

TTG ASIA

[LUXURY]

for buyers of premium travel and luxury meetings

*An Iconic Return.
A Legendary Welcome.*



RAFFLES
SINGAPORE

RAFFLES.COM/SINGAPORE



Grand Lobby

RAFFLES SINGAPORE AN ICON REBORN

Raffles Singapore has reopened after a multi-million-dollar restoration, reinvigorating an iconic landmark while retaining a heritage that stretches back more than a hundred years. Following a tasteful transformation of its public areas, suites, restaurants and bars, the hotel offers the perfect venue for discerning business and leisure travelers thanks to its unparalleled service and facilities.

The careful and sensitive restoration was designed to ensure that the hallmarks of the Raffles Singapore – from the striking architecture to its graceful service – were left intact.

The hotel continues to offer luxurious all-suite accommodation, with an expanded suite count of 115 that features new categories, as well as enhanced amenities and technology. The Arcade at Raffles Singapore will be home to Raffles Boutique (previously known as the Raffles Gift Shop), accompanied by new-to-market retail and dining concepts and a brand-new Raffles Spa, a sanctuary for hotel residents and visitors looking to escape the bustle of the city.

After more than a century of providing unsurpassed service excellence, the reborn Raffles Hotel offers enhanced splendour and comfort to discerning travelers.



Palm Court



Writers Bar



Palm Court Suite



Suite Bathroom

A SERIES OF CULINARY FIRSTS



In 1899, Raffles Singapore was the first hotel in the city to hire a French chef, introducing travellers and Singapore to authentic French flavours. Fast-forward almost 120 years, and the Grand Dame is once again at the forefront of a culinary renaissance.

For more than 100 years, the dining venues at Raffles Singapore have been recognised as an integral part of the vibrant and ever changing local bar and dining scene, exciting the local community as well as city guests alike. Continuing with this tradition and commitment of the highest level in delivering engaging and anticipatory service, discover culinary experiences that are new and distinct to Singapore.



La Dame de Pic, Raffles Singapore



Tomato Myriad



Dim Sum Selections



BBR by Alain Ducasse



LA DAME DE PIC
RAFFLES SINGAPORE



BY JEREME LEUNG



by ALAIN DUCASSE

Discover the world of Anne-Sophie's culinary identity, one of the world's top female chefs with a total of seven Michelin stars under her belt. Reflecting her search for aromatic complexity, combinations of flavours and powerful tastes that evoke emotions, this marks her debut into Asia.

Making his return to Singapore, celebrity MasterChef Jereme Leung leverages on the art form of fine dining to awaken the appetite and senses. This contemporary Chinese restaurant takes diners on an exploration voyage to China's vastly diverse cultural regions.

Evolve with a new chapter by acclaimed Chef Alain Ducasse, who presents his first Mediterranean restaurant and bar in Southeast Asia. This unique concept takes customers on a culinary journey along the Mediterranean coast, complemented by a modern and vibrant ambience.



RAFFLES
SINGAPORE

RAFFLES.COM/SINGAPORE

DUBAI HAINAN ISTANBUL JAKARTA MAKKAH MALDIVES MANILA PARIS PHNOM PENH SEYCHELLES SHENZHEN SIEM REAP SINGAPORE WARSAW
OPENING SOON: BALI BOSTON LONDON UDAIPUR

TTG ASIA

[LUXURY]

November 2019

for buyers of premium travel and luxury meetings



FURTHER AND DEEPER

Further East returns for a second edition, bringing with it new luxury travel ideas and hot issues to pay rapt attention to

READY FOR MARRIAGE

Thailand is beckoning LGBT+ travellers to get hitched on her shores

A CHANGE DRIVER

Hiro Miyatake wants to unite Japan's top-end travel specialists

CALL OF THE WILD



The Kayana Beach - Lombok



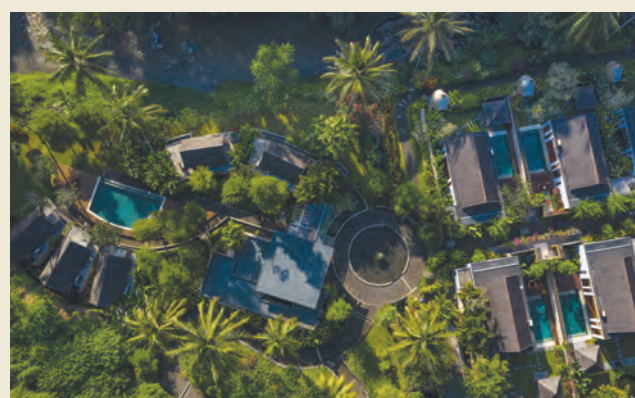
The Samaya Seminyak - Bali



The Kayana Seminyak - Bali

A PARADISE *of* YOUR OWN

The Royal Collection is a unique brand of villa living, featuring three world-class properties: The Kayana, The Samaya Seminyak and The Samaya Ubud. Set within beautiful tropical gardens on Seminyak Beach and the Ayung River, each property combines a unique ambience with a touch of luxury in products and services. The Kayana Beach – Lombok as the newest will welcome you with expansive ocean vistas and lush coconut-strewn gardens. Only 45 minutes' drive from the capital Mataram, this spectacular resort is truly a world apart. With a private plunge pool, spa and full butler service, these private boutique villas offer a secluded sanctuary for our most discerning guests.



The Samaya Ubud - Bali

THE SAMAYA

The Samaya Seminyak - Bali

Jl. Laksmana Seminyak, 80361
Bali – Indonesia
P. (+62-361) 731149
E. info@thesamayabali.com

The Samaya Ubud - Bali

Banjar Baung Desa Sayan, Ubud 80571
Bali – Indonesia
P. (+62-361) 973 606
E. info.ubud@thesamayabali.com

thesamayabali.com

The kayana

The Kayana Seminyak - Bali

Jl. Raya Petitenget, Kerobokan Kelod
Kuta Utara, Bali – Indonesia
P. (+62-361) 8476628, +(62) 899 0116 789
E. info@thekayana.com

The Kayana Beach - Lombok

Jl. Raya Senggigi, Kecinan - Pemenang
Lombok Utara, Nusa Tenggara Barat
83352 - Indonesia
P. (+62-370) 6199 000, (+62-21) 2700027
E. lombok@thekayana.com

thekayana.com

a Company of  KOMPAS GRAMEDIA

THE ANVAYA

BEACH RESORT - BALI

theanvayabali.com



INSPIRED BALINESE ELEGANCE ON KUTA BEACH

Jl. Kartika Plaza, Tuban, Kuta Bali 80361 – Indonesia
Ph: (62 361) 759991, E-mail: sales@theanvayabali.com

📍 @theanvayabeachresortbali

HS
Santika Indonesia
HOTELS & RESORTS

 **KOMPAS GRAMEDIA**



Animals form a central part of many travel experiences, as many of us are eager to get close to them and learn more about them. It is thus encouraging to see that amid a growing wave of eco-consciousness, travellers are putting greater scrutiny and focus

on environmental sustainability, and becoming an integral force for responsible travel development.

How we as travel consumers choose to appreciate nature and wildlife have more impacts than we realise. By choosing responsible travel and showing thoughtfulness in the selection of in-destination experiences and tour operators, travellers can play a pivotal role in protecting wildlife and their habitats.

Look no further than our feature story on 'Call of the Wild' (see page 26) in this issue, which explores how responsible wildlife tourism, when done well, has the potential to enhance conservation efforts for animals and nature. It could also be a powerful economic incentive to keep local places well and alive.

Safari tour operators like Singita as well as andBeyond have taken it upon themselves to push for conservation efforts aimed at protecting and conserving wildlife and wild places, while at the same time putting an emphasis on the betterment of the local communities that their safaris and tours operate in.

It's interesting to note that the wild-

life travel business started with the British upper class travelling to Africa in the late 1800s and early 1900s, in the pursuit of adventure and glory, and its subsequent popularity has led to the need for development of rules and ethical standards.

While not entirely harmless, wildlife tourism, when done right, can be one of the most benign ways to stimulate local economies and empower local people, rather than more exploitative industries of development like mining, oil and gas exploration.

Travelling to enjoy extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime experiences is a privilege, and encounters with wildlife in their natural landscapes can be some of the most profound and unforgettable.

Let's keep travel wild, and hunt for adventures with our eyes and cameras.

Xinyi Liang-Pholsena
Editor

TTG ASIA [LUXURY] for buyers of premium travel and luxury meetings

EDITORIAL

Karen Yue
Group Editor
(karen.yue@ttgasia.com)

Xinyi Liang-Pholsena
Editor, TTG Asia
(liang.xinyi@ttgasia.com)

S Puvaneswary
Editor, Malaysia/Brunei
(puvanes@ttgasia.com)

Mimi Hudoyo
Editor, Indonesia
(mimihudoyo@gmail.com)

Kenneth Goh
Assistant Editor, TTG Content
Lab (kenneth.goh@ttgasia.com)

Pamela Chow
Reporter, Singapore
(pamela.chow@ttgasia.com)

Rachel AJ Lee, Cheryl Ong
Sub Editors
(rachel.lee@ttgasia.com,
cheryl.ong@ttgasia.com)

Adelaine Ng
Correspondent, Australia
(adelaineng.abc@gmail.com)

Caroline Boey
Senior Correspondent, China
(caroline.boey@ttgasia.com)

Prudence Lui
Correspondent, Hong Kong
(prului@yahoo.com)

Marissa Carruthers
Correspondent, Cambodia
Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam
(maris.carruthers@gmail.com)

Rohit Kaul
Correspondent, India
(rohit.kaul@ttgasia.com)

**Tiara Maharani,
Kurniawan Ulung**
Correspondents, Indonesia
(tiaraul13@gmail.com)
(alezkurniawan@gmail.com)

Julian Ryall
Correspondent, Japan
(jryall2@hotmail.com)

Rosa Ocampo
Correspondent, The Philippines
(rosa.ocampo@gmail.com)

Feizal Samath
Correspondent, Sri Lanka/
Maldives (feizalsam@gmail.com)

Julian Ryall
Correspondent, Japan
(jryall2@hotmail.com)

Redmond Sia, Goh Meng Yong
Creative Designers

Lina Tan
Editorial Assistant

Chimmy Tsui
Publisher and Head
Integrated Solutions (China)
(chimmy.tsui@ttgasia.com)

Ar-lene Lee
Senior Business Manager
(arlene.lee@ttgasia.com)

Jonathan Yap
Senior Business Manager
(jonathan.yap@ttgasia.com)

Shirley Tan
Senior Business Manager
(shirley.tan@ttgasia.com)

Cheryl Tan
Corporate Marketing Manager
(cheryl.tan@ttgasia.com)

Delia Ng
Digital Marketing Strategist
(delia.ng@ttgasia.com)

Cheryl Lim
Advertisement
Administration Manager
(cheryl.lim@ttgasia.com)

Carol Cheng
Assistant Manager Administration
and Marketing
(carol.cheng@ttgasia.com)

Kun Swee Qi
Publishing Services
Executive

Nur Hazirah
Web Executive

Katherine Leong
Circulation Executive

TTG ASIA MEDIA

Darren Ng
Managing Director
(darren.ng@ttgasia.com)

OFFICES

SINGAPORE
1 Science Park Road,
#04-07,
The Capricorn,
Singapore Science Park II
Singapore 117528
Tel: (65) 6395-7575
Fax: (65) 6536-0896
traveltradesales@ttgasia.com;
www.ttgasia.com

HONG KONG
8/F, E168,
166-168 Des Voeux Road Central,
Sheung Wan, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2237 7288
Fax: (852) 2237 7227



TTG Travel Trade Publishing is a business group of TTG Asia Media. It is mailed free on written request to readers who meet predetermined criteria. Paid subscriptions are available to those who do not meet the criteria. MCI(P)050/08/2018. PPS1884/02/2017 (025625). Printed by Times Printer Pte Ltd, 16 Tuas Avenue 5, Singapore 639340.

SALES & MARKETING

Pierre Quek
Publisher and Head
Integrated Solutions
(pierre.quek@ttgasia.com)

PUBLISHING SERVICES

Jonathan Wan
Head Operational Support Services

THE BARRACKS

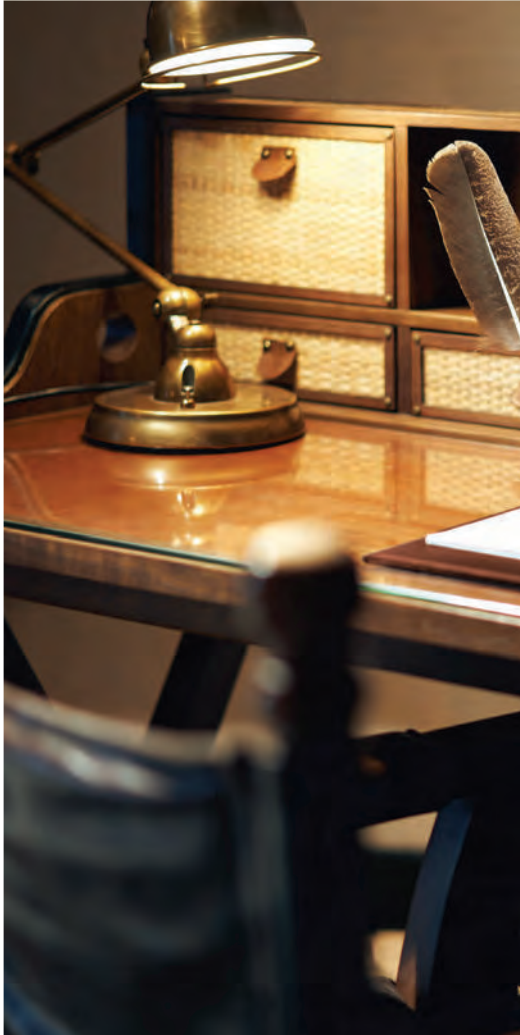
HOTEL

SENTOSA



The Barracks Hotel Sentosa opens 1st December 2019

A timeless experience where every day presents endless opportunities to discover Sentosa's rich heritage. Housed in a conserved colonial building, The Barracks Hotel Sentosa offers all things exquisite in its luxurious 40 suites and premier rooms. Be immersed in timeless romance and charm as you appreciate the finest in life.



- Suites with direct access to an exclusive pool and semi-private jacuzzi.
- All-day refreshments & evening cocktails at the cosy Living Room.
- Discover the rich heritage of Sentosa in an exclusive guided tour.
- The Equerry Team will be your personal aide during your stay & to all things about Sentosa.

Discover more about this heritage hideaway via www.TheBarracksHotel.com.sg



@TheBarracksHotel



info.tbh@fareast.com.sg



+65 6722 0802

TTG ASIA

LUXURY

for buyers of premium travel and luxury meetings

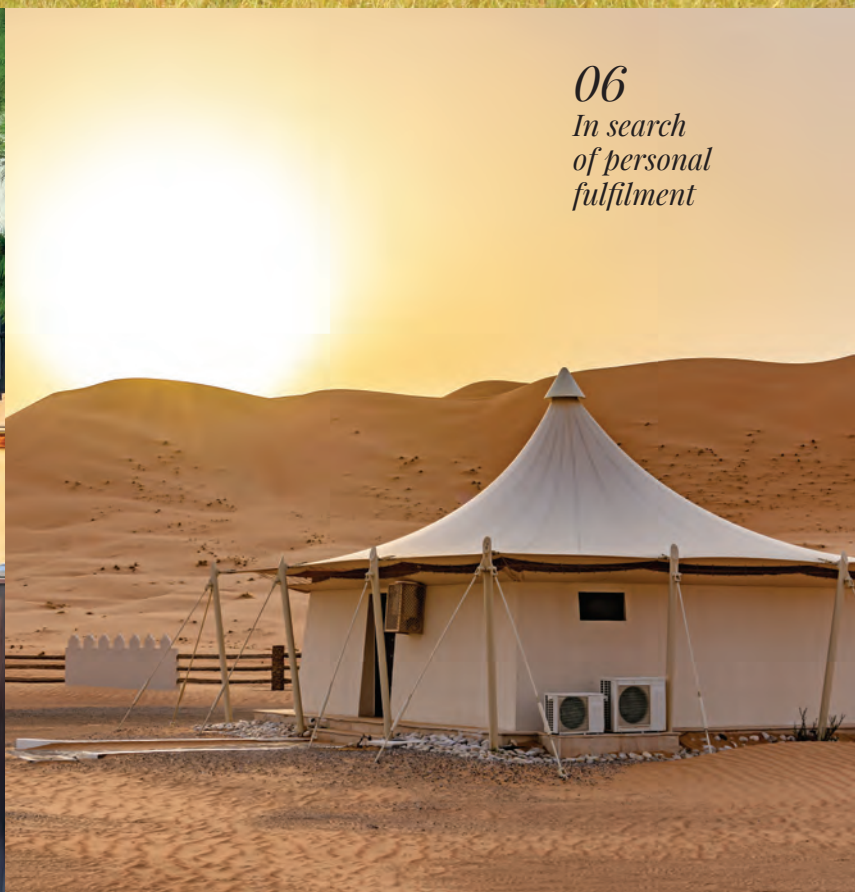
26
Call of the wild



40
Luxurious lures



06
*In search
of personal
fulfilment*



24

*Getting serious
about marriage*



further
east

16

*Going further
and deeper*



NOVEMBER 2019

- 06 luxury market report singapore
- 12 luxury market report indonesia
- 16 focus further east interview
- 18 focus further east host city: bali
- 22 focus further east exhibitor showcase
- 24 special report lgbt
- 26 special report wildlife

- 30 luxury personality hiro miyatake
- 32 destination malaysia
- 36 destination australia
- 40 destination japan
- 42 gasp! the audacity of luxury

30

A change driver



18

Bali's pristine push





Above Oman's Empty Quarter, the world's largest contiguous sand desert

In search of personal fulfilment

Comfort is taking a back seat as more Singaporeans show a greater eagerness to spend on transformative experiences that bring them out of their elements. By **Pamela Chow**

Experiential travel no longer cuts it for Singapore's luxury travellers, who now seek out transformative experiences to engage with the places visited on a deeper and more meaningful level.

"Many of our Singaporean guests are opting for transformative travel, where travellers see a holiday as a time for self-reflection or self-development. Transformative travel will be taking us into new pastures while at the same time providing us with fresh perspectives," explained Nico Heath, co-founder and director of Light-foot Travel.

For example, more guests are opting to track critically endangered gorillas in Rwanda or black rhinos on safari in Namibia, experience the nomadic lifestyle in Mongolia with local herders, or drive



Preferred[™]
HOTELS & RESORTS

*I am currently out of the office with limited access to email.
To escape your next meeting, visit PREFERREDHOTELS.COM*



Preferred[™]
HOTELS & RESORTS

LEGEND

L.V.X.

LIFESTYLE

CONNECT

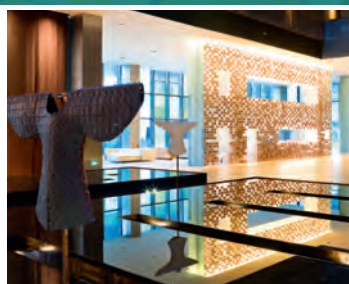
Preferred[™]
RESIDENCES

I PREFER[™]
HOTEL REWARDS

MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH
LAGUNA BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA



THE FULLERTON HOTEL SYDNEY
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



THE OPPOSITE HOUSE
BEIJING, CHINA



GAYANA MARINE RESORT
KOTA KINABALU, MALAYSIA



WANDA REIGN CHENGDU HOTEL
CHENGDU, CHINA

luxury market report singapore



across the high dunes in Oman's Wahiba Sands.

This demand is especially pronounced among seasoned travellers, observed Luxury Escapes' head of Asia, Graham Hills. Popular products among this segment include personal local guides to destinations such as India's wildlife sanctuaries, the thick of the jungles of Africa and the ice glaciers in Patagonia.

Such destinations are a growing magnet for high-income Singaporeans, who allocate more of their monthly budget to travel beyond Asia. According to the Singapore Department of Statistics, the country's top 20 per cent earners spend 1.6 per cent of their monthly budget on package tours and holiday expenses in destinations outside of Asia, compared to the mid-income household equivalent of 0.7 per cent. High-income households also registered as the only group with a significant amount of monthly expenditure – 0.1 per cent – allocated to package tours to African destinations.

And as Singapore's upper class welcomes a new generation of working millennials, operators are also changing the way they market luxury experiences to them. For instance, Luxury Escapes has launched Experiences, a platform that provides guests with a personalised list of activities that can be added on to the holiday they are purchasing. This system of-

fers customers with more flexible options – for example, multiple families travelling together can opt for private departures to different experiences on their tour.

Interestingly, while luxury experiences grow more nuanced, simplicity is a gem that Singaporeans are willing to spend on. Lightfoot Travel's Heath elaborated: "A much bigger trend will be travelling for pure calm, ease, and the chance for total decompression. It's less about facilities, and more about the authenticity of the experience."

This rings especially true when it comes to safety and accessibility, confirmed Lim Hui Juan, co-founder and COO, Quotient TravelPlanner. She shared: "It's always about creativity and convenience – e.g. instead of sitting in the car for hours, we take them on a helicopter."

Moreover, clients are game to eschew branded hotels for more unique stays in small boutiques, safari lodges or even family-run inns like ryokans in Japan, trusting the operator to select a quality option. However, home-sharing services are out of the equation. While these platforms have been plumping up their premium offerings – e.g. Airbnb now segments its high-quality home rentals with Airbnb Plus – Singaporean spenders remain averse to these varieties, preferring to lock in guaranteed security and service.

Lim commented: "Travellers who are looking for stays to be

Above A tent on Wahiba Sands in Oman at sunrise



“

"A much bigger trend will be travelling for pure calm, ease, and the chance for total decompression."

Nico Heath, co-founder and director of Lightfoot Travel

The Singaporean luxury traveller is...

- ❖ pushing personal boundaries, spending more on transformative experiences that connect them to the destination
- ❖ prizes reliability, safety and security, and are likely to pay for established accommodation options
- ❖ keen to travel together as a family, often bringing young children along for the ride

perfectly comfortable would find that Airbnb can disappoint. We cannot predict the standard or the end result of the stay – there is no quality assurance."

Luxury Escapes' Hills concurred: "We find that Singaporean travellers are willing to pay more to stay in luxury hotels and resorts offered by Luxury Escapes rather than apartments and homestays because they value the inclusions provided by us that are more readily catered for by established hotels or resorts. (They) are not willing to compromise on certain basic standards."

He shared recent survey findings among the company's Singaporean members that their top three holiday nightmares are a room that is unclean or unhygienic (82 per cent of members), was not found as pictured (52 per cent) and had rude or unhelpful staff (48 per cent).



ILTM[®]

Friendships create business at ILTM Asia Pacific.

If you're the finest luxury travel supplier or buyer,
you'll find both here.
Apply to attend in 2020.

Don't miss your opportunity to discover and
be discovered. Register for **ILTM Asia Pacific**
18 - 21 May 2020 at iltm.com/asiapacific

ILTM[®]
ASIA PACIFIC

ILTM brings together the finest luxury travel professionals to create the places,
experiences and moments that matter in the luxury travel industry.

ILTM[®]
AFRICA

Africa
02 - 04 Apr
2020

ILTM[®]
ARABIA

Arabia
20 - 21 Apr
2020

ILTM[®]
LATIN AMERICA

Latin America
05 - 08 May
2020

ILTM[®]
ASIA PACIFIC

Asia Pacific
18 - 21 May
2020

ILTM[®]
NORTH AMERICA

North America
21 - 24 Sep
2020

ILTM[®]
CHINA

China
28 - 30 Oct
2020

ILTM[®]
CANNES

Cannes
07 - 10 Dec
2020

Sands Resorts Macao – Asia's Leading Meetings and Events Destination that Inspires

The luxurious resort is the emblem of high-end meetings, and the city fascinates with its East-meets-West culture blending in perfect harmony, and where tradition and modernity belong side-by-side.



Sands Resorts Macao has earned a stellar reputation as the preferred choice for its incomparable facilities and ability to deliver an unforgettable experience for any meeting or event, big or small.

There are many reasons why the world's most savvy event planners rely on Sands Resorts Macao for events of all sizes. Here are the top eight reasons that make the resort stand out.

No. 1 Unparalleled accessibility

Located within just one to four hours' flight from most major Asian cities, Macao is the go-to destination in Asia today for events. The Macau International Airport offers direct flights to-and-from more than 55 cities. Citizens from nearly 80 countries enjoy visa-free entry.

Those arriving in Hong Kong enjoy great flexibility with Cotai Water Jet, which offers more than 94 sailings per day between the two cities, and ferries can also be chartered for groups.

The integrated resort is located just 10 minutes from Macau International Airport and the Taipa Ferry Terminal via complimentary shuttle bus, and chartered buses can be arranged to facilitate group arrivals.

What's more, the newly opened Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge offers an effortless 45-minute connection by road.

No. 2 Unique East-meets-West heritage

To create a well-balanced programme, meeting planners can plan free time for delegates to venture beyond the integrated resort to experience Macao's unique charm with its quaint old towns and unique districts.

In fact, Macao is home to more than 20

UNESCO heritage sites with colonial Portuguese character and intriguing architecture, making them gorgeous backdrops for group photos and Instagram-worthy posts.

No. 3 Amazing accommodation

With seven international hotels and approximately 12,500 rooms and suites to choose from, Sands Resorts Macao offers an excellent range of accommodations for any event. The hotels are: The Venetian® Macao; The Parisian Macao; Four Seasons Hotel Macao, Cotai Strip; The St. Regis Macao; Conrad® Macao, Cotai Central; Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel; and Holiday Inn® Macao Cotai Central.

The flagship all-suites The Venetian Macao



The newly refurbished Premio Bella Suite at The Venetian Macao

features 3,000 newly refurbished suites, including the Premio Suite which captures the romance of Venice. For special occasions, the Champagne Suite at The Parisian Macao combines



The Venetian Ballroom provides 6,500m² pillarless event space



Sands Resorts offers the ideal setting for events of all sizes

French opulence with breathtaking views of the Eiffel Tower and Le Jardin.

With all the hotels, meeting venues, dining, shopping and entertainment under one roof, meeting planners can book accommodations for different budgets and enjoy effortless logistics. Similarly, delegates will find it easy to move between meetings and leisure activities.

No. 4 Flexible indoor and outdoor meeting venues



Outdoor pool deck event space at The Parisian Macao

Sands Resorts Macao offers the ideal setting for events of all sizes, with over 150,000m² of flexible meeting space up to eight-metre ceiling height, 334 breakout rooms, a magnificent 6,500m² pillarless ballroom, three grand theatres – Venetian Theatre, Parisian Theatre and Sands Cotai Theatre – and the colossal 15,000-seat Cotai Arena that hosts major concerts and live entertainment.

The integrated resort also offers a range of open-air venues. The Il Prato event lawn accommodates up to 5,000 delegates for cocktail-style events and teambuilding activities, while the pool deck event space on the sixth floor of The Parisian Macao welcomes up to 500 delegates, with the Eiffel Tower as a glorious backdrop.

No. 5 Effortless group movement

With all the elements to stage a successful event under one roof, managing large group events is seamless. Sands Resorts owns its fleet of Cotai Water Jet ferries, shuttle buses and an in-house travel agency to facilitate local and international travel.

Sands Resorts' expert staff are also trained and highly experienced at managing large group movements and the events planning team is well

equipped to manage ferry and coach service to streamline logistics on large group movements.

No. 6 Countless wonders in one resort



Sands Resorts Macao bespoke entertainment creates immersive entertainment experiences for your event

Every aspect of an event is impeccably coordinated by the experienced event planning team, which has organised more than 4,000 meetings and exhibitions since 2007. Every event is an occasion to create unique experiences with the creativity and professionalism of the banqueting team, audiovisual technicians, entertainment and floral specialists, making every event truly unforgettable.

For a touch of showmanship, a troupe of 200 performers are on hand to wow guests with Streetmosphere-style performances – including singing gondoliers, Chinese-style feats of wonder, Parisian mimes, musicians and more.

No. 7 Endless discoveries across the city

Within the integrated resort, guests can relish Asian and world cuisine at over 150 eateries. These include the Michelin-starred and Black Pearl Award winners The Golden Peacock and Zi Yat Heen; Black Pearl Award winner La Chine which serves unique French-inspired Chinese cuisine on the 6th floor of Eiffel Tower; and authentic Portuguese restaurant Chiado by celebrity chef Henrique Sá Pessoa.

Delegates can also delight in the mix of Portuguese and Chinese cuisine which have earned the city the distinction of UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.

The same culinary excellence is replicated by Sands Resorts Macao's banqueting and catering teams, and delegates can enjoy a variety of exquisite dishes during officially organised meals in

Sands Resorts Macao at a glance

- Seven international hotels:
 - The Venetian Macao
 - The Parisian Macao
 - Four Seasons Hotel Macao, Cotai Strip
 - The St. Regis Macao
 - Conrad Macao, Cotai Central
 - Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel
 - Holiday Inn Macao Cotai Central
- All properties are interconnected with covered walkways, while each property is connected to or contains meeting and exhibition space
- Approximately 12,500 guestrooms and suites
- 150,000m² of meeting and exhibition space
- A 15,000-seater Cotai Arena and three magnificent theatres
- 334 breakout rooms
- Recreation: Aqua World, spas, golf, gyms, swimming pools and more
- Dining: 150 restaurants ranging from food courts to Michelin-starred and Black Pearl diamond-awarded restaurants, with cuisines from around the world
- Shopping: Over 850 duty free international brand shops

our ballrooms or in meeting venues.

For shopaholics there are more than 850 duty-free shops featuring the top brands in fashion, jewellery, accessories and more to discover. Free time can also be spent in exciting activities, golfing, cultural tours, spa treatments and more.

No. 8 Generous government support

Last, but not least, the Macao government's Convention and Exhibition Financial Support Programme provides marketing and financial support to confirmed and potential conventions and exhibitions.

The wide range of support covers marketing, accommodations, banqueting, meeting packages and other activities; and Sands Resorts Macao's team can provide more details.

And what's more, Sands Resorts Macao's Meetings Beyond Imagination programme ensures twice the joy with extra privileges for event organisers and delegates. Bookings at any hotel enjoys special offers* including 5% off on master bills and up to 50% off on selected in-house entertainment. Delegates are also entitled to enjoy extra dining, entertainment and retail privileges. This offer is valid for meetings held between now and December 18, 2020. Bookings are available from now to December 31, 2019.

Visit SandsResortsMacao.com/en/MeetingsBeyondImagination for details, or call (853) 2882-8800 or email sales@sands.com.mo.

* Terms and conditions apply



澳門金沙度假区
Sands
RESORTS MACAO

From material to experiential

For Indonesia's savviest travellers, luxury travel is increasingly more creative, personal and meaningful as they seek immersive singular in-destination experiences tailored to their tastes.

By **Mimi Hudoyo** and **Tiara Maharani**

Shopping and famed

cities used to feature prominently on the radar for Indonesian luxury travellers, but recent years have seen the country's high spenders put greater emphasis on exploring remote, far-flung destinations as much as seeking out thematic experiences that deliver a strong sense of place.

Anthony Akili, group president & CEO, Smiling Tours & Travel Management Company, said: "Some travellers look for exotic destinations like Machu Picchu, Nepal or Brazil, but more noticeably, they are looking for thematic holidays, like gastronomy, cycling or skiing (in popular destinations)."

Rather than spending a day at a ski resort in Switzerland just for the sake of experiencing it, said Akili, luxury customers are now looking to enjoy an immersive ski

holiday of a week or more.

Even at popular destinations such as Europe's key cities, discerning clients are now thirsting for access over acquisition, pushing travel advisors to open doors to unique insider experiences.

"Some clients tell us the type of holidays they want and we suggest the destination and itinerary," said Anthony. "For foodies, we have done popular destinations such as Spain and Italy; for those seeking nature and outdoor activities, Australia is a great choice."

He also noticed more travellers, especially families, requesting to stay in luxury homes instead of conventional luxury hotels.

"Rather than booking four or five suites in a hotel, they would opt for a luxury home where they can bond with the family members more," he shared.

Dreamscape Travel Network



Shivam Chy/shutterstock



Left Tiger's Nest Monastery, a sacred site in Bhutan

also sees a greater hunger for exclusive experiences among Indonesia's elite travellers.

Said Fitri Tresnawida, the firm's managing director: "We have seen more and more wealthy Indonesians travellers seeking unique experiences, driving us to be creative to accommodate these desires."

Exploring remote destinations is now trending, she noted. "Indonesians used to enjoy shopping and the atmosphere of the city, but now they prefer destinations that are laid-back, close to nature, and where they can appreciate the natural atmosphere or the lives of local residents," Fitri said.

A greater sense of adventure is fanning a higher demand for Africa this year and next, she observed, while interest for new destinations such as Mongolia and Bhutan is expected to rise in 2020.

Whether it is glamping in Africa or an adventurous stay in a Mongolian ger, these are the kind of experiential activities high net-worth travellers from Indonesia are looking for.

"Indonesians don't like to go to places that are too crowded and over-popular. They are no longer interested in big cities, in fact not even the small cities (in popular destinations like) Europe," said Fitri.

“

Some travellers look for exotic destinations like Machu Picchu, Nepal or Brazil, but more noticeably, they are looking for thematic holidays, like gastronomy, cycling or skiing (in popular destinations).

Anthony Akili, group president & CEO, Smiling Tours & Travel Management Company



luxury market report indonesia

Similarly, Golden Rama Tours & Travel's tour director Edhi Sutadarma also sees an uptick in demand for unique destinations among the travelling crème de la crème as well as more extravagant requests, at the same time that group tours are on the wane for the high-end segment.

Edhi elaborated: "There are two categories of premium travellers for us. The top-notch individual travellers, for whom money is not an issue, take a tour specially designed for them and fully rely on our services.

"These niche, top-notch travellers are seeking experiences like no other, sometimes with extravagant requests like private airplane or yacht. This market is small in number, but is growing," he said.

"The other type are those who are cautious on spending; they may fly first or business class but take a ready-made package."

The digitalisation of travel has reduced the popularity of package tours, even at the high-end segment, Edhi added.

"Firstly, information on destinations, transportation, entry tickets to attractions, etc are easily accessible online to travellers that they do not need to rely on us fully.

He added: "Secondly, travel fairs such as the one organised by Singapore Airlines, which offer promotional fares for premium classes, have changed the way they buy holidays. They buy the promotional tickets on offer and then arrange their trips accordingly."

As a result, luxury clients are

Right Mongolia is viewed as an experiential getaway for Indonesia's affluent travellers

Katiekk/shutterstock



now buying air tickets first, then turning to his agency for its service to book hotels and tours, arrange local transport, or make restaurant reservations in the destination, Edhi revealed.

Smailing Tours' Anthony also noted a growing trend of clients building exclusive holidays around the air tickets they have nabbed at travel fairs.

In response, Smailing Tours has created affordable luxury modules to entice such premium clients, allowing them to arrange their itineraries by picking the available modules and paying the respective prices based on their selected choices, according to Anthony.

"On the other hand, the Smailing Platinum members, for whom money is not an issue, tend to rely on us to be their concierge – we arrange everything for them and have someone ready round the clock to assist them."

Millennials, however, have yet

to become a true force to reckon with at the top end, said Indonesia's luxury travel consultants.

Anthony said: "The millennials still want to have fun by exploring (the destinations) more than the level of comfort of luxury hotel.

"I am sure that as millennials climb the career level, they will crave for luxury, only that their definition of luxury and the way they buy luxury products may be different (from earlier generations)," he remarked.

Like Anthony, Dreamscape's Fitri believes that the millennial interest in experiential travel will take root and drive the luxury segment as this generation matures, especially as they are more willing to forego comfort in the name of authenticity and sustainability.

She said: "The millennial market is exciting. They appreciate travel to remote places which are not yet well-known."

The
Indonesian
luxury
traveller
is...

- ❖ typically 40 years and above, travelling with family or a group of friends with similar interests
- ❖ keen to explore new exotic, remote destinations or engage in exclusive experiences in familiar destinations
- ❖ looking for luxury villas to spend more time with their family, bonding over shared activities

AWAKEN

A NEW DAWN OF THINKING

11-14 NOVEMBER 2019 | SEMINYAK, BALI



11-14 NOVEMBER 2019 | SEMINYAK, BALI



AWAKEN the un-conference | Monday 11 November 2019

A BRAND NEW WAY OF DOING BUSINESS.

Discover more at further east.co

further
east

Going further and deeper



As the second edition of Further East draws closer, **Marissa Carruthers** speaks to the show's head Jemma Uglow on what's in store for this year's event in Bali

Sustainability, innovation and creativity within the luxury travel segment are the key issues for this year's Further East luxury travel tradeshow in Bali.

Bringing together leaders in Asia's luxury travel market, organisers said this year's event from November 11 to 14 will build on the success of last year's inaugural conference at Seminyak beach on the Indonesian island.

Jemma Uglow, head of Further

East, said: "Having already united some of the most iconic names in Asian travel, we've spent the past year scouring the industry for even more innovative Asian brands that will take the event to new heights, which is no easy feat."

New additions gracing this year's event include Five Elements Bali, St Regis Hong Kong, Rosewood Bangkok, One + Only Dessaru and Nihi Sumba. Organisers have also been working closely with the Japan

From left Jemma Uglow and show founder, Serge Dive

National Tourism Organisation.

Added Uglow: "Their creativity and future-facing mindset is really aligned with our vision for Further East, so we're looking forward to seeing what they bring to the show floor."

The jam-packed agenda kicks off with the return of Further East's un-conference, Awaken. This will see innovators in leadership, technology and design, sustainability, and guests unite at Potato Head Beach Club for an immersive day of learning and idea-sharing across a range of formats. These range from more traditional keynote presentations to open-source discussion sessions and hands-on workshops.

With sustainability being a hot topic within Asia's luxury travel industry, the event has beefed up content in this space to include a diverse range of perspectives, from marine experts and eco-designers, to sustainability consultants and hospitality educators.

Uglow said: "One 'trend' that's going to become a necessity for the entire travel industry is sustainability – not only because consumers are increasingly demanding it, but also because the future of the industry entirely depends on it. We need to prioritise more sustainable materials, processes and ways of thinking, before it's too late."

A female leadership panel, moderated by Vogue Turkey's editor-in-chief, Seda Domanic, will feature Anchalika Kijkanakorn, founder and managing director of Akaryn Hotel Group, alongside Doris Goh, head of brands and marketing for Alila ASPAC at Hyatt Hotels Corporation.

On the exhibitors' side, organisers have focused on products with

roots in Asia that celebrate their locality. This year, 50 per cent of exhibitors are showcasing at Further East for the first time. Hand-picked buyers hail from across the globe, with 30 per cent regionally based and the rest international, including specialists in wellness, leisure, corporate, group, incentive and culinary travel.

Noting that Asia's luxury hospitality segment is growing at "breakneck speed", along with Further East's popularity, Uglow predicts they will have hit the brink of capacity at their current home by 2020.

She added: "(We) will be strategising some innovative ways to progress the event. Needless to say, with the demand we have received, we are here to stay and will be building from strength to strength in years to come."

Uglow predicts experiential travel will continue to dominate the luxury landscape, alongside purpose travel. She said: "These days, we're witnessing the emergence of the purpose economy, where more and more high-net-worth consumers are looking for purpose, rather than just material comforts."

"Above all, luxury consumers will be looking for human interactions. Community as we used to know it no longer exists, so people are searching for a way to fill the void. In the future, they will expect brands to provide this sense of community."

From top Awaken convenes at Potato Head Beach Club; Further East participants soak up the unique marketplace vibe at Alila Seminyak



Not to be missed

- November 11: Awaken un-conference takes over Potato Head Beach Club from 12.30 to 18.30
- November 12: Networking power-up over lunch at a yet-to-be disclosed hotel from 12.50 to 14.30, and round up the day at the official opening party hosted by Alila Seminyak from 19.30
- November 13: Squeeze in an express workshop and networking break in between meetings from 10.35 to 11.15, and enjoy a sunset beach networking session at Alila Seminyak from 17.15 to 18.00
- November 14: Do your bit for the environment by starting the day with a community beach cleanup from 07.00 to 07.45; Further East ends with a bang at the Final Night Party at a new secret location



Cocos Bount/ Shutterstock

Above Bali's tourism stakeholders are fighting a 'garbage emergency' to ensure its beautiful beaches can continue to lure travellers

Bali's pristine push

The popular leisure island is undergoing a clean revolution, with legislated garbage controls and proactive tourism players investing in proper processes.

By **Tiara Maharani**

Loved for its pristine waters and fine, sandy beaches, Indonesia's Bali has attracted throngs of sunseekers and holidaymakers. However, its popularity has led to a "garbage emergency", with the island's lovely beaches now smothered by huge amounts of plastic and other garbage that the waves angrily throw back. The water too is no more as clear as it used to be.

According to The Bali Partnership, Bali generates 1.6 million tonnes of waste per year, around 20 per cent

of which is plastic. Thousands of tons of rubbish ends up polluting land or being dumped in waterways or the ocean.

Since 2018, the island's government has declared a "garbage emergency" and banned the use of single-use plastic items in a bid to cut down on ocean pollution. The ban stipulated in the Governor Regulation is aimed at cutting the amount of plastic waste by 70 per cent by 2025.

The regional government draft-

ed a by-law imposing a US\$10 tax on foreign tourists, to be charged upon leaving the country. That money is then put towards the island's waste management programme.

Dewa Ayu Laksmiadi Janapriati (Laksmi), head of marketing, Bali Government Tourism Office, said: "We (the government) also take a cultural approach and apply local wisdom (to waste management efforts), such as promoting Suksma Bali, a movement to thank Mother Earth. Included on the agenda of Suksma Bali is a monthly clean-up at a number of tourist sites and temples."

Meanwhile, tourism stakeholders in Bali, particularly those in the luxury space, have demonstrated advanced efforts in minimising their environmental impact and developing sustainable initiatives.

Alila Hotels & Resorts, for example, launched its Zero Waste to Landfill initiative in August 2016. By late 2018, the hotel group announced that all mechanisms for achieving zero waste to landfill have been fully established. The centrepiece of this initiative is an Integrated Sustainable Resource Recovery Facility (iSuRRF), an on-site laboratory where all waste streams are recycled or upcycled through mechanical and biological systems. Each iSuRRF is housed in 20-foot sea containers clad in a natural material, such as bamboo, in keeping with the natural surroundings.

Glass, plastics and metals are sorted on site before being either processed or sent off-property to be recycled by third parties. Certain plastics, glass and ceramics are crushed on site and mixed into an aggregate for the creation of slabs and tiles, which are either used on site or sold.

Uneconomical plastic waste – such as plastic labels on plastic water bottles and other films – are

converted into a light crude oil that is distilled down to diesel, kerosene and gasoline for reuse in the hotels.

Hemal Jain, general manager at Alila Villa Uluwatu, explained: "The majority of Alila's waste is organic waste. Garden waste and paper waste is composted on site and used on the hotel gardens – including new organic food gardens that are utilised as part of the guest experience programme and for kitchens. 75 per cent of Alila's food waste is fermented into animal feed, some of which is sold to nearby pig farmers. The rest is composted with the garden waste."

Beyond finding uses for its waste, Alila Villas Uluwatu also invests in a water bottling plant.

Likewise, Desa Potato Head, a creative village comprising a beach club, hotel, restaurants, shops and more, is following a zero-waste philosophy. For example, at Ijen Restaurant, which claims to be the first zero-waste restaurant in Bali, the floor is made of chipped plates and broken bottles, while the furniture, designed in-

house, is clad in foam made out of factory offcuts. Candles are made with processed vegetable oil from the beach club fryers, and drinking glasses are beer bottles with the tops simply cut off.

Lauren Blasco, director of sustainability education at Potato Head, said: "We have repurposed much of our waste into numerous products throughout Desa. We separate soft shells (crab and prawn) from hard ones (clam and oyster), the latter of which is ground and added to chicken feed to increase nutritional value. Soft shells are burned overnight in the oven, producing ash that can be composted."

The group makes sustainable initiatives fun and creative through its Sustainism Lab, a space for R&D workshops that guests can visit to see how plastic and other waste are converted into new materials.

Desa Potato Head is currently building new creative spaces with recycled plastics and sustainable materials. It has also engaged local artisans to create pieces using indigenous materials and techniques, which provides a multidimensional experience transcending hospitality, music, art, design, and culture with sustainability at its heart.

Over at Padma Resort Ubud, cow dung is processed into renewable energy that is used for cooking. This cuts the need for natural gas and electricity.

Cow dung is also used to fertilise plants in the organic garden and around the hotel.

Six Senses Uluwatu, which opened last year, upholds its brand promise of sustainability through its construction. It was built using only natural materials, locally sourced where possible, according to Zahrah Ratna Sari, sustainability manager. She explained that Six Senses resorts "are operated with a passionate adherence to ecologically sound principles – we recycle, reuse and manage waste. Food is

“

It is the millennials, the Gen-Zs who are behind (the sustainable travel movement).

Eric Ricaurte,
founder,
Greenview



sourced or grown locally, always from sustainable sources, and we have our own organic garden of herbs, vegetables and fruit”.

Besides environmental protecting, community empowerment and preservation of endangered species are also an important part of Six Senses’ sustainable efforts. In this regard, Six Senses Uluwatu works with one of the village-owned enterprises in Pecatu to manage waste, where non-organic waste is processed into products that can be sold while organic waste is used to fertilise crops. Sales proceeds are channelled into local village development.

“We are also working with the Begawan Foundation, which preserves the Bali Starling, an endangered native bird,” Zahrah added.

Meanwhile, Hilton and other large hotel chains have promised to eliminate items that never fully decompose, such as plastic straws.

Fitri Tresnawida, managing director at Discover Indonesia, a



“

Sustainability is a growing priority for (European and young) travellers.

Umberto Cadamuro,
COO inbound,
Pacto

luxury travel company, said: “The high-end travel market has long adopted a sustainable mindset. Holidaying sustainably is imperative but (travellers) never ask for green destinations or eco-friendly hotels. Yet, once they find out that the destination is not environmentally friendly, they will blacklisted it.”

Bali, Fitri added, has gained good understanding of the importance of sustainability. She believes the coming years will see more hotels facilitating increasingly novel, engaging and memorable guest participatory eco-experiences.

She said: “(At this stage) the Asian high-end travel market is still in the early stages of issue awareness, and has only recently started to implement meaningful practices that could be considered sustainable.”

Pacto’s COO inbound, Umberto Cadamuro, observed that Europeans in general, with the British leading the way, are the most interested in sustainability. Young travellers are especially interested

in this aspect of their holiday.

Cadamuro urged Bali’s luxury suppliers to move quickly in achieving sustainability so as to cater to these travellers.

Eric Ricaurte, founder of Greenview, however, thinks the sustainable travel movement is not driven by the luxury travel market alone.

He noted that the travel masses are wanting eco-friendly travel options.

“It is the millennials, the Gen-Zs who are behind it. It is public sentiment of plastics, public sentiment of climate change. It is everybody’s topic, everyone discusses it,” said Ricaurte.

In his view, it is imperative that destinations champion environmental responsibility. The government needs to do keep the natural environment as pristine as possible, and balance arrivals and revenue.

“They have to maximise the value of tourism rather than set (high) numbers,” he advised. “Secondly, the government needs to be concerned about water and waste.”



Above Six Senses Uluwatu, Bali

Introducing the Newly Revamped TTG Content Lab



Backed by the experienced editorial team of TTG Travel Trade Publishing, **TTG Content Lab** is where creative content is crafted to help your brand achieve your messaging goals. Adopting a collaborative approach, TTG Content Lab producers work with you to produce **engaging and insightful content across multimedia platforms**, from sponsored trend reports and advertorials to branded microsites and video presentations.



Here's What's New!

TREND REPORTS AND OUTLOOKS

Produced by TTG title editors and reporters, trend and outlook reports dissect drivers of new business opportunities and challenges, to help our readership take smarter, informed steps into the future

TOPICAL DEEP DIVES

Built to give our readership new and exciting ideas that will enhance their business proposals, Topical Deep Dives focus on hot developments and ideas in the travel and tourism as well as business travel and events space

Our Past Projects



View More
Examples
Here

Come Talk To Us About Co-Creating:

- Trend Reports and Outlooks
- Topical Deep Dives
- Reader Engagement Events
- Advertorials
- Sponsored Posts
- Microsites
- Video Presentations
- and more

Enquire About Special Advertising Rates / Collaboration
Singapore +65 63957579 | Hong Kong +852 2237 7272

Email traveltradesales@ttgasia.com

Luxe in focus

Further East gathers iconic names and high-end brands new and returning to the beautiful shores of Bali for the second time. Here are some of them



Etho Metho Tours & Treks, Bhutan

Regarded as one of the oldest and most experienced tour operators in Bhutan, the 29-year-old company specialises in customised tours created with the passion, experience, and knowledge of its team of 55 permanent staff. From gazing at beautiful snowcapped mountains and attending the Kingdom's many colourful festivals to simply basking in the charm and gracious hospitality of the local people, customers of Etho Metho are promised exciting adventures and insightful journeys that are also mindful of the fragility of Bhutan's natural environment.

Contact info@ethometho.com.bt

Shinta Mani - Bensley Collection, Cambodia

The Bensley Collection features Shinta Mani Wild in Cambodia's Cardamom Forest and Shinta Mani Siem Reap, the more urban option in the collection.

Guests of Shinta Mani Wild can take their pick of accommodation: Wild Tents, nestled along the Tmor Rung river valley and perched over the swift moving waters deep in the jungle; and Waterfall Tents, dramatically located on the farthest two ends of the camp, each with distinctive views over the spectacular Raging Sister rapids. Memorable destination experiences are crafted

by a team of Adventure Butlers, while guests can also choose to unwind over pampering treatments using Khmer tonics.

Over in the archaeological heart of Cambodia, Shinta Mani Siem Reap is an exclusive set of 10 villas tucked away under the shade of the Royal Residence's gardens. Each villa offers the utmost comfort and privacy in beautiful settings, with design inspired by Khmer king Jayavarman. A private 30ft pool, roof terrace, outdoor bathtub in a private garden and naturally, and an exceptional Bensley Butler come together to provide a memorable welcome and stay for every guest.

Visit www.bensleycollection.com

From top Shinta Mani Wild's Waterfall Tent; the Punakha Dzong in Bhutan



Imperial Tours, China

Offering exclusively China and only the best, Imperial Tours deploys a blend of handpicked China guides, a western, bilingual China Host or a western virtual concierge, and top-of-the-line facilities and experiences to deliver two private touring options: Ultimate China and China Escapades, each with different features.

Itineraries are crafted to the preferences of the travelling party, and Imperial Moments – experiences uniquely designed to bring out the character innate to a destination – are promised.

Contact contact@imperialtours.net

The Glenburn Penthouse, Calcutta

The Glenburn Penthouse is a discrete, elegant residence in the heart of historic Calcutta, with spectacular views of iconic local landmarks, from Victoria Memorial and Eden Gardens to the majestic bridges that cross the River Hoogly. Conceptualised and executed over a number of years, the team behind this Glenburn Tea Estate's boutique hotel have carefully amassed an exquisite collection of antique Bengal colonial furniture and artworks to create a haven of quiet luxury above the bustling streets of the city.

Nine spacious suites are offered for an exquisite stay. Facilities within The Glenburn Penthouse include a rooftop terrace that leads to an infinity pool overlooking Victoria Memorial and the city; a sun deck with whimsical cane furniture and sun loungers; an elegant library that looks out to a covered verandah and courtyard beyond; and more.

Contact info@glenburnpent

Clockwise from right Imperial Tours takes travellers deep into China; The Glenburn Penthouse, Calcutta; Hoshinoya Bali, Indonesia; sea excursions with Hummingbird Travel, Sri Lanka

www.imperialtours.net/experiences/explore-exchange



Hoshinoya Bali, Indonesia

A hidden retreat in Ubud, Bali's artistic centre, Hoshinoya Bali welcomes guests down a narrow path and through a tiny gate that leads into their villas and a luxurious world comprising a courtyard with a rustic gazebo topped with a roof made of alang-alang, a sacred grass; pools set amid a landscaped garden that evokes a stream running through the jungle; and an open air restaurant where traditional Balinese and Indonesian cuisine are dished out by executive chef Junichi Sakamaki.

Villa interiors are decorated with beautiful furniture and wall hangings of traditional wood carvings. Each carving tells a story

related either to Ubud's nature or its folklore, as depicted by master artisans. Meanwhile, large windows welcome soothing breezes.

Visit hoshinoya.com/bali

Hummingbird Travel, Sri Lanka

Hummingbird Travel is a wholesaler and ground handler for the Indian Ocean, specialising in the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Seychelles. Operating in the Indian Ocean for over 30 years, the company takes pride in its unrivalled knowledge of the destinations it features. Hummingbird Experiences are curated with the guest in mind, often featuring excursions off the beaten track.

Visit hummingbird.travel

Since declaring its proud intentions to openly promote Thailand as an LGBT+ friendly destination in Asia, Thailand is now stepping up its pursuit of this niche yet lucrative segment by positioning the country not just as a destination for holidays and parties, but also as a top-of-mind choice for milestone events for LGBT+ travellers.

Stars appear to align in favour for Thailand's tourism industry when the Thai cabinet recently passed a bill to a proposed civil union bill. If approved by Parliament, Thailand will become the first South-east Asian country to legalise same-sex relationships.

And Thailand's tourism sector is clearly paying close attention to the proposed move, if sentiments at the recent LGBT+ Travel Symposium in Bangkok – the second time the event was held in the country – were anything to go by.

The civil partnership bill presents an “exciting time for the LGBT+ community in Thailand”, stated Chattan Kunjara Na Ayudhya, Tourism Authority of Thailand's (TAT) deputy governor for international marketing (Asia and South Pacific), at this year's LGBT+ Travel Symposium.

Not only will the near-approved bill send “a positive message” to the world that Thailand is “open to all people and cultures”, said Chattan, the move will also enhance TAT's mission to position the country as a top destination to “experience diversity”.

“We are going deeper and becoming more intensive in what we do to welcome the community,” he added.

A two-pronged approach is undertaken for TAT's international LGBT+ strategy, according to Steven Johnson, marketing manager of TAT's New York Office, where the organisation's global LGBT+ efforts were spearheaded, and have been most concentrated.

Getting serious about marriage

Thailand is stepping up its pursuit of LGBT+ travellers by proposing the kingdom as a wedding destination for this niche segment, especially as the passing of a civil union bill looms on the horizon.

By Xinyi Liang-Pholsena

This involves getting Thailand's private sector, including hotels and DMCs, on board to train their staff to be more sensitive to the LGBT+ community, and also foster conversation and knowledge sharing on the Go Thai, Be Free website, a platform launched to share travel information specific to LGBT+ travel in Thailand.

Another key tenet is “making sure Thailand is represented from a LGBT+ perspective” by continuing TAT's participation at major trade shows like ITB Berlin and FITUR, as well as joining Pride Parades at Tel Aviv, Canada and Germany, revealed Johnson.

While Chattan acknowledges that TAT's LGBT+ promotional efforts have been predominantly focused on the Western markets – starting first in North America before expanding to Europe – he has plans to establish similar efforts in Asia. Taiwan, which legalised same-sex marriage earlier this year, is earmarked as a potential market for Thailand's growing LGBT+ tourism sector.

Johnson added: “Thailand has always been a safe haven for

the LGBT+ community in South-east Asia. (Everyone in this region) knows if they want to get away as a LGBT+ person, the place to go to is Thailand. But to formalise this will definitely boost Thailand's



“

(The weddings and honeymoon market) will continue to be a strong focus, especially as it relates to the LGBT+ community as well when the legislation passes for (civil union partnership).

Steven Johnson, marketing manager, New York Office, Tourism Authority of Thailand



credibility among the LGBT+ community in South-east Asia. And what better place to start but Taiwan?"

But Chattan has made clear that TAT's LGBT+ marketing efforts are unlikely to be rolled out in Asian countries where acceptance or tolerance of same-sex relationship is low. "We will respect all countries' beliefs. Marketing is a two-way street, you cannot do advertising and promotion without a certain level of support from the local level. We just want to be more open and inclusive," he reiterated.

Meanwhile, Thailand's gay events calendar in recent years has grown even more colourful and louder, with Circuit Festival Asia (launched 2018) in Pattaya; Tropout Phuket (launched 2016); and White Party (launched 2015); adding to established events like gCircuit, an annual Songkran staple since 2007. Coming up later this year is XXO Party Bangkok, set to take place at So Sofitel Bangkok in October.

With such a vibrant line-up of events for the gay community in Thailand, Vincent Jones, founding CEO & chief experience curator at Citizen Jones Travel, a Los Angeles-based travel company specialising in LGBT+ travel, thinks that Thailand has the makings to become the party capital of Asia, not unlike Ibiza or Mykonos in Europe.

However, TAT's Johnson was quick to point out that such events only appeal to one component or sub-sector of the overall LGBT+ market, particularly a younger crowd, but that the luxury segment remains a priority market for Thailand's LGBT+ marketing efforts.

"The weddings and honeymoon market has always been a very strong priority for us. Most people from the Western world who come to Thailand have some level of romance, whether it's honeymoon or anniversary, and that will continue to be a

strong focus, specifically as it relates to the LGBT+ community as well when the legislation passes (for civil union partnership)."

He added: "The trends in our part of the world show that most people doing destination weddings are (marrying) legally in their own source markets and doing it ceremonially at the destination of their choice, so that will add another layer of element to our promotions as well."

Uwern Jong, editor in chief of OutThere, a luxury travel publication targeted at gay men, and organiser and host of the LGBT+ Travel Symposium, also underlined weddings and honeymoons as among the key trends for the LGBT+ travel market.

"There is significant interest in destination weddings for Thailand, and 2020 is expected to be a big year for this trend. Now it's time to consider LGBT+ weddings if you haven't (already)", Jong urged hoteliers in Thailand.

Already, The Sukhothai Bangkok is seeing lucrative prospects in same-sex weddings, the hotel's director of sales Santichai Boonrasri told TTG Asia Luxury. The resort hotel has hosted several same-sex weddings and is actively courting more of such events, as the spending veer upwards of one million baht (US\$32,800).

But some markets still have an impression that Thailand is not quite a "sophisticated" destination, pointed out Timothy Cook, Thailand country manager at Abercrombie & Kent.

The luxury travel operator wants to challenge that perception by developing LGBT+ tours to connect travellers with LGBT+ guides and experts in the field to elevate in-destination experiences.

"A lot of these tours are about customising – we're about experts first, orientation second," he stressed.



Call of the wild

Human impact on nature is playing out in new ways with the growing popularity of wildlife tourism. As more well-heeled Asian travellers answer calls of the wild in Africa, ethical tour and safari operators are taking on the important charge of managing complex dilemmas between human and nature. By **Yixin Ng**



A game drive through Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania

Man­kind’s coexis­tence with wild­life has pre­sented in­ter­est­ing pa­ra­doxes in re­cent times. The march of economic de­vel­op­ment has made ac­ces­sible the won­ders of na­ture, while also cre­ating hos­tile con­di­tions that en­danger the sur­viv­ability of ha­bitats and species.

In tourism, industries have thrived on travellers’ fascination with animals, sometimes at the expense of animal well-being.

Rising awareness means that zoos and tourist attractions are coming under greater public scrutiny, and prompted influential travel players to discourage practices that compromise the welfare of animals.

In a recent move, TripAdvisor and its subsidiary Viator will no longer sell tickets to, or generate revenue from, any attraction that continues to contribute to the captivity of future generations of whales, dolphins and porpoises.

Small-group adventure operator G Adventures has also introduced its first animal welfare policy, developed in consultation with

World Animal Protection, the Jane Goodall

Institute, and the World Cetacean Alliance.

In Asia’s outbound tourism markets, more well-heeled Asian travellers are ditching shopping trips for African discovery trips. Markets that have witnessed growing interest in African holidays include Singapore, India and Greater China, according to luxury travel buyers and suppliers that TTG Asia Luxury spoke to.

“At Singita, we have seen a gradual increase over the years from the Asian market and specifically Hong Kong and Singapore. The typical Asian traveller has become more adventurous to seek the most experiential holiday.

“We have been active in this market for many years, and the client base of trade partners is growing,” Caroline Burke, general manager and head of business development in Asia, said.

Fierce OTA competition has also seen travel agencies striving to add more “exotic” destinations to their catalogues to stay relevant, according to Tim Wang of Taiwan’s Tristar Travel. At the agency, clients have been drawn to Africa, eager to experience nature and witness wildlife migration, he shared.

Meanwhile, the more seasoned travellers in Asia are showing changing preferences when it comes to African holidays, according to a spokesperson from Taiwan’s Yoyo Travel. Clients are choosing to stay longer at each safari, doing more activities, while their accommodation choice has shifted from mainstream international names to more



There is no one-size-fits-all approach to conservation – local solutions need to be created for local problems.

Joss Kent, CEO, andBeyond

special report wildlife

specialised, boutique lodge operators who combine comfort, design and conservation practices, according to the spokesperson.

Against this backdrop, established safari operators are finding themselves charged with the mission to promote conservation, sustainability and care for nature through tourism.

There are ethical grey areas involved in balancing tourists' expectations and ecological and wildlife sensitivity, but Joss Kent, CEO of luxury safari and tour operator andBeyond, stressed that the business is at the end of the day led by ethos rather than tourist demand.

"Our vision is based on the premise that in order to care for the world's wild places, its animals and its people, our company must be sustained through creating exceptional journeys for our guests. In this way, we are able to show meaningful and lasting benefits for the natural environments and the communities that surround our operations."

On how andBeyond safaris manage human-wildlife proximity, Kent said: "Our rangers play a vital role in ensuring safe and profound

viewing of animals while guests are on safari – our guides go through extensive and rigorous training.

"When we do offer our guests a hands-on experience, it is to show what happens behind the scenes," he explained. For example, andBeyond offers the Phinda Impact Journey, which Kent says serve to instil a "deep understanding of how the wildlife, people, and land are dependent on one another and addresses misconceptions about conservation that no longer holds true".

At Singita, Burke shared that "the very purpose of starting Singita was to preserve African wildlife... conservation preceded the commercial aspect of the lodge". In fact, Singita efforts in sustainability initiatives extend behind the tourism scenes, such as operating anti-poaching patrols and enterprise development.

"Most of our conservation work remains unseen to guests, for example alien plant eradication, scout patrols, fire breaks, and research. We also work with various conservation NGOs because collaborative

“

Singita recognises that in a modern world, wildlife will not remain unless the people living near them derive benefits from their existence.

Caroline Burke,
general manager
and head
of business
development,
Singita

efforts are the future of conservation, and the only way to make projects financially viable."

There may be more complex dilemmas in the discourse of safari ethics. Beyond human and wildlife interaction, there is the question of whether hunting can be justified.

For one of Africa's largest wildlife parks, the answer is no. With recent government intervention at Mozambique's Niassa Reserve, anyone in the park caught with a firearm will be considered to have intent to hunt illegally. Offenders face a maximum prison sentence of 16 years.

Niassa Reserve in Mozambique marked a year with zero elephant poaching, hailed a remarkable achievement after poaching cut the number of Niassa's elephants from about 12,000 to little over 3,600 in 2016, before anti-poaching efforts kicked in.

On the other hand, Botswana in June made the decision to reverse the ban on elephant hunting. But contrary to the situation in Niassa, elephant numbers in Botswana has been increasing fast since the imposition of the hunting ban was imposed five years ago – giving

Below Leopards and zebras around Singita Pamushana Lodge in Zimbabwe



rise to human-wildlife conflict.

Botswana Tourism has spoken up in support of the government's controversial decision. "Botswana only put a ban on hunting five years ago. Yet we have long been known for luxury (travel) and the conservation-minded nation that we are. We were the first African tribe to proclaim a game reserve in 1963. Before and after that, we were doing boar hunting side by side with photographic safaris," Ramsden told TTG Asia Luxury.

Hunting is not only justified – it is necessary for Botswana, he argued. "Elephants are encroaching into human areas. Conservationists are up in arms (over the lifting of our hunting ban) on social media. But what you won't see on social media is how many people are being killed by elephants in Botswana. We are a sovereign state – we have to make decisions that are best for both commodities and resources, as well as for our people."

The two cases elucidate an important message, safari operators say. "AndBeyond (which operates in Botswana) recognises that the world we operate in is a complex one and that balancing the needs of wildlife and people is difficult in any country. After over 28 years of engaging with and developing communities, andBeyond has learned that there are frequently no black and white answers to the issues that we face in the field. We believe in honouring the democratic government systems in the countries where we operate and work within the framework that they set," said Kent.

"It is important to remember there is no one-size-fits-all approach to conservation – local solutions need to be created for

Clockwise from right Food and wine offerings at Singita Serengeti House, Tanzania; nature-inspired design at Singita Boulders Lodge in South Africa; Sasakwa salad served at Singita Sasakwa Lodge, Tanzania



local problems."

Indeed, unlike Mozambique, Botswana is grappling with growing, not dwindling, elephant numbers, Ramsden said. Poaching activities and civil conflicts in countries surrounding Botswana have been contributing to the migration of elephants into Botswana.

But one thing's for sure. Companies like Singita and andBeyond are emerging as crucial players that can help tackle poaching by giving locals an alternative source of income.

"The utmost importance of communities living around wildlife areas to see economic benefit overflowing to them," said Kent.

Burke agreed: "Singita

recognises that in a modern world, wildlife will not remain unless the people living near them derive benefits from their existence. Singita therefore supports the wellbeing of neighbouring communities directly through employment, enterprise development and environmental education.

"Enterprise development through partnerships with local communities is a valuable and important part of the Grumeti Fund's work in Tanzania. These projects boost the local economy and have a ripple effect on the wider community, providing employment and creating enormous potential for the people living in neighbouring villages."

A change driver

From being an employee at a securities firm to now a joint founder of a collection of Japan's most top-end travel specialists, the 28-year-old Hiro Miyatake talks to **Julian Ryall** about the country's potential for luxury tourism

Why did you set up Bear Luxe Japan?

The company's mission is to help develop Japanese traditions, culture and local industries through the creation of the ecosystem and infrastructure required for the tourism industry.

Lifestyles in Japan have been changing and demand for traditional arts and crafts among the younger generation has stagnated. For example, the retail volume of kimonos has shrunk to one-sixth of the market's peak in the 1980s. However, there is demand among overseas luxury travellers to meet with artisans, touch authentic Japanese products and experience the real Japan – but only if they can find a way to access it.

By tapping into this gap in the market, we aim to shape a sustainable luxury tourism industry in Japan that will cater to both the needs of international travellers seeking access to bespoke experiences in Japan as well as Japanese regional industries seeking to continue their traditions.

What is the state of luxury travel suppliers in Japan?

The number of companies operat-

ing in the industry has grown in recent years, with more Japanese travel corporations establishing luxury travel divisions. There are also numerous DMCs starting up.

However, I believe there is a shortage of companies operating at the luxury end of the market and which specialise in a particular region of Japan or a specific field, such as crafts, architecture and skiing. Part of the reason for this shortage is the pace of change in the market. In the past decade, the Japanese inbound travel market has grown from 8.3 million visitors in 2008 to 31.1 million in 2018.

The number of overseas visitors is expected to surpass 40 million in 2020. The number of travellers to Japan has tripled from just five years ago.

What are your biggest challenges at the moment?

I would say that my biggest challenges are communicating and promoting greater understanding of the Bear Luxe Japan network within the Japanese tourism industry. Bear Luxe Japan is not a travel agency, an online travel agency or a tourism board.

As the first B2B network of

Japan's leading luxury travel suppliers and specialists, educating suppliers about who we are and what changes we are trying to bring into the industry has been challenging.

How are you overcoming them?

We are tackling these challenges by partnering or working with various local governments and organisations, such as the Kyoto City Tourism Association and Okinawa Prefecture. These organisations and destinations are proactive in developing a local community of luxury travel suppliers, and are marketing their destination to the international market while educating suppliers about the structure of this market and the nature of international luxury travel.

What's driving the rapid growth of luxury tourism in Japan?

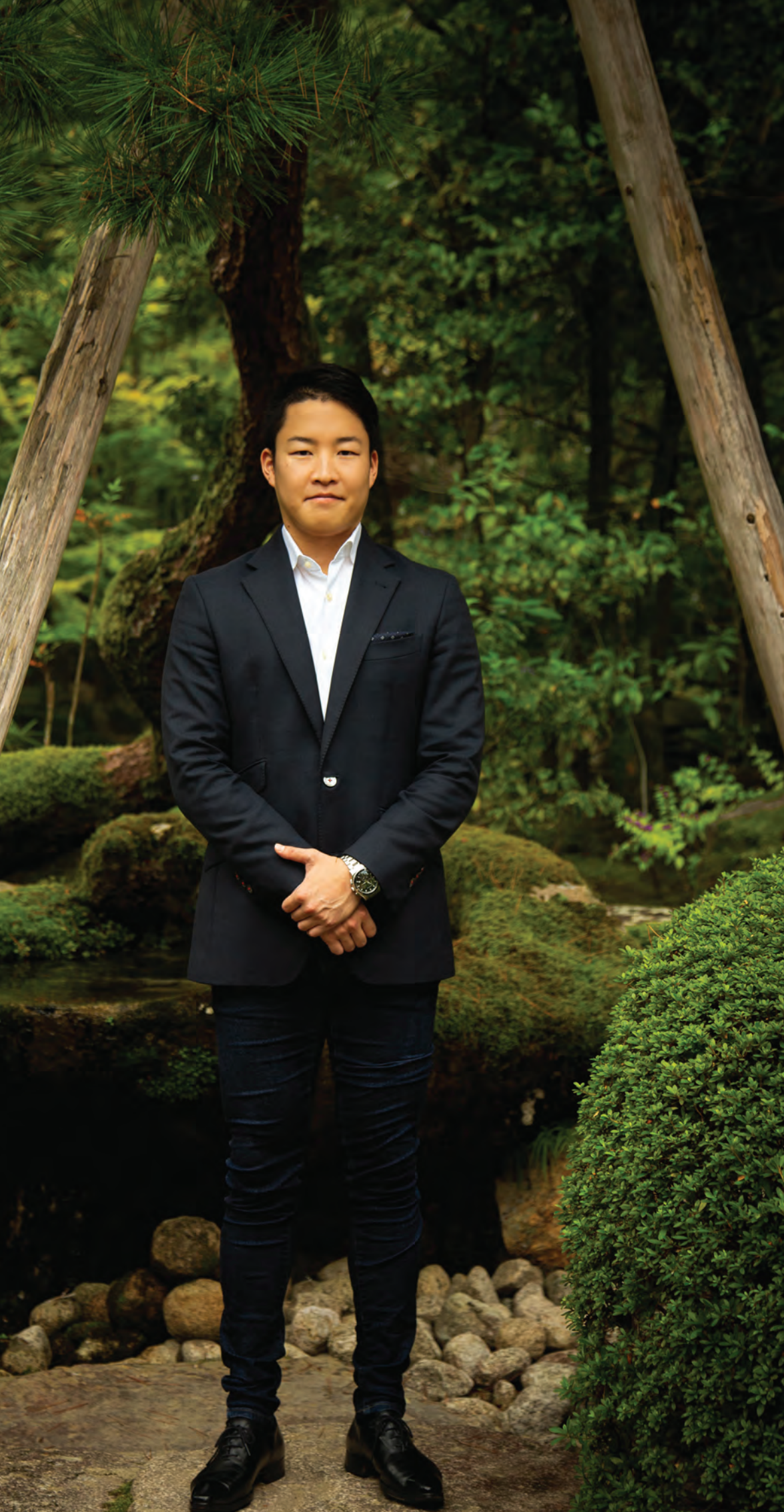
With the World Rugby Cup in 2019, the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020 and the Kansai Expo scheduled for 2025, there is a growing desire among the international niche market to discover unknown elements of Japan.

There is also more investment than ever before, not just in the luxury travel sector but also in the broader tourism industry from the Japanese government, prefectural governments and hotel developers. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism, for example, has more than doubled the tourism budget for 2019 from the previous year to 71 billion yen (US\$663.9 million).

Luxury hotels are being developed not just in Tokyo, but also in regional areas of Japan – Niseko, Okinawa, Osaka, Nara and elsewhere. Regional DMCs with a focus on the luxury sector are being established by corporations and are helping to propel the travel market in parts of Japan that operators were not previously able to access.

These changes in the luxury





travel industry here are changing the way that international travellers see and experience Japan.

Typically, what do high-end travellers want to see and do?

We receive a diverse range of requests ranging from one- or two-week tailor-made journeys to sourcing unique venues for corporate executives in rural Japan. We are also seeing growing demand for wellness-related travel services, such as spiritual retreats and guided pilgrimage trails.

What is the most unusual request that you have received?

It was from an architecture enthusiast who requested a tailor-made journey revolving around guided visits to iconic architectural sites from the early 1900s. It's a privilege to meet people with a passion for anything ranging from Japanese single malt whiskeys to traditional arts and crafts, and to witness their passion.

What would you most like to see become a must-visit for luxury travellers to your country?

Personally, I would like to see more people visiting luxury ryokans and villas in less-visited parts of Japan.

Sasayuri-Ann is one example. Located in my home prefecture of Nara, it is a luxury villa fashioned from two traditional farmhouses that have been completely renovated to provide modern convenience and luxury, but still with the thatched roof, the traditional *irori* hearth and earthen walls. It has the nostalgic ambiance of a Kurosawa film. Sasayuri-Ann offers a raft of mindfulness experiences led by the owner and various local artists, craftsmen and food producers.

These unique properties serve to facilitate local industries and ensure that Japanese traditions and culture can continue through tourism.

Twin peaks

Above Nature has become a big draw among wealthy European and Middle Eastern travellers; Sabah's Tun Sakaran Marine Park pictured

Europe and the Middle East have emerged the most promising for Tourism Malaysia, which has stepped up destination marketing in the luxe travel space.

By **S Puvaneswary**

Malaysia's investment in ITB Berlin this March as a partner country has paid off. Extensive international media exposure was generated, and destination exhibitors scored sales contracts worth RM180 million (US\$43 million), according to an estimate given by Tourism Malaysia.

Its boosted presence at the global travel trade fair has also created greater awareness about Malaysia in Europe, especially among German-speaking buyers.

Diethelm Travel Malaysia, recorded a 20 per cent increase in summer business from the German luxury market, with most of the attention going to the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak.

Manfred Kurz, the agency's managing director, said: "Sabah, especially, was in high demand because it has everything Europeans seek – beaches, wildlife, the tallest mountain in South-east Asia, and soft adventure. Sarawak attracted mainly honeymooners and young FITs looking for



adventure, nature, culture, and the annual Rainforest World Music Festival.”

Luxury travellers from Europe are increasingly desiring destination-specific experiences, such as gastronomy tours, homestays, lessons in pewter smelting and batik printing as well as soft adventure activities, observed Adam Kamal, general manager, Tour East Malaysia.

He shared: “For nature, culture and adventure, Sabah and Sarawak are most in demand. Kuala Lumpur remains the gateway, and both the capital

city and the state of Selangor which surrounds it are popular for local culture.”

Summer was a good season for Tour East Malaysia too, and Adam hopes the “numbers will grow further in the winter season”, especially as the profile of luxury travellers from Europe changes.

“They used to be mainly retirees but now we see more working professionals in their 40s travelling for a vacation,” he said.

But for Malaysia to truly grow the number of high-yield European travellers, air access improvements are needed.

“One of the challenges Malaysia faces is the lack of direct flights from Europe. We need more of that to grow arrivals further, especially in conjunction with Visit Malaysia 2020,” Adam remarked.

Besides Europe, the Middle East is also getting prime attention from Malaysia’s tourism players.

The country’s top five source markets with the highest per capita expenditure for 2018

were from the Middle East – specifically Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Iran and Kuwait.

Naturally, for the upcoming Visit Malaysia 2020, Tourism Malaysia and inbound players intend to attract more arrivals from these high-yield markets where the average spend per capita stands at RM11,628 for Saudi Arabians, RM9,387.80 for UAE tourists, and RM8334.50 for Kuwaitis.

It bodes well for Malaysia that Qatar Airways had recently launched four weekly flights to Langkawi on October 15 via Penang, and increased the service to five times a week from October 27.

Earlier in the year, Air Sharjah also commenced daily direct services to Kuala Lumpur on July 1, providing much needed seat capacity during the super peak Middle Eastern summer.

Savvy Middle Eastern travellers, who have already had a taste of Malaysia’s key destinations, are demanding new places to explore.

Ally Bhoonee, executive

Above
Sarawak’s Rainforest World Music Festival is a hit with European luxury FITs and honeymooners



Portrait/shutterstock

destination malaysia

director, World Avenues, said: “In the past, we featured key tourist destinations in Peninsular Malaysia, namely Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Langkawi, Johor and Cameron Highlands, for the Middle Eastern markets.

“As there have been many requests from our partners for new destinations to please their repeat clients, we have decided to extend the scope to cover all states in Malaysia, including Sabah and Sarawak in 2020.”

World Avenues will showcase Malaysia’s unique cultural diversity as well as the different cultures, food and lifestyles of each state, in order to satiate the Middle Eastern traveller’s preference for local experiences.

Musa Yusof, director-general, Tourism Malaysia, revealed that the NTO’s offices in Jeddah and Dubai are also trying to woo more business events groups from Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries that may be shying away from the US and Europe which are seen as ‘not friendly’.

“

Kuala Lumpur remains the gateway, and both the capital city and the state of Selangor which surrounds it are popular for local culture.

Adam Kamal,
general manager,
Tour East Malaysia



Six
luxé
products

Monopoly Mansion by Sirocco, Kuala Lumpur

Monopoly Mansion by Sirocco, Kuala Lumpur will soft open this December with 290 keys, and become the world’s first hotel that is inspired by the popular board game by Hasbro Inc. All 14 floors of the hotel will each feature traits of a particular country that Mr Monopoly, a fictional character from the game, had visited. While the hotel is modern and contemporary, facilities will bear a Great Gatsby vibe.

Imaginatricks

An uproarious fusion of acrobatics, dance and comedy is currently performed daily at Genting International Showroom at Resorts World Genting until May 2020. The hour-long performance packs in stunning stunts performed by a stellar cast of record-breaking stuntmen, world champion ice



skaters and talented dancers in elaborate costumes – all set in jaw-dropping stage design. The show is suitable for all ages.

The Prestige Hotel, Penang

Inspired by its Victorian heritage, The Prestige Hotel Penang in the Georgetown UNESCO world heritage site presents a modern take on the colonial scene and features 162 rooms and suites, an all-day dining outlet, an shopping arcade, a gym, event spaces and a rooftop infinity pool. The property is only walking distance from major historical sites such as Pinang Peranakan Mansion, Clan Jetty Heritage Home and Fort Cornwallis as well as popular art, culture and dining options along the Heritage Trail of Penang.

Platinum Charters

Platinum Charters operates a fleet

of luxurious motor cruisers, yachts and catamarans that can be chartered for private cruises parties and corporate functions that sail around Malaysia.

In Port Dickson, off Malaysia's west coast, the company has a 'fun boat' called *Dickson Dragon*. The trimaran takes up to 60 passengers at one time, and is equipped with a karaoke system, a beverage bar, a buffet bar, and a salt water Jacuzzi. The fly deck is fitted out with huge bean bags where guests can settle in and watch the sun set over the horizon.

Dickson Dragon sails daily from 18.00 to 19.30 from Admiral Marina & Leisure Club in Port Dickson, PD World Marina or Lexis Hibiscus Jetty depending on weather conditions.

The Grill

Le Petit Chef, the world's smallest chef at only 58mm tall, takes

Above, from left
Monopoly Mansion by Sirocco, Kuala Lumpur; Imaginatricks

centre stage at The Grill at TREC Kuala Lumpur where he prepares a Tropical Colada with help from an active volcano and a tropical jungle. A product of advanced 3D projection mapping technology, Le Petit Chef promises a memorable dining experience. The Grill sits up to 60 diners, and is open daily from 17.00 to 02.00.

Bukit Bintang walking tour

A tour of lively Bukit Bintang road in Kuala Lumpur is conducted every evening, during which a guide regals participants with tales of the city's history and heritage. Highlights include a bird's-eye view of the Kuala Lumpur skyline, optical illusions in a 'distorted room', and a special meal comprising local dishes and drinks. The guided walk starts at 16.00 from The Federal Hotel Kuala Lumpur and covers a distance of 2.5km.



A firm favourite

Well-heeled travellers have been flocking to Australia for the past decade, hungry for adventure, food, wine and wellness, which the destination has plenty to offer, writes **Adelaine Ng**

If Australia carries the Lucky Country tag, it's even more true when it comes to luxury travel. The tyranny of distance is no obstacle for global travellers who see the world as their oyster, with the Land Down Under holding her position admirably among the world's most desired luxury destinations.

Luxury travel network Virtuoso's recent *2019 Luxe Report* found that Australia was

seeing "incredible increases" in arrivals through its network, with a 23 per cent growth in visitor numbers over the past two years.

Virtuoso's network hotel bookings to Australia has grown tenfold since 2009, and the country has consistently listed in its world's top ten destinations for the past eight years. Interestingly, Australia ranks highly among well-heeled millennials at number five.

"It's pretty rarefied (that Australia is there with) absolutely perennial favourites like France and Italy, and holding its own against incredible destinations around the world," David Kolner, Virtuoso's senior vice president of global member partnerships, told *TTG Asia Luxury*. "It's not easy to keep the imagination of a luxury traveller and stay in the mindset of the industry. I think Australia has done a good job of that over the last 10 years".

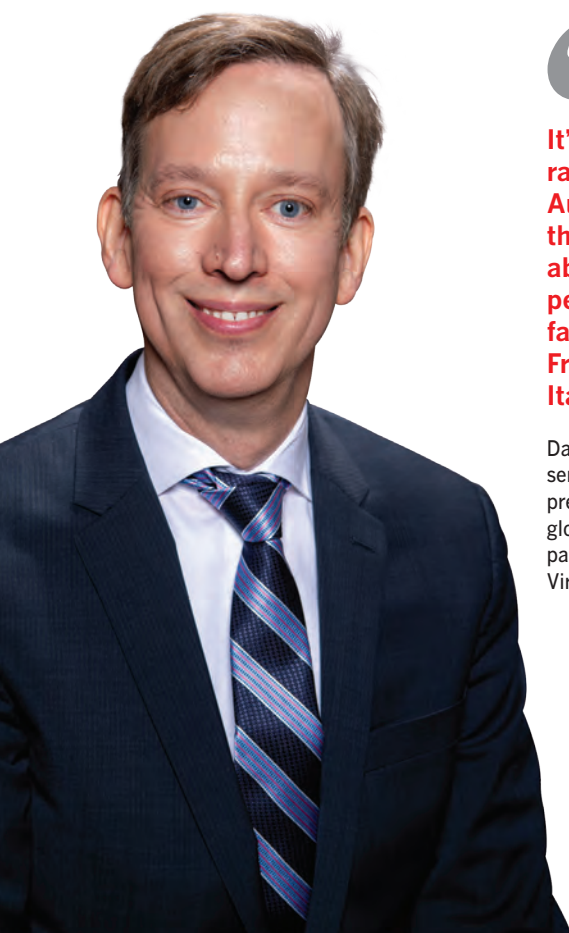
But these travellers are changing their preferences in the types of experiences they are seeking, according to Michelle Papas, event director at Luxperience, Australia's annual luxury trade event.

"There is a trend (of



Rudy Balasko/shutterstock

Above Sydney stands out in Virtuoso's top ranking of world cities



“

It's pretty rarefied (that Australia is there with) absolutely perennial favourites like France and Italy...

David Kolner, senior vice president of global member partnerships, Virtuoso

travellers wanting) to enrich their experiences beyond cities, with our research showing 99 per cent of respondents identifying exclusive resorts and boutique lodges, often in more remote locations, as a key preference,” she said.

Papas also noted 72 per cent of registered buyers at this year's event informed they were actively seeking out Australian products because they are expanding their Australasia programmes to find more unique activities for their clients. Interest was also building from second-tier Chinese cities to add to buyer representatives from Taiwan, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Australia's blossoming luxury market is also evidenced in the number of new premium hotels either recently opened or coming into the market. Brisbane alone

has eight including The W Hotel Brisbane and Emporium Southbank. Perth will see five new offerings including a Ritz Carlton, while other cities like Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney will also welcome a boost in their luxury accommodation offering.

While Sydney stands out in Virtuoso's top ranking world cities, over at Luxperience, it is Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia – in that order – that are attracting the most luxury buyers.

“It's more about experiences,” said Papas. “For instance, luxury lodge accommodation is the most popular experience our buyers are seeking, followed by tailored and adventure, soft adventure activities, food and wine, and wellness.”



Visual Collective/shutterstock

With the knowledge that luxury travellers who visit Australia spend up to A\$17,000 (US\$11,531) per trip – nearly four times more than the average traveller, Tourism Australia has its sights “firmly set on a high-yield strategy” to lure tourists who can afford to splurge and explore more parts of the country.

“We know from our Consumer Demand Research that 93 per cent of our target audience of High Value Travellers (HVT) are increasingly seeking authenticity from their travel experiences and to engage in authentic experience through the local culture and

Above Luxury travellers increasingly yearn to be in nature’s embrace; a hiker in Cradle Mountain National Park, Tasmania

getting a taste of everyday life,” said Tourism Australia, managing director, Phillipa Harrison.

“Our research also shows 73 per cent of HVTs look for purposeful travel where it allows them to give back to the destination they visit. Much of what Australia is already doing, in terms of product offering and experiences, works to these trends. It is a matter of keeping pace with what’s next,” she continued.

However Kolner said Australian suppliers need to adapt quickly to capture the Chinese High Net Worth market.

“One thing that’s unique about the travel planning and purchasing in those markets is the speed and timeframe with which they work to make their decisions,” he said.

“It’s very rapid (and requires) immediate answers no matter the day or time. It’s a little bit of the WeChat lifestyle and I think that’s a bit of a challenge (compared to) the more traditional travellers from Europe or America who may expect a 24-hour response time (rather than) 30 minutes,” he observed.



“

There is a trend (of travellers wanting) to enrich their experiences beyond cities...

Michelle Papas,
event director,
Luxperience

Five lux products

Taronga Zoo

Just 15 minutes from urban Sydney is a new wildlife retreat within Taronga Zoo, offering a first-of-its-kind luxury sleepover with Australia’s unique wildlife. Designed by leading Australian architects Cox Architecture, 62 elegant rooms and suites grant guests access to a lush sanctuary where koalas roam and platypus swim. Its restaurant Me-Gal boasts some of the most spectacular views in all of Sydney.

The Ritz-Carlton, Perth

As one of Australia’s most anticipated luxury properties opening in November, The Ritz-Carlton,

www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/australia/perth



Perth offers 205 rooms including 19 suites and a lobby that features 10,000 pieces of hand-picked Kimberley sandstone to echo the natural wonder of the Kimberley. There's also a heated outdoor infinity pool and the Ritz-Carlton Club, described as a "hotel within a hotel". More than just a splendid stay, the hotel offers guests a range of immersive experiences from luxury seaplane tours to Margaret River, to a twilight cruise across the Swan River.

Reefsuites

Australia's first underwater accommodation has opened on the Great Barrier Reef, which features panoramic in-room, floor-to-ceiling views of tropical marine life. Only two underwater rooms are available for overnight stays at Reefsuites, with the full experience comprising a return cruise out to the reef, all meals and beverages, and a

selection of marine activities. Reefsuites is located on the A\$8-million Reefworld pontoon at the Whitsundays' Hardy Reef.

MGallery Hotel

Hotel Chadstone Melbourne MGallery by Sofitel, the only five-star hotel located outside Melbourne's centre, has opened and is conveniently connected to Chadstone Shopping Centre, which houses premium brands. The A\$130 million hotel features 250 rooms and suites, two penthouses, rooftop bar and dining, wellness retreat and day spa along with an LED lounge and yoga studio.

Clockwise from below Tackle a physical challenge at the Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley; stay underwater at Reefsuites; The Ritz-Carlton, Perth arrives in November

The Wolgan Warrior Adventure Challenge

The Wolgan Warrior Adventure Challenge is a new weekend activity course offered only to 10 guests per month at Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley, Australia's ultra-luxury, conservation-based nature resort. Launched in August as a direct response to guests' feedback, the challenge features an exclusive 21-kilometre trail run linking three of the valley's iconic peaks, led by a dedicated Field Guide. The experience includes special menus, therapeutic massages, a campfire and awards ceremony.



Luxurious lures

Japan is riding the wave of rising demand for bespoke cultural experiences and exclusive tours to charm savvy, high-end travellers, writes **Kathryn Wortley**

Interest in Japan as a luxury destination has been fast-growing and will continue to gain traction, thanks to the country's diversified offerings. That is according to Daisuke Kobayashi, deputy manager of global marketing at Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO).

Kobayashi told *TTG Asia Luxury* that the country boasts not only historic and cultural experiences and natural heritage, but also cutting-edge technology and innovation. In essence, travellers can experience both old and new Japan. What's more, the country's long archipelago, extending from tropical Okinawa to sub-frigid Hokkaido, means both marine and snow sports can be enjoyed on the same Japan vacation.

"This diversity gives Japan a special edge in the global luxury market," he said.

Kobayashi added that JNTO's success in attracting high-end travellers is evidenced by growing recognition for Japan as a luxury destination. Last year, Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka were crowned Best Cities by *Condé Nast Traveler's* Readers' Choice Awards while the *Virtuoso Luxe Report* ranked Japan first among top 10 most popular emerging destinations for 2019.

In March, Japan added another feather to its luxe cap when it was named Most Desired Preferred Destination at Traveller Made's The Essence of Luxury Travel show. The award heralds a "growing interest in Japan as a luxury destination in Europe," said a Traveller Made spokesperson.

The outlook for Japan looks bright, but Kobayashi said demand for Japan's luxury offerings hinges on continued promotion of the country's diverse offerings.

Left A myriad of unique cultural experiences across Japan await visitors; old streets leading up to Hōkoku-ji Temple, Kyoto pictured



f11photo/shutterstock

Four luxé products

The Expedition Hotel Zenagi

Once a historical farmhouse, this luxury hotel now offers accommodation, three meals a day, and outdoor activities in rural Nagano Prefecture. Opened in April 2019, the hotel dangles local slow food whipped up by Michelin-starred chefs, canyoning or paragliding experiences, and crafts with a personal guide.

The Japanese Sword Museum

This mecca of Japanese swordmaking situated in Tokyo's Sumida Ward makes for a picturesque private event venue. Besides housing some of the rarest *katana* swords in Japan, the museum also serves up a fascinating slice of swordmaking history.

British Embassy Villa Memorial Park

Built in 1896 by diplomat Ernest Satow and gifted to the British Embassy Tokyo, this iconic building sits on the shores of Lake Chuzenji, Tochigi Prefecture. In 2010, it was donated to the local government and restored and renovated. Today, visitors can enjoy high-end afternoon tea on the veranda with views of the lake.

Deep-breathing Regimen

Hoshinoya Tokyo's 3D2N programme, Deep-breathing Regimen, offers a way to rebalance body and mind through exercise, two spa treatments, and onsen or hot spring baths, among others. Guests are supported by an exclusive conditioning coach and receive pre- and post-programme consultations.



Hoshino Resorts

Above Deep-breathing Regimen

To drive further growth in the luxury market, JNTO has been gracing luxury travel events and running online promotions. The destination was showcased at past ILTM events and the JNTO team will exhibit at the Further East luxury travel show in Bali for the first time this year.

In March, JNTO launched the Luxury Japan website to spread

the word on the country's bespoke travel experiences spanning seven sectors, ranging from gastronomic experiences and natural wonders to luxury accommodation. The website builds on efforts by Japan's localities to brand unique historic and cultural experiences as luxury offerings.

Engaging in exclusive activities with experts is a major drawcard. The Japan Luxury Travel Alliance (JLTA), which was formed in 2016, unites five localities – Kyoto, Sapporo, Ishikawa, Wakayama and Nara – with such high-quality offerings to attract well-heeled travellers from around the world.

For instance, visitors to Kyoto can try Zen meditation at a temple, weave traditional crafts in a local artisan's workshop or enjoy an evening reception at a cultural site. These experiences are featured in the *Kyoto Excursion Guide* published this year by the Kyoto Convention & Visitors Bureau (KCVB), which

is also pushing the city's luxury offerings.

According to Yurika Sugino, coordinator of the regional promotion division at KCVB, the city has been "working to weave our cultural heritage into the meetings and events industry by offering high-quality bags made by local artisans". Exhibiting Kyoto's rich history of craftsmanship is one way the city is promoting itself as a destination to enjoy cultural interaction with skilled artisans.

While Japan is clearly a darling of high-end holidaymakers, JNTO's Kobayashi believes that the sector has still room to grow.

"Luxury travellers are constantly seeking unique and exciting new experiences, and Japan can offer exactly that. We have a unique culture, with activities that you can experience only in Japan, and many luxury travellers around the world are now beginning to realise what Japan has to offer."



**Luxury
travellers are
constantly
seeking
unique and
exciting new
experiences,
and Japan can
offer exactly
that.**

Daisuke Kobayashi,
deputy manager of
global marketing,
Japan National
Tourism
Organization



A DAME BOTH INSIDE AND OUT

Acclaimed French chef Anne-Sophie Pic – who has seven Michelin stars under her belt – has made her debut in Asia with La Dame de Pic at Raffles Hotel Singapore.

The 46-seater in the main hotel building took over the space that once housed the Raffles Grill. Gone are the wooden chairs and stiff white tablecloths of yesteryear, all of which have been updated with plush maroon armchairs and black-topped tables with metallic accents.

Over the course of a languid three-hour lunch, every canapé, amuse bouche, and dish that was placed before me was gorgeously plated, brightly coloured, and light on the palate. Cuisine-wise, evident is the creativity of Pic and her prodigy of eight years, chef de cuisine Kevin Gatin, as they added a local twist to contemporary French dishes.

For instance, her signature berlingots – pasta parcels adapted to reflect its own locale in all three of her restaurants – have been given

an Asian twist.

Here in Singapore, the pyramid-shaped pasta parcels was matcha-flavoured, filled with molten French cheese fondue, and covered in a consommé derived from green zebra tomatoes and infused with the herb of grace or choucao (literally translates to “stinky grass” from Mandarin). Apparently, Pic chanced upon the local medicinal herb while strolling through one of our wet markets!

Some of the snacks served also demonstrated Pic’s boundless creativity, and revealed how she wields her flavour combinations like a sharp-edged knife, constantly surprising my palate. Think curry inside liquid chocolate balls; a cracker topped with lemon confit and mushroom gel; and yoghurt dollops on basmati rice chips.

More Asian influences could also be found in the Wild Turbot where the dish’s apple-based broth was infused with marigold; and the pièce



Elegant interiors at La Dame de Pic

de résistance, the Saga Wagyu Beef – a juicy, roasted slab of Japanese Wagyu paired with smoked beetroot and an osmanthus-infused mushroom broth.

Even the dessert wasn’t spared the gentle touch of an Asian herb, with the White Millefeuille, another of Pic’s signatures, featuring a ginger flower light cream, confit grapefruit and Litsea cubeba emulsion. The dessert, which resembled a wobbly block of tofu, proved an intricate and complex work of art when sliced apart. Definitely do not judge a book by its cover, or a dessert by its appearance, for I was astounded by the number of layers and textures contained within its unassuming white shell.

It was an impeccable five-course meal in a historic hotel on a lazy afternoon. Despite the plethora of options crowding the Singapore dining scene, only a handful are founded or helmed by female chefs, which is another solid reason why this restaurant stands out. – Rachel AJ Lee



Discover a once-inhabited settlement hidden beneath the Amazonian canopy in Colombia

Jetting off into the sunset

Global private aviation company, VistaJet, has unveiled VistaJet World, a programme highlighting 15 travel itineraries around the world in celebration of the company’s 15th anniversary.

Itineraries were put together with the help of travel experts such as Blue Marble Private, Based on a True Story, Indagare, Nota Bene Global and Pelorus.

They include joining a pioneering research expedition in the Amazonian rainforest in Colombia; and gaining insights into the long lives of different cultures such as by bathing in the mud in Rincón de la Vieja Volcano National Park, and imbibing wines in Sardinia – a surprising secret behind Sardinians’ longevity.

Other adventures include joining the great Maharajas of India in their palaces; abseiling over the edge of the active Vanuatu Volcano; becoming the first civilians to take flight in an anti-poaching safari flight hosted by the Born Free Foundation, and UV night skiing to discover unexplored massifs.

BACK IN BUSINESS

The Raffles Hotel Singapore has reopened after 2.5 years of restoration work, and now offers an all-suite concept. There are 115 keys across nine suite categories, from the lead-in State Room Suites to the Presidential Suites. Recreational facilities on-site include the Raffles Spa, 24-hour gym and a rooftop swimming pool. Event planners may avail any of the seven indoor and outdoor function spaces; the largest being the Jubilee Ballroom which can hold up to 500 guests cocktail-style. There are also 10 F&B concepts, ranging from the Long Bar and its most famous cocktail, the Singapore Sling; to Mediterranean sharing and grill BBR by Alain Ducasse.

ALL-INCLUSIVE PULLMAN IN THE MALDIVES NOW OPEN

Set amid 18 hectares of tropical flora and fauna on the Gaafu Alifu Atoll is Pullman Maldives Maamutaa Resort, the latest Accor hotel to open in the Maldives.

The resort boasts 122 overwater and beach-side villas, including two exclusive Aqua Villas featuring bedrooms submerged beneath the waters, from where guests can get up close with the region's marine life. Meanwhile, The Royal Suite is billed as a resort within a resort, providing complete privacy and indulgence.

Guests will never go hungry, for there are six outlets across the island. Options include Mélange, an all-day dining restaurant; The Hub, a sunken pool bar offering signature drinks and sharing plates; Saffron Affair for tapas and crafted cocktails; and Souq Oven for Middle Eastern dishes, for pairing with a wine list featuring over 80 wines from around the world.



For something more casual, guests can enjoy healthy café treats at Sol Rising; or organic and vegan restaurant, Phat Chameleon, set amid a vegetable and herb garden. For those on the go, the Bites on Wheels food cart, offers sorbets and light snacks throughout the day.

Other facilities include a jogging track with five fitness stations, as well as the Spa by

Phytomer with eight treatment rooms. Nature walks, arts and crafts class, marine conservation talks, scuba diving, snorkelling and outdoor sports are also available.

The property is accessible by domestic flight 55 minutes from Velana International Airport in Malé, followed by a 15-minute speedboat ride from Kooddoo Airport.

Living in the lap of luxury



Top-of-the-line tours in Egypt

Luxury Gold has announced its luxury itineraries for next year, as its parent company, The Travel Corporation, celebrates its centennial.

For 2020, aside from its more than 50 luxurious, small-group, guided journeys to Europe, Africa, North & South America, Asia, India, Australia and New Zealand, Luxury Gold has also released three new itineraries – Elegance of the Pharaohs; Art, Culture & Cuisine of Colombia; and Vibrant Eastern Canada & the USA.

The three experiences also includes the Chairman's Collection, which are rare oppor-

tunities to meet Legendary Locals on select departures and learn all about their family heritage and connection with the destinations.

For instance, on the 10-day French Vogue journey, guests will have the opportunity to meet and nosh on a traditional Parisian meal with Count Richard de Warren, a direct descendant of the aristocratic Sommier family.

Over in Colombia, Luxury Gold promises a VIP Experience-filled 10-day itinerary, with private visits to the Gold Museum and Zipaquirá Salt Cathedral alongside traipses through the Paloquemao Market in Bogota before learning how to prepare a traditional Colombian lunch. With The Chairman's Collection, guests will meet Colombian author Juan Gabriel Vasquez in Bogota.

The last new addition is a 10-day journey to the land of the Pharaohs. Staying in a five-star hotel with guaranteed Pyramid-view rooms, guests will get to join an expert Egyptologist and venture inside the Great Pyramids, cruise down the Nile, and enjoy an after hours visit to the Temple of Luxor. The trip also includes a touch of local culture, where travellers will head to a Nubian village, meet a local family, and learn about a regional bread-making process.

Retreat to the hills above Adelaide

South Australia has welcomed a brand new offering, the luxury lodge Sequoia, situated on the grounds of the 12-hectare Mount Lofty House estate in Adelaide Hills.

Sequoia features 14, 75m² open-plan suites boasting 180-degree valley views and cantilevered balconies. Sequoia guests will also have access to a private club lounge area with sundeck and heated infinity pool, alongside all of the property's amenities like the three-hatted Hardy's Verandah Restaurant, Arthur Waterhouse Lounge, and Stables Day Spa.

Guests may also choose from a catalogue of experiences that celebrate South Australian stories – think private behind-the-scenes tours with local winemakers, and getting up-close and personal with native icons.





UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

Belmond has pulled the curtain back on its newest hilltop retreat, Belmond Castello di Casole, a historic 10th-century hotel in Tuscany offering 39 rooms and suites.

Amenities on the sprawling 1,700m² private estate include the Essere Spa, an elevated infinity pool, pool terrace with pool bar, and a small library filled with classic novels. Numerous dining experiences can also be had on-site: La Tosca for Tuscan cuisine with a contemporary twist and stone-baked pizzas; CIP's by Cipriani offers classic Venetian dishes; and Bar Visconti, a typical Italian lounge bar.

Meanwhile, the centuries-old great oak forest

that borders the estate is home to a variety of wild animals, native flora and fauna and is the setting for a number of guest experiences. First Light in the Tuscan Wonderland in partnership with Leica Sport Optics, takes guests by 4X4 into the forest to spot bird and wildlife through Leica binoculars from observation towers dotted around the grounds.

Meanwhile, Take a Walk on the Wild Side encourages guests to explore the trekking routes that weave through the woods. Truffle Hunting with small groups of foodies is an estate signature experience, led by expert hunter Mauro Nesi and his Lagotto Romagnolo dogs.

Savouring Saigon



The Reverie Saigon endeavours to deepen its guests' appreciation of Ho Chi Minh City and its culinary heritage through recently-launched tours with Australia-born "MasterChef Vietnam" Luke Nguyen. Privately guided,

these six- to eight-hour expeditions will introduce guests to major landmarks, tucked-away street vendors, riverside lunch spots, and chic restaurants.

The journey begins in the late afternoon with

a glimpse of key landmarks in the city's District 1 – such as the 139-year-old Notre Dame Cathedral, historic Central Post Office, and colonial French Opera House.

From there, deep dive into Saigon's culinary world, starting with a pitstop for *banh mi* and Vietnamese coffee at chef's favourite outpost; walking down back alleyways sniffing out delicious home-cooking; a short boat ride to a popular riverside restaurant for cocktails and small bites at sunset; tasting Vietnamese street-food dishes at a local eatery; and dinner at Vietnam House, chef's restaurant.

An option to extend the evening (for up to two hours) with an exploration of the city's nightlife scene by way of an introduction to chef's recommended drinking spots, be they hidden bars or cocktails on a rooftop.

Chef Nguyen's tour starts from US\$850 per person, with a minimum of two and a maximum of 10. The price includes all food and drinks for the main tour.



Outside is the new inside

Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara in southern Oman has rolled out its new Luxe Mobile Camping Adventures in partnership with Oman Expeditions.

Guests may choose to venture deep the world's largest sand desert to find peace and solitude amid magnificent sweeping dunes reaching up to 200m in the Empty Quarter. For a seaside option, guests can camp on a stretch of secluded beach along the Dhofar coastline where they will encounter an array of wildlife including spinner dolphins, green turtles and coastal birdlife. At the foothills of the Dhofar mountains, guests can trek with camels along the same ancient frankincense trading routes that these prized animals have been following for over 2,000 years.

After the day's excursions, guests retire to a camp. Each dwelling boasts a private tented bathroom with showers open to the skies, comfortable mattresses, cotton sheets, Arabian rugs, and oil lamps. For dinner, chefs will prepare Middle Eastern, North African and Mediterranean dishes on-site using local ingredients.

These adventures are typically 3D/2N, and are offered from late September through April.

A tropical hideaway

On the south-western shore of Koh Mapraw Island in Thailand's Andaman Sea is the newest five-star island resort to open in Phuket.

Island Escape by Burasari offers 250 keys, 46 of which are villas, spread over four zones catering to different segments. Villa configurations range from the 104m² One-Bedroom Reserve Villa up to the 900m² Four-Bedroom Oceanview Pool Villa, and come furnished with king-sized beds, touch-panel technology system, and a free minibar that's refilled daily.

Facilities on the island include five swimming pools, three private beaches, Spa Burasari, fitness centre, kids' club, and a wedding pavilion. There are also seven F&B options, including food trucks serving myriad snacks.



At Home a Thousand Miles Away

As cliché as it sounds, the Maldives are textbook-perfect.

I have travelled the world, but when I saw a photo of LUX* North Malé Atoll on my friend's Instagram, my curiosity was piqued. Swank, high-design villas looming over pink-rimmed swimming pools? This wasn't the Maldives I was accustomed to. Right then, I knew I wanted in.

Travelling with two boys in tow, I was dreading the check-in and long wait. Not here. We stepped off the speedboat onto the jetty and followed Moomin, our Island Host straight to our beach retreat—just 970 sq m over three storeys. Within minutes my husband and the boys ran off to the beach, which we had all to ourselves, while I set off to explore our villa.

That night, a home cinema was set up on our rooftop. The boys spent most of dinner stargazing. That's when I decided I never wanted to leave. At dawn, I quietly snuck out to do some yoga at the far end of the jetty. My meditation was interrupted by the thought of breakfast in bed. My guilty pleasure. But when I returned to our retreat, I found the boys eating watermelon and pancakes off a floating tray...in the pool!

I like to think there's something magical about the Indian Ocean, because on day six, my oldest swam without his floaties for the first time. There is no way to prepare for the moment when you realize your child is growing up, and this day would stay with me long after my suntan had faded.



We are here!



Lucy stayed at
LUX* North Male Atoll for
7 nights in June 2019

LUX*

NORTH MALE ATOLL, MALDIVES
RESORT & VILLAS

We celebrated my youngest's birthday under the Maldivian sun. Moomin planned the whole thing; no detail was overlooked. There was a cake shaped like my son's teddy bear, and even an ice-cream cart! As someone who has collected many stamps on her passport, I hope that they too someday will feel that familiar need to go somewhere. LUX* North Malé Atoll: you stole my heart. We'll be back.

For more information visit luxresorts.com or email stay@luxnorthmale.com





*An Iconic Return.
A Legendary Welcome.*


RAFFLES
SINGAPORE

RAFFLES.COM/SINGAPORE

DUBAI HAINAN ISTANBUL JAKARTA MAKKAH MALDIVES MANILA PARIS PHNOM PENH SEYCHELLES SHENZHEN SIEM REAP SINGAPORE WARSAW
OPENING SOON: BALI BOSTON LONDON UDAIPUR