seah, said: “We rely on B2B platforms such as Hotelbeds and GDSs such as Abacus and Sabre for the majority of our air and non-air bookings as we are able to lock in rates with them.”

She also added that while OTAs were useful for point-to-point bookings, they could not cope with complex itineraries.

Pacific World’s Ferrer summed it up: “In the near future, agents will no longer be tied to just one or two distribution systems, but will work closely or act as affiliates to several platforms simultaneously.”



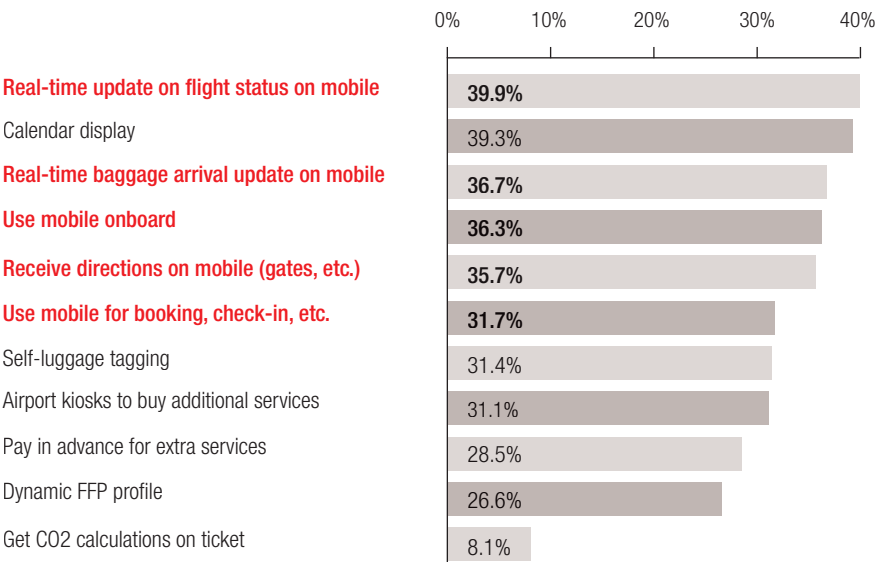
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What innovative features or services do air travellers want?



Total – global sample

Source: 2010 JD Power’s Global Airline Traveller Survey commissioned by Amadeus involving 2,978 travellers



# Putting mobile back into travel

By Karen Yue

**SINGAPORE** The mobile distribution space has been abuzz with activity in recent months, as hotels, airlines and agents rush to embrace possibilities with new smartphone apps and mobile-friendly websites.

Hoping to capitalise on the trend of mobile bookings, Hotels.com launched apps for iPhone and Android smartphones in May. The apps allow travellers to access more than 135,000 hotels worldwide and are available in over 30 languages.

Christelle Chan, marketing director, Hotels.com, said: "The trend towards last-minute bookings will continue to grow as people become more mobile."

In the same month, Thai hotel group Dusit International introduced a mobile version of their website. Available in English, Mandarin, Japanese and Arabic, the site supports real-time online booking, and includes information on special offers, and guest history and booking status.

Dusit aims to increase its revenue through online bookings to 25 per cent by end-2011, said vice president, sales and marketing, Jennifer Cronin.

"Currently, some Dusit properties are already drawing 35 per cent of their business through online channels," she revealed.

Cronin also brushed off concerns that the higher frequency of last-minute transactions would affect yield management. "Our revenue management team will determine demand in accordance to the customer's booking behaviour," she said.

Cronin added that mobile development by hotels would not alienate travel agents, adding that the latter should see it as "another channel for them to present hotels to their clients".

Meanwhile, the demand for mobile has also given rise to an explosion of technology products. Last month, Pegasus Solutions introduced RezView Mobile, which helps hotels provide a custom mobile experience through a private label mobile website and Internet booking engine, without requiring in-house design, development and maintenance costs.

BlackBerry smartphone developer Research in Motion

(RIM), too, launched this year the first official travel app for the device, opening up content opportunities for travel providers.

Andreas Hofmann, director, platform product management, RIM, said "a lot of take-up is expected in Asia-Pacific", especially in Indonesia, where smartphone usage is high.

Priceline.com, head of worldwide strategy and planning, Glenn Fogel, said middlemen were more likely to benefit when it came to apps. Customers would not download every supplier's app, especially if the hotel is not a chain, he explained.

"Hotels should be investing in the mobile web. Apps are for loyal customers," agreed MasterCard Worldwide, vice president, market development, Martin Collings, who has his eye on e-commerce growth.

"People searching on the web are open to buying from whoever is at the top of the rankings with a mobile-friendly site," he said. – **Additional reporting by Gracia Chiang**



Cronin: more online bookings

# Betting big on bulk buying

By Gracia Chiang

**SINGAPORE/HONG KONG**

The Internet has added yet another channel to the already unwieldy distribution network – group-buying sites.

"Group buying has taken the whole industry by storm," said Travelzoo Australia general manager, Australia and Singapore, Brad Gurrie.

This year, the travel deal publisher launched a collective-buying platform, putting it in competition with the likes of US-based discount coupon giant Groupon, which is also expanding rapidly in Asia-Pacific (APAC).

Travelzoo Local Deals is currently operational in Australia and Hong Kong, and will soon be extended to the rest of the region. Groupon is also in 10 APAC countries, thanks to an acquisition spree over the past year.

New hotels, or hotels in markets affected by seasonality and turmoil, are potential beneficiaries of such sites, Gurrie said.

At a recent travel distribution summit, Martin Symes, CEO of search engine Wego.com, cited an example of a single sale in Australia generating 10,000 room-nights for a hotel in Phuket.

Gurrie added that travel agents

were also starting to get in on the act through content and fulfilment partnerships.

Last month, the setting up of Groupon Getaways with Expedia was announced, which would see the two collaborating on offers ranging from hotels to cruise tickets. Customers in the US and Canada will have the first bite, but this is expected to be launched globally as well.

Reactions from offline players are mixed. As most deals come from suppliers, some agents worry they are being bypassed.

Hong Kong Pass Travel, general manager, Samson Chan, said: "Group buying has dampened agents' business, given our low profit margin nowadays."

He added that such rock-bottom prices were hard to sustain and may only be a gimmick.

However, Hong Kong's Win-castle Travel, senior manager, marketing and products, Eliza Li, said: "The travel-related offers are mostly mono products like ferry tickets. Most of their clientele are also the younger generation with limited budgets."

"I would be concerned if the (sites) venture into the package tours business, as that would definitely threaten us." – **Additional reporting by Prudence Lui**

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# Who’s flying the Airbus

Sim Kok Chwee looks at how airlines are differentiating themselves with the big beauty that promises more

Four years ago, Singapore Airlines flew the first commercial flight of the Airbus A380, the world’s largest passenger aircraft. Delivery of the double-deck jetliner has been painfully slow, but 51 out of 236 total orders have been delivered to six customers as of June: three in Asia-Pacific (Singapore Airlines, Korean Air and Qantas Airways), one in the Middle East (Emirates) and two in Europe (Air France and Lufthansa). China Southern Airlines will be receiving its first A380 in the second half of 2011,

while Malaysia Airlines and Thai Airways International will receive theirs in 2012. Interestingly, as a region, the Middle East has the most number of A380s on order, or 45 per cent of the total. So far, none of the airlines have requested for ostentatious add-ons (bowling alleys were an option in Airbus’ marketing brochures). A few, however, did incorporate special features such as onboard showers, meeting rooms, bars and lounges, a museum, a duty-free showcase area and even urinals. A new trend in seat configuration also

seems to be emerging. While most airlines have decided on between 450 and 520 seats for their A380s, Korean Air and Singapore Airlines have both unveiled low-density models with 407 and 409 seats respectively. They have also dedicated entire upper decks to Business Class passengers, with 94 and 86 seats each. It remains to be seen if more airlines will follow in their footsteps. Qantas previously expressed its intention to eliminate First Class seats from some of its A380s, but this has yet to happen after 10 deliveries. On the other hand, France’s Air

Austral has plans for more than 800 seats for its two A380s on order. As expected, destinations served by multiple A380s are either the airlines’ home bases, major hubs or airports facing slot constraints. The latter include Heathrow and Narita, where physical limitations have inhibited airport expansion. And even as Dubai will eventually be home to the largest number of A380s – Emirates has a total of 90 orders with 15 already delivered – Seoul’s Incheon airport will hold the distinction of being home to two A380 operators in 2014, when Asiana

## Configuration and destination of airlines’ planes



	Singapore Airlines		Emirates		Qantas Airways	Air France	Lufthansa	Korean Air	Malaysia Airlines
	Version 1	Version 2	Version 1	Version 2					
Total no. of seats	471	409	489	517	450	538	526	407	510
Upper deck									
First Class (pitch/width)	—	—	14 suites (86"/23")	14 suites (86"/23")	—	80 (55"/34")	8 (90-92"/31.5")	—	—
Business Class (pitch/width)	60 (55"/34")	86 (55"/34")	76 (48"/18.5")	76 (48"/18.5")	72 (80"/21.5")	—	98 (57-60"/19.6") inclined	94 (74"/ - )	54
Premium Economy (pitch/width)	—	—	—	—	32 (38-42"/19.5")	—	—	—	26
Economy (pitch/width)	88 (23"/19")	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	See below
Main deck									
First Class/ Suites (pitch/width)	12 suites (81"/35")	12 suites (81"/35")	—	—	14 (83.5"/29")	9 (81"/35")	—	12 (83"/ - )	8
Economy (pitch/width)	311 (32"/19")	311 (32"/19")	399 (32"/18")	427 (32"/18")	332 (31"/18.1")	343 (32"/19")	420 (31"/17")	301 (33-34"/ - )	420, spread over main and upper decks
Percentage of premium class seats versus overall seats	15.2	23.9	18.4	17.4	19.1	16.5	20.1	26	12.1
Unique features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enclosed Suites, branded as a ‘Class above First’</li><li>• World’s widest Business Class seats</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enclosed Suites branded as a ‘Class above First’</li><li>• World’s widest Business Class seats</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shower facilities for First Class</li><li>• Lounge for First and Business Class</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shower facilities for First Class</li><li>• Lounge for First and Business Class</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-service bars in First, Business and Premium Economy cabins</li><li>• Meeting lounge in Business Class cabin</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gallery dedicated to culture and art</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sound-absorbing material in First Class cabin</li><li>• Humidifier in First Class cabin</li><li>• Only ‘urinal in the sky’ in First Class cabin</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Duty-free showcase area</li></ul>	—
Destinations	Singapore, Sydney, Melbourne, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Zurich, Paris, London, Los Angeles		Dubai, Jeddah, Johannesburg, London, Manchester, Paris, New York, Toronto, Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul, Bangkok, Sydney, Auckland		Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore, Los Angeles, London	Paris, New York, Montreal, Washington DC, San Francisco, Johannesburg, Tokyo	Frankfurt, Johannesburg, New York, Miami, San Francisco, Tokyo, Beijing, Singapore	Seoul, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Los Angeles, New York, Paris	Kuala Lumpur, Amsterdam, London



# A380

## premium travel options

Airlines joins Korean Air as members of the exclusive A380 club.

For the most part, the introduction of the A380 has been rather smooth, with the exception of an engine explosion on Qantas' first A380 and a ground collision involving an Air France A380 at New York's JFK Airport.

According to the airlines, passengers prefer flights operated by A380s, initially for the aircraft's novelty factor but later for its ultra-quiet cabin. Some of the A380's other finer qualities include fuel efficiency and low engine emission.



China Southern Airlines	Thai Airways International
506	507
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 First Class</li><li>• 70 Business Class</li><li>• 428 Economy Class</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 First Class</li><li>• 60 Business Class</li><li>• 435 Economy Class</li></ul>
15.4	14.2
Information not available yet	Information not available yet
Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Paris	Information not available yet

### Numbers that matter

**18** The total number of A380 customers, according to Airbus.

**106** The Middle East has the most orders of A380s, with 106 planes, or 45 per cent of the total 236.

**90** Emirates leads the charge, with 90 planes on order, or 38 per cent of the total.

### Orders placed by carriers all over the world

**83** In comparison, Asia-Pacific carriers ordered 83 planes. China and India have only five orders each.

**20** Qantas Airways has 20 planes on order. This is the highest number of orders after Emirates.

**19** Singapore Airlines has the most orders in Asia-Pacific.

**5** Qatar Airways, China Southern Airlines and Kingfisher Airlines will be receiving five planes each.

**1** The smallest order to date comes from a private customer in Saudi Arabia.

**0** A dozen of airlines, including British Airways and Skymark Airlines, have yet to receive any of their orders.



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Prambanan, one of Jogjakarta's key attractions

Courtesy of Jogjakarta Tourism Office

# Growing more arrivals

New hotel supply will ease Jogjakarta's long-standing room crunch. By **Mimi Hudoyo**

**Arrivals** Despite the devastation caused by the Mount Merapi eruption last year, arrivals to Jogjakarta continue to increase. Based on data from the Jogjakarta Tourism Office, the destination had 112,542 arrivals last year from its top 10 markets. It had 102,892 arrivals in 2009. Jogjakarta Tourism Office director Tazbir Abdullah said: "As most traffic to Jogjakarta is through other gateways in Indonesia, this is data obtained from star-rated hotels. There are about 15-20 per cent more (visitors from other properties)."

For the first quarter of 2011, arrivals were 18,667. Based on annual trends, Tazbir projected an increase of 10 per cent. "With the current number of air seat capacity available and hotel rooms, that is the maximum increase we can expect," he said. Europe, led by the Netherlands, France and Germany, continues to be a major source of arrivals. Singapore and Malaysia are growing too, thanks to direct flights by AirAsia and Malaysia Airlines. Japan remains a top market. Panorama Tours Jogjakarta director Triagung Pramono Adi said: "The tsunami (in Japan)

had an impact, but the decline was insignificant."

**NTO** Jogjakarta Tourism Office will organise a roadshow in Thailand this month. This is its first campaign targeting the market, which has seen steady annual arrivals of 4,600 to 4,800 for the past three years. Tazbir said: "The market is new, the level of satisfaction is high and the potential is big. This is why it's important to start tapping the market seriously."

Other activities include targeting Singapore and Malaysia with fam trips, and promoting Jogjakarta for filmmaking projects.

**Hotels** Limited hotel room supply, which has been an issue for the past decade, is set to ease. According to the tourism office, there will be 1,000 additional rooms up to 2013.

Accor, which already has MGallery, Novotel and ibis brands here, is launching an all seasons this year and the 186-room Formule1 in 2012. Santika Indonesia will manage the renovated four-star Ambarrukmo Palace, to open in November. Tauzia's budget Pop! Hotel will



"The tourism stakeholders need to join hands to promote and increase market demand to Jogjakarta so that more airlines will be interested to fly here."

**Tazbir Abdullah**  
Director  
Jogjakarta Tourism Office

also open with 150 rooms at year-end, while a 180-room Harris-branded property will come up in 2012.

Newcomers like Intiland's budget Whiz Hotel Yogyakarta, with 103 rooms in the Malioboro city centre, recently opened. Central Java-based Dafam Hotels and Resorts will also have a four-star Grand Dafam Yogyakarta next year, with some 200 rooms.

Triagung said: "The additional rooms will ease the room crunch a bit, but not for long. The situation will be back after three to five years if we don't see new hotels coming up again."

**Prices** The higher room rates, entry fees to major tourist attractions and transportation costs make Jogjakarta tour packages 20-30 per cent more costly compared to similar packages in Bali.

Ayu Mandiri Tours and Travel Jogjakarta managing director Aji Sutomo said: "With high demand, especially from domestic leisure and MICE markets, hotels in Jogjakarta are not only charging high-season surcharges, but also long-weekend surcharges, which are a bit difficult to package to the international market."

The surcharge varies between US\$10 and US\$15, Aji said.

Panorama's Triagung added: "Jogjakarta is probably the only destination in Indonesia that applies a long-weekend surcharge, and it is still difficult to get a room, even in a small hotel."

Entrance fees to World Heritage sites have also said to be pricey, at US\$15 per person. However, Triagung defended the fees. "You may find white, sandy beaches anywhere, but Borobudur and Prambanan can only be found here. If entry fees are compared, they should be compared with those of other heritage sites like Angkor Wat," he said.

**Events** To celebrate the city's 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Jogjakarta municipal government is organising the Jogja Java Carnival from October 6-22. Festivities include a night cycling tour, performances and event highlight Vehicle of the World, which will see replicas of iconic landmarks like the London Bridge touring the city's main streets.

Committee secretary Abdul Razaq said 12 countries have been invited. "We hope to attract more Indonesian and international participants," he added.



# Spa and tourism, good bedfellows

Indonesia is trying to make its presence felt in a billion-dollar global industry, reports **Mimi Hudoyo**

**1 How important is spa and wellness to Indonesia's tourism industry?** Massage techniques and herbal scrubs and drinks are components of a centuries-old tradition in Indonesia. The tourism industry has capitalised on this, and it has proven to be a popular draw.

"Generally, every guest taking the Java-Bali-Lombok tours makes time to have a spa treatment, be it just a simple back massage or a holistic treatment," said Smiling Tour managing director Justina Puspawati, adding that a hotel's spa could contribute 15-20 per cent of its total revenue.

Nusa Dua Beach Hotel & Spa Bali director of sales Rubianti said, as a revenue stream, spas follow rooms and F&B.

**2 What kind of growth can Indonesia expect?** In a stressful world where spa and wellness become more of a necessity, Indonesia has a good chance of making it big.

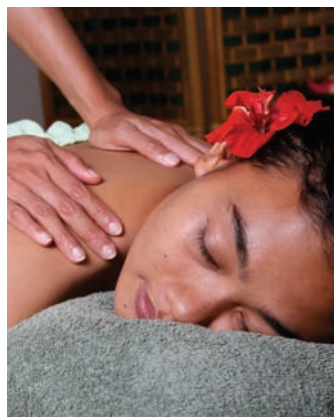
Justina said local expertise mixed with modernity and "the

ability to enrich the original Balinese method with other ancient methods from China and India will make the Indonesian, especially the Balinese spa, continue to exist and grow".

Ministry of Culture and Tourism director general of tourism marketing Sapta Nirwandar said: "We may not be able to compete with neighbouring countries in medical tourism, but we have all the potential to be a market leader in the wellness industry, so that is where we are headed."

An SRI International/Global Spa Summit study roughly estimates the global market value of wellness tourism at US\$106 billion annually, compared to the US\$50 billion value of the global medical tourism market.

**3 Who are Indonesia's biggest competitors?** The country is facing tough fight from its neighbours. A poll among delegates of the Global Spa Summit held in Bali in May emphasised this fact. Thirty per cent of delegates – top-level executives with an interest in the spa and well-



ness industry – voted that they would most likely expand business to China, while 22 per cent voted for expansion in South-east Asia.

There are also reports showing new properties emerging in the region. Mandara Spa, COO, Jeff Matthews, said: "In Asia, spa and wellness are growing fast in China and India, while Vietnam is up and coming."

**4 What is Indonesia's advantage over its competitors?** Manpower and tradition are its strong suits. Matthews said: "In-

donesia is a matured spa destination. Now, the growth is more in exporting expertise. We train and send Balinese therapists to the Maldives and Dubai, for example."

Spa Finder CEO and Global Spa Summit founding board member Pete Ellis said, in Asia, particularly in Bali, spas were the norm, but not in the rest of the world where "spa is a new industry".

He added: "This is because the baby boomers, the ageing group, are now grown up, are stressed and have experienced the benefits of spas. The other generations (will soon) follow. Although it is a new business, the spa industry is huge and will continue to grow."

**5 What else is Indonesia doing to stay ahead of the competition?** Culture and Tourism Minister Jero Wacik said the government and the (spa-related) associations are "developing a code of ethics and setting spa categories to make it easier for guests to identify what kind of

services (they) can expect from a spa".

He noted that the spa and wellness market was no longer exclusive and upmarket. "There are low-to-upmarket customers, and Indonesia has products with prices ranging from US\$10 to US\$1,000 or more to cater to them all," he said. "What we need to enhance now is professionalism."

Last year, Indonesia set up the Spa Professional Certification Board. The Bali Tourism Institute also opened a spa department two years ago with one- and two-year programmes.

Bali Tourism Institute director Dr Nyoman Madiun said: "The new department is still small, some 15 students per batch, but the demand is there. It is not only coming from Indonesia. I have also received requests from the Maldives for therapists and supervisors."

Based on data from the ministry, in 2010, there were around 3,000 spas across the country that employed 18,000, of whom 11 per cent were certified.

## Village tourism takes root

By **Mimi Hudoyo**

**JAKARTA** Community-based tourism is spreading across Indonesia due to a growing awareness of balancing revenue sources with maintaining the environment.

There are at least 500 villages currently involved in this sector, according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This will swell to 2,000 by 2014. The government allots 100 million rupiah (US\$11,700) to selected villages for marketing and training purposes.

Bali Prestige Tours & Travel Specialist president director Elly Malaihollo said: "There is a growing demand among travellers to engage the local community, especially from my cruise clients and MICE groups."

While community-based tourism has been around for some time, it is only in the last five years or so that tourism villages took off, said the ministry's director-general of destination development secretary Winarno Sudjas.

He added that originality was key. "In order to succeed, a tourism village must have something unique instead of copying others. It will work better when neighbouring villages with different products join forces to become one destination," said Winarno.

There are success stories. Pentingsari Tourism Village near Mount Merapi in Jogjakarta (see page 17) has attracted at least 20,000 tourists and earned an accumulated income of one billion rupiah as of May since launching its programme three years ago.

Doto Yogantoro, a board member of the village and senior guide, said: "After Mount Merapi's devastating eruption at the end of last year, we got more visitors

who were interested in Merapi. This has been a busy year for us."

Villagers in Tangkahan, North Sumatra, who used to earn a living from logging, are another example. Indonesia Ecotourism Network (INDECON) executive director Ary Suhandi said: "Tempted by quick income offered by timber dealers, the locals used to cut forest trees. But they realised the income they earned was nothing compared to the benefit those dealers reaped, while they and the next generation had to bear the (environmental) consequences."

Through cooperation with the Gunung Leuser National Park authority and INDECON, the village established regulations, interpretation trails, guide procedures, a code of ethics for tourists and even a tour operating business, Simalem Ranger.

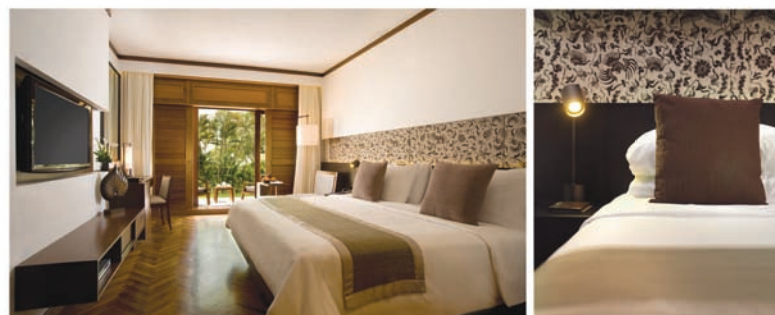
"From a destructive community, the Tangkahan people now contribute to the preservation of more than 8,000 hectares of forest park," Ary said, adding that tourism arrivals and revenue were growing phenomenally.

In Central Java, Candirejo Tourism Village also managed to increase tourists threefold, from 1,000 to 3,000 between 2003 to 2009. Revenue in 2009, the latest available, was 11 times higher than 2003, from 18.5 million rupiah to more than 202 million rupiah.

Indonesia's former Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gede Ardika, who has been actively involved with the sector, said: "Community-based tourism, such as village tourism, should become the basis of tourism development. The initiative comes from the people. They are directly involved in the tourism activities, and when they get the benefits, they are able to preserve the environment."



**Gede: villages as basis of tourism**



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Diamond Cottage Resort & Spa  
Discovery Overland Holidays  
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Fairmont Raffles Hotels International  
Far East Organization  
Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa  
Freme Travel Services  
Furama Hotels International  
Management  
Fusion Management Vietnam  
G Hotel  
Gangga Divers At Lotus Bungalows  
Go Vacation  
Hansar Samui  
Hertz Car Rental  
Ho Tram Beach Resort & Spa  
Hoi An Hotels & Resorts  
Holiday Villa Langkawi / Bali /  
Halong Bay  
Holiday Villa Langkawi/Cherating  
Hotel Equatorial Group  
Hotel Istana Kuala Lumpur  
Hotel Melia Bali  
HPL Hotels & Resorts  
Hyatt Hotels & Resorts  
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Kata Group  
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Khaolak Laguna Resort  
King Park Avenue Hotel  
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La Flora Resorts Group  
Laguna Phuket  
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Lotus Asia Tours  
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Phuket

Marriott & Renaissance Hotels & Resorts  
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MBK Hospitality Management  
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Ministry Of Culture And Tourism, Republic Of  
Indonesia  
Montien Hotels Thailand  
MP Travel & Tours  
Nirwana Gardens  
Nusa Dua Beach Hotel & Spa  
Oberoi Hotels And Resorts Indonesia  
Onyx Hospitality Group  
Orchid Garden Hotel  
Orchidacea Resort  
Outrigger Asia  
Padma Resort Bali At Legian  
Panviman Group Of Resorts  
Patong Beach Hotel & Baan Samui Resort  
Pemda-Sumba Barat-NTT-Indonesia  
Philea Resort & Spa  
Philippine Department Of Tourism  
Pulai Group  
Pullman Pattaya Aisawan  
Puri Saron Hotels  
Rawai Palm Beach Resort  
Rendezvous Hotel Singapore  
RMG Tours  
Royal Cliff Hotels Group  
Sabah Tourism Board  
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Santhiya Resorts & Spas  
Sanur Paradise Plaza Hotel & Suites  
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Sutera Harbour Resort  
Swissotel Le Concorde Bangkok  
Synergy Tours  
Tauzia Hotel Management  
The Briza Beach Resort & Spa, Samui  
& Khaolak  
The Imperial Hotels & Resorts  
The Kee Resort & Spa  
The M Resort Phuket  
The Oasis Beach, Benoa - Bali  
The Old Phuket - Karon Beach Resort  
The Pavilions, Bali  
The Royal Pita Maha  
The Ubud Village Hotel And Resort  
The Unique Collection Of Hotels & Resorts  
The Vijitt Resort Phuket  
The Villas  
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## Test drive

## A taste of local flavour



Jogjakarta's tourism villages are fast gaining popularity. *Mimi Hudoyo* spends half a day at Pentingsari

**WHY** Pentingsari only began developing itself as a tourism village three years ago, but its fame has already attracted curious visitors game to experience local life and corporates who hold their outings here.

**WHAT** Located a short distance away from Mount Merapi, Pentingsari offers simple agricultural training, visits to home industries, trekking tours to learn about the history of founder Kyai Jokerto, myths and legends, folk art courses, teambuilding activities, homestays and more – all at a very reasonable price.

Upon arriving at the village by bus (which is how most tourists get here), I was welcomed by the village chief who was standing at the drop off point

smiling at guests. Indeed, one of the first things I noted about this village was the warmth of its people.

A group of traditional dancers playing musical instruments then led us to the community hall Joglo House, while passing through a coffee plantation, vegetable gardens and local homes.

We saw villagers pounding away at roasted coffee, cutting up and frying various vegetables such as sweet potato, taro, yam and arrowroot, and making herbal drinks – all local products that could be sampled.

Some of them understood and spoke simple English. They tried their best to explain to guests what they were doing, all the time very politely, and with huge smiles.

In one corner, two women were making arrowroot crackers.

"We grow various types of tuber crops, which were the staple food for our ancestors before everyone started eating rice. We can rarely find these crops nowadays, and many of the younger

generation have never even heard of them," one of the ladies told me.

"We cultivate them, reintroduce them to both the locals and guests as an accompaniment to coffee or tea, and make various kinds of chips for travellers to take home," she added.

The arrowroots are boiled with spices, cut into smaller pieces, and pounded to flat and round shapes. They are then sun-dried before they are fried and packaged for selling.

Guests were invited not only to help themselves to the fresh-from-the-wok chips, but also to try their hand at making them.

Later, we arrived at the Joglo House for traditional entertainment. The Javanese-style house had a large, semi-open living room for village gatherings, and was surrounded by gardens and shaded by fruit trees such as durian, mangosteen and mango.

We were treated to performances by *punakawan* (joker-like characters from Javanese dance drama), who spoke in broken



**Name** Pentingsari Tourism Village  
**Rates** 75,000 rupiah (US\$8.80) per person for a full-board homestay, while activities are a la carte  
**Hours of operation** Daily (prior booking is required)  
**Contact details**  
Tel: (62) 812-156-630-39  
(look for Doto Yogantoro)  
Email: dotoyogantoro@gmail.com

English, and they invited guests to dance along.

Before we left, a video presentation was played, detailing activities available to guests. A menu of activities was also handed out.

**HOW** Guests on day trips can pick from a wide range of activities listed. Alternatively, they

can choose to spend the night with any of the 10 families who offer homestays, ranging from two to four rooms. The village can accommodate up to 200 people.

**VERDICT** A nice introduction that gave me ideas for my next vacation.



2011

# 中国国际旅游交易会

## CHINA INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MART

## Organizers:

- China National Tourism Administration
- Yunnan Provincial People's Government
- Civil Aviation Administration of China

**Time:** October 27 (Thursday) to October 30 (Sunday), 2011

**Venue:** Kunming International Convention & Exhibition Center

**Scale:** Area: 50,000 sq m Number of standard shell scheme booths: 2,000

## 主办单位:

- 中国国家旅游局
- 云南省人民政府
- 中国民用航空局

**时间:** 2011年10月27日(四)至10月30日(日)

**地点:** 云南省昆明市国际会展中心

**规模:** 展览面积: 50,000 平方米 预设标准展位: 2,000 个

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**"This year packed in both days full with appointments."**

Jacob Abraham Van Hal | European Marketing Director, S.T Tours (1996) European Branch

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Christine Kim | JW Marriott Seoul

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### Travel Supplier Awards

- Airline Awards
- Hotels • Resorts • Serviced Residences • Spa Awards
- BT-MICE Awards
- Travel Services Awards

### Travel Agent Awards

## TTG salutes the finest and most accomplished

In two other categories, exceptional individuals and organisations are identified and acknowledged for their accomplishments.

These two categories of awards are:

### Outstanding Achievement Awards

Under this category, TTG's editorial team determines the winners in these awards:

- Travel Personality of the Year
- Destination of the Year
- Most Entrepreneurial Travel Company
- Best Marketing & Development Effort

### Travel Hall of Fame

The Travel Hall of Fame honours organisations that have won at least 10 times at previous TTG Travel Awards. Although they will not be voted for again, these special award winners will be recognised at every TTG annual awards presentation ceremony.

Votes for them will not be counted. Travel Hall of Fame - Inducted Members are:

- Singapore Changi Airport (2002)
- Singapore Airlines (2002)
- Hertz Asia-Pacific (2005)
- Royal Cliff Beach Resort, Pattaya (2006)
- Star Cruises (2008)
- Abacus International (2009)
- Silkair (2010)

## How to vote

### Instructions and Guidelines

#### VOTE ON PAPER

(Please use the correct voting form)

There are two voting categories and accompanying forms

#### Voting Form A: Travel Supplier Awards

For voting by travel agents, tour operators and destination management companies only.

#### Voting Form B: Travel Agent Awards

For voting by hoteliers, airline staff, car rental companies, cruise operators, national tourism organisations, GDS companies and all other travel professionals (except travel agents, tour operators and destination management companies).

#### CRITERIA

To ensure that nominees are judged on an equal basis, each category has its own set of criteria. Please use them as a guide when casting your votes.

## AWARDS CITERIA

# TRAVEL SUPPLIER AWARDS

## Airline Awards

### Criteria

Best **airline** in its respective category in terms of:

- Providing the best service, network and schedules.
- Most agent-friendly in terms of reservations, confirmations and commission payments.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas, incentive programmes and servicing.

1. Best **North American** Airline  
Best airline based in North America operating Asia-Pacific routes.
2. Best **European** Airline  
Best airline based in Europe operating Asia-Pacific routes.
3. Best **Middle Eastern** Airline  
Best airline based in Middle East operating Asia-Pacific routes.
4. Best **South Asian** Airline  
Best airline based in the Indian subcontinent operating Asia-Pacific routes.
5. Best **South-east Asian** Airline  
Best airline based in Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand or Vietnam operating Asia-Pacific routes.
6. Best **North Asian** Airline  
Best airline based in South Korea, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Macau or Hong Kong operating Asia-Pacific routes.
7. Best **China** Airline  
Best airline based in China operating Asia-Pacific routes.
8. Best **Pacific** Airline  
Best airline based in the Pacific operating Asia-Pacific routes.
9. Best **Regional** Airline  
Best airline based regionally operating Asia-Pacific routes.
10. Best **Asian Low-cost Carrier**  
Best airline based in Asia-Pacific that operates on a low-cost strategy.

## Hotels • Resorts • Serviced Residences • Spa Awards

### Criteria

Best **Hotel Chain** in its respective category in terms of:

- Most consistent in products and services.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas, incentive programmes and servicing.

Best **Hotel/Resort/Serviced Residence/Spa** in its respective category in terms of:

- Best services and facilities.
- Best range of value-added benefits.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.

### HOTEL CHAINS

11. Best **Global** Hotel Chain  
Best hotel chain operating a network of properties globally.
12. Best **Regional** Hotel Chain  
Best hotel chain operating a network of properties in the region.
13. Best **Local** Hotel Chain  
Best hotel chain operating a network of properties within any one Asia-Pacific country.
14. Best Hotel **Representation Company**  
Best company providing the most agent-friendly products and services and showing the best marketing effort in generating sales for member hotels via agents.
15. Best **Luxury** Hotel Brand  
Best hotel chain operating a network of luxurious properties within any one Asia-Pacific country.
16. Best **Mid-range** Hotel Brand  
Best hotel chain operating a network of mid-range properties within any one Asia-Pacific country.
17. Best **Budget** Hotel Brand  
Best hotel chain operating a network of economical properties within any one Asia-Pacific country.

### HOTELS – Individual Property

18. Best **Luxury** Hotel  
Best hotel catering to the upmarket traveller. This hotel must also boast the best visual appeal and ambience reflecting upmarket status.
19. Best **Mid-range** Hotel  
Best mid-range hotel catering to the traveller who seeks three- to four-star quality and comfort.
20. Best **Budget** Hotel  
Best hotel catering to the budget traveller.
21. Best **Independent** Hotel  
Best non-chain (ie not part of a network of properties) hotel.
22. Best **Boutique** Hotel  
Best small, fashionable and unique hotel.
23. Best **City** Hotel – **Bangkok**
24. Best **City** Hotel – **Delhi**
25. Best **City** Hotel – **Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City**
26. Best **City** Hotel – **Jakarta**
27. Best **City** Hotel – **Kuala Lumpur**
28. Best **City** Hotel – **Manila**
29. Best **City** Hotel – **Seoul**
30. Best **City** Hotel – **Singapore**
31. Best **City** Hotel – **Taipei**
32. Best **City** Hotel – **Tokyo**
33. Best **New City** Hotel  
Best city hotel that opened in 2009/2010.
34. Best **Airport** Hotel  
Best hotel – located within the vicinity of an airport – that caters to travellers in transit.

### RESORTS – Individual Property

35. Best **Beach** Resort  
Best resort located by a beach. This resort must also boast the best visual appeal and ambience reflecting local flavour.
36. Best **Resort** Hotel (Non-Beach)  
Best resort not located by a beach. This resort must also boast the best visual appeal and ambience reflecting local flavour.
37. Best **New Beach** Resort  
Best beach resort that opened in 2009/2010.
38. Best **Integrated** Resort

Best hotel offering comprehensive accommodation, shopping, dining, entertainment and sports.

### SERVICED RESIDENCES

39. Best **Serviced Residence** Operator  
Best serviced property catering to mid- and long-term staying guests.

### SPAS

40. Best **Spa** Operator  
Best managed and operated spa or network of spas in the region.

## BT-MICE Awards

### Criteria

- Best services and facilities catering specifically to the BT-MICE market.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing the BT-MICE market.
- Most desirable and attractive incentives and value added services to business travellers and MICE planners.

41. Best **Airline – Business Class**  
Best business class airline across the board.  
Refer to Airline Criteria.
42. Best **Business** Hotel  
Best hotel catering to the business traveller.  
Refer to Hotel Criteria.
43. Best **Meetings & Conventions** Hotel  
Best hotel catering to meeting and convention needs.  
Refer to Hotel Criteria.
44. Best **BT-MICE City**  
The city most friendly and desirable to business travellers and for MICE planners to host their events.
45. Best **Convention & Exhibition** Centre
  - Best facilities.
  - Best value for money.
  - Most flexible in catering to MICE planners.
  - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.
46. Best **Convention & Exhibition Bureau**
  - Most efficient, flexible and friendly in terms of response to enquiries and information.
  - Most effective in raising awareness of MICE at government and community levels.
  - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.

## Travel Services Awards

### Criteria

- Best product, services and facilities
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing

47. Best **Airport**
  - Best facilities.
  - Most user-friendly, efficient and hassle-free immigration.
  - Most organised baggage claim.
  - Best planned floor layout, with easy ground access.
48. Best **GDS (Global Distribution System)**
  - Most comprehensive network offering ease of operation and user friendliness.
  - Most efficient and reliable system.
49. Best **Cruise Operator**
  - Best product in terms of service, routes and schedules.
  - Best onboard programme and facilities.
  - Most agent-friendly in terms of reservations, confirmations and commission payments.
  - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas, incentive programmes and servicing.
50. Best **NTO**
  - Most efficient, flexible and friendly in terms of response to enquiries and information.
  - Most effective in raising awareness of tourism at government and community levels.
  - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.
51. Best **Theme Attraction**
  - Best ambience.
  - Best facilities and services.
  - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.

# TRAVEL AGENT AWARDS

### Criteria

Best **Travel Agency** in its respective category in terms of:

- Professionalism and excellence in staff.
- Best value-added services to client
- Best use of computer technology applications to help improve efficiency and effectiveness in services provided to client.

52. Best Travel Agency – **Australia**
53. Best Travel Agency – **China**
54. Best Travel Agency – **Chinese Taipei**
55. Best Travel Agency – **Hong Kong**
56. Best Travel Agency – **India**
57. Best Travel Agency – **Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)**
58. Best Travel Agency – **Indonesia**
59. Best Travel Agency – **Japan**
60. Best Travel Agency – **Malaysia**
61. Best Travel Agency – **Singapore**
62. Best Travel Agency – **South Korea**
63. Best Travel Agency – **Thailand**
64. Best Travel Agency – **The Philippines**
65. Best **Corporate** Travel Agency  
Best travel agency specialising in serving the needs of corporate travellers.
66. Best **Online** Travel Agent  
Best online-based travel agent offering the most user-friendly and effective interface to meet client needs. This online travel agent must also boast the best sales and marketing network in terms of service innovation.

OR VOTE ONLINE!

[www.ttgasia.com/ttg-awards](http://www.ttgasia.com/ttg-awards)

12th August 2011



VOTING FORM A: TRAVEL SUPPLIER AWARDS

For voting by • Travel agents • Tour operators • Destination Management Companies      You Can Also Vote Online Now @ [www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards](http://www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards)

Do refer to the voting criteria on the facing page when casting your vote

**Voting Rules**

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- All votes are confidential.
- Voting forms are published in TTG print titles and are available online at [www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards](http://www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards).
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- There are no pre-nominated contenders for any voting awards.
- The results for TTG Travel Awards 2011 are final and no correspondence will be entertained.
- Voting forms will be independently tabulated and evaluated by an independent auditor in Singapore.
- The closing date is **12th August 2011**

**Submission**

Completed voting forms are to be returned to:

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Ms Lina Tan  
TTG Travel Awards 2011  
TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd  
1 Science Park Road #04-07 The Capricorn  
Singapore Science Park II Singapore 117528  
Tel: (65) 6395-7575  
Fax: (65) 6536-2972

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TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd  
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11/F ING Tower No. 308 Des Voeux Road  
Central Hong Kong  
Tel: (852) 2237-7272  
Fax: (852) 2806-0646

Organisation / Country	Organisation / Country
<b>Airlines</b>	
1. Best North American Airline	28. Best City Hotel – Manila
2. Best European Airline	29. Best City Hotel – Seoul
3. Best Middle Eastern Airline	30. Best City Hotel – Singapore
4. Best South Asian Airline	31. Best City Hotel – Taipei
5. Best South-east Asian Airline	32. Best City Hotel – Tokyo
6. Best North Asian Airline	33. Best New City Hotel
7. Best China Airline	34. Best Airport Hotel
8. Best Pacific Airline	<b>RESORTS – Individual Property</b>
9. Best Regional Airline	35. Best Beach Resort
10. Best Asian Low-Cost Carrier	36. Best Resort Hotel (Non-Beach)
	37. Best New Beach Resort
	38. Best Integrated Resort
	<b>SERVICED RESIDENCES</b>
	39. Best Serviced Residence Operator
	<b>SPAS</b>
	40. Best Spa Operator
	<b>BT-MICE</b>
	41. Best Airline – Business Class
	42. Best Business Hotel
	43. Best Meetings & Conventions Hotel
	44. Best BT-MICE City
	45. Best Convention & Exhibition Centre
	46. Best Convention & Exhibition Bureau
	<b>TRAVEL SERVICES</b>
	47. Best Airport
	48. Best GDS
	49. Best Cruise Operator
	50. Best NTO
	51. Best Theme Attraction

VOTER INFORMATION

Name:

Passport no.:

Job title:

Company:

Address:

Country:

Telephone no.:

Fax no.:

Email:

Signature:

Closing Date: 12th August 2011

VOTING FORM B: TRAVEL AGENT AWARDS

Do refer to the voting criteria on the facing page when casting your vote

For voting by • Hoteliers • Airline staff • Car rental companies • Cruise operators • National Tourism Organisations • GDS companies • All other travel professionals (except Travel agents, Tour operators and Destination Management Companies)

You Can Also Vote Online Now @ [www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards](http://www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards)

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Organisation / Country
52. Best Travel Agency – Australia
53. Best Travel Agency – China
54. Best Travel Agency – Chinese Taipei
55. Best Travel Agency – Hong Kong
56. Best Travel Agency – India
57. Best Travel Agency – Indonesia
58. Best Travel Agency – Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)
59. Best Travel Agency – Japan
60. Best Travel Agency – Malaysia
61. Best Travel Agency – Singapore
62. Best Travel Agency – South Korea
63. Best Travel Agency – Thailand
64. Best Travel Agency – The Philippines
65. Best Corporate Travel Agency
66. Best Online Travel Agent

VOTER INFORMATION

Name:

Passport no.:

Job title:

Company:

Address:

Country:

Telephone no.:

Fax no.:

Email:

Signature:

Closing Date: 12th August 2011





# TRAVEL AWARDS 2011

## Vote Now!

### TRAVEL SUPPLIER AWARDS

#### Airline Awards

1. Best North American Airline
2. Best European Airline
3. Best Middle Eastern Airline
4. Best South Asian Airline
5. Best South-east Asian Airline
6. Best North Asian Airline
7. Best China Airline
8. Best Pacific Airline
9. Best Regional Airline
10. Best Asian Low-Cost Carrier

#### Hotels • Resorts • Serviced Residences • Spa Awards

##### HOTEL Chains

11. Best Global Hotel Chain
12. Best Regional Hotel Chain
13. Best Local Hotel Chain
14. Best Hotel Representation Company
15. Best Luxury Hotel Brand
16. Best Mid-range Hotel Brand
17. Best Budget Hotel Brand

##### HOTELS – Individual Property

18. Best Luxury Hotel
19. Best Mid-range Hotel
20. Best Budget Hotel
21. Best Independent Hotel
22. Best Boutique Hotel
23. Best City Hotel – Bangkok
24. Best City Hotel – Delhi
25. Best City Hotel – Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City
26. Best City Hotel – Jakarta
27. Best City Hotel – Kuala Lumpur
28. Best City Hotel – Manila
29. Best City Hotel – Seoul
30. Best City Hotel – Singapore
31. Best City Hotel – Taipei
32. Best City Hotel – Tokyo
33. Best New City Hotel
34. Best Airport Hotel

##### RESORTS – Individual Property

35. Best Beach Resort
36. Best Resort Hotel (Non-Beach)
37. Best New Beach Resort
38. Best Integrated Resort

##### SERVICED RESIDENCES

39. Best Serviced Residence Operator

##### SPAS

40. Best Spa Operator

#### BT-MICE Awards

41. Best Airline – Business Class
42. Best Business Hotel
43. Best Meetings & Conventions Hotel
44. Best BT-MICE City
45. Best Convention & Exhibition Centre
46. Best Convention & Exhibition Bureau

#### Travel Services Awards

47. Best Airport
48. Best GDS
49. Best Cruise Operator
50. Best NTO
51. Best Theme Attraction

### TRAVEL AGENT AWARDS

52. Best Travel Agency – Australia
53. Best Travel Agency – China
54. Best Travel Agency – Chinese Taipei
55. Best Travel Agency – Hong Kong
56. Best Travel Agency – India
57. Best Travel Agency – Indochina  
(Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)
58. Best Travel Agency – Indonesia
59. Best Travel Agency – Japan
60. Best Travel Agency – Malaysia
61. Best Travel Agency – Singapore
62. Best Travel Agency – South Korea
63. Best Travel Agency – Thailand
64. Best Travel Agency – The Philippines
65. Best Corporate Travel Agency
66. Best Online Travel Agent

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**PEOPLE ARE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL HR**

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

Successful human resources management is a central pillar of any hotel operation. At Best Western International, our people are the key to success.

We see the importance of people in our organization and we invest prominently in human resources to make sure our people are happy. Best Western is a strong believer that if its people are happy, they in turn will ensure Best Western's hotel guests are happy.

It is our people that differentiate Best Western from other hotel companies. Emphasis is placed on acquisition, retention and talent management of the right people as part of effective overall strategies against high staff turnover, employee inefficiency and other negative factors. The human resources manager becomes a coach, mentor, counselor and succession planner for employees, to motivate the efficiency, development and loyalty of staff.

Today's human resources department is a strategic partner, an employee advocate and a 'change mentor'. There is the need to align and evolve with business challenges, keep up to date with technology and follow the ever-changing global environment.

With hotels in many locations throughout Asia and the Middle East, our human resources strategies are employed along with the promotion of ethics, beliefs and values of different hotel workplaces. It is an understanding that while employees' basic needs are similar regionally, their wants might not be the same.

New and existing staff are properly inducted to familiarize themselves with the Best Western brands, the hotels, their respective departments and job responsibilities. Ongoing training helps them develop and grow within the organisation.

Communication is another key element in Best Western's human resources strategies, incorporating meetings, briefings, feedback and appraisal to make staff truly feel a part of the team. Also important is the reward and recognition available to our people; Employee of the Month and Employee of the Year titles, for example, are used to motivate staff.

Best Western International continues to enhance and strengthen human resources strategies throughout Asia and the Middle East – especially in locations where tourism is fast-growing – to ensure superior customer care, services and standards are delivered with efficiency and effectiveness to meet the ever-growing demands of today's customers.



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# No Arab tourism turmoil

Thailand, Philippines among destinations seeing double-digit rise from Middle East

By Sirima Eamtako, Marianne Carandang and Ellen Chen

**BANGKOK, MANILA, KUALA LUMPUR**

Expectations that turmoil in the Arab world would roil Middle East outbound travel have proven largely unfounded, with opportunities remaining aplenty as the market enters its peak travel season, traditionally from end-June to mid-October.

"We initially thought we would be seeing sluggish growth in arrivals from the Middle East (due to the recent anti-government protests from Yemen to Egypt). In contrast, the market is growing," said Juthaporn Rerngronasa, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) deputy governor for international marketing-Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas.

Thailand looks set to surpass the 600,000 mark in Middle East arrivals this year, having recorded an 18 per cent year-on-year growth in the first six months to 299,000 visitors. Over in the Philippines, latest available statistics from January to April also show a strong 13.2 per cent growth from the Middle East markets to 16,196 arrivals, compared with the same period last year.

"Contrary to what people might expect, we've actually seen an increase in arrivals. I realise people might find this surprising," said Alex Stutely, general manager of Blue Horizons Travel and Tours. He credits this to the



Juthaporn: nicely surprised

effort of the Philippine Department of Tourism (DoT), which appointed its first representative in the Middle East in April and kept growing its presence at the Arabian Travel Market in the past four years.

Stutely continued: "We've seen leisure travel go up; people no longer come just for business. They are now also going to Boracay and Cebu."

The novelty of Philippine leisure destinations may well give old-timers such as neighbouring Malaysia – which is reporting mixed results on Middle East business – a run for their money.

Emirates Holidays, which in May offered Palawan resorts and adventure tours, has just added Boracay and Marinduque to its latest brochure, with packages for luxury resorts Bellarocca (Marinduque) and Shangri-La Boracay.

Also in May, Qatar Holidays added 16 hotels and resorts to its brochures, coinciding with Qatar Airways' new flights from Doha to Manila and Cebu.

And last month, Etihad Holidays began to carry packages for Metro Manila, Cebu, Boracay and Palawan. "One of the reasons they decided to include the Philippines was they, too, spotted the increase," Stutely said. His company is groundhandler for all the three operators.

Malaysian operators such as Asian Overland Services (AOS) Tours and Travels and Mayflower Acme Tours, in contrast, are reporting a drop in Middle East arrivals of between 10 and 20 per cent, not due to the Arab turmoil, but challenges such as high air fares, insufficient flights and less direct accessibility.

AOS sales manager Andy Muniandy said: "It is just cheaper for Middle East tourists to head for Europe now compared to coming here," he said. Saudi Arabia is the company's biggest market at 60 per cent.

AOS managing director Yap Sook Ling added it could cost thrice as much for Middle East travellers to fly to Malaysia compared with to Europe.

Both the AOS executives and Mayflower Acme's director and general manager Chin Ten Hoy are pinning hopes on a pick-up in arrivals after the fasting season end-August. "We are work-

ing closely with our Middle East operators to encourage travel after the fasting month. We have new businesses such as from Kuwait to help cushion the impact," said Chin.

But as the market books last minute, they said it was too early to gauge the response.

No such uncertainty among their Thai counterparts, who are expecting only growth. Destinations of the World (Thailand) business development manager Patcharanee Somsamai expects a whopping 30 per cent growth in Middle East business this year, pointing to attractive shopping opportunities and competitive medical treatment fees as the main draws for the market. The tour operator claimed a 55 per cent increase in roomnight production from the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries in the first six months, albeit noting that guests were choosing four- or five-star instead of luxury hotels.

"But they are staying longer, from five days to one week in Bangkok, and from three to four days in Phuket," said Patcharanee.

TAT, meanwhile, is reinforcing the country's strength as a shopping and medical destination through roadshows and familiarisation trips, with the Amazing Thailand Always Amazes You branding as the key message on Al Jazeera.

## Jakarta's second airport role

By Mimi Hudoyo

**JAKARTA** A second airport has opened in the capital, providing a boon for domestic services, but no real relief for congested Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, which exceeded its annual traffic capacity of 23 million last year.

Halim Perdanakusuma Airport is located in east Jakarta, up to an hour's drive from the city centre, while Soekarno-Hatta is in west Jakarta. Up till now, it was primarily used for charter and presidential services.

However, on July 8, Merpati Nusantara Airlines relaunched thrice-daily services between Jakarta and Lampung and daily Lampung-Palembang services. It also operates thrice-daily Jakarta-Bandung services from the airport.

Director-general of air transportation Herry Bakti Gumay was quoted in the local media as saying: "It will be more convenient (for passengers) travelling to nearby destinations (within an hour's flight time) to go via Halim Perdanakusuma than

New passage

3

Annual passenger capacity, in millions, of Halim Perdanakusuma

travel for up to two hours to reach Soekarno-Hatta."

Indonesia's tourism stakeholders agree. Sheraton Lampung director of sales and marketing Sugeng Purnomo said: "The second airport opens new opportunities for more airlines to operate to the nearby cities from Jakarta, which also means more opportunities for cities (like Lampung) to develop tourism."

"Merpati's services, for example, are quite an improvement, especially when flights between Jakarta and Lampung (served by

Garuda Indonesia and Sriwijaya Air from Soekarno-Hatta) are usually full."

Titan Convex general manager Ressa Salim said: "I have tried the service and it is quite good and convenient for travellers out of and into Jakarta."

Salim, who is preparing to organise the Tourism Indonesia Mart and Expo 2011 in October in Lampung, said Jakarta-based sellers would find it convenient to use Halim Perdanakusuma, but it was not advisable for buyers to try and connect to Halim airport from Soekarno-Hatta to fly to Lampung.

"Flight time between Jakarta and Lampung is only 30 minutes, while the ride from Soekarno-Hatta to the city centre alone can take up to two hours, let alone to Halim airport," he said.

Similarly, Batik Holiday Bandung managing director Maktal Hadiyat said it was more convenient to travel by shuttle between Bandung and Jakarta, which involves three to four hours ride on the highway, than to transfer between the two airports.

## CSA firms up

**SINGAPORE** Cruise Shipping Asia (CSA), which debuts November 16-18 in Singapore, has lined up key exhibitors including the Singapore Tourism Board, Sembawang Shipyard, Intercoast Shoreside and Port Services, Indonesia's Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Inflat Worldwide, Penang Port and Latitude 1 Maritime.

Its conference programme will feature panels discussing the latest developments and opportunities in the Asian cruise market. There will also be a travel agent training programme to promote cruising as the next holiday option in Asia.

The exhibition and conference will be held at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre. "With new terminals, facilities in both Hong Kong and Singapore, combined with the fact that Asia is home to the fastest-growing region in the world, (CSA) opens up new possibilities and profit centres for the entire cruise industry," said Michael Duck, EVP, UBM Asia, which jointly organises CSA with UBM Live, organisers of Cruise Shipping Miami.