

TTG

40 YEARS

ASIA

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VIEW FROM THE TOP

Who can best cater to the new generation with a lifestyle brand? Leave it to a luxury hotel company, says Robert Warman, the new CEO of Langham Hospitality Group



40tude
Forty Years, As Strong As Ever



SHAKING OFF THE SLEAZE

Can Pattaya shed its less savoury reputation and morph into a family-friendly and wedding destination?



HONG KONG ON STANDBY

With political tensions running high, the travel industry is bracing itself for more Occupy Central action



MORE UNITS FOR NEW CLIENTS

Serviced residences are becoming more relevant to leisure outbound agencies across Asia, as new segments emerge



PLAYTIME FOR ALL

Attraction operators are clearly not worried about theme park fatigue in Asia, with more set to make their debut in the coming year



ALL GAME ABOUT CULTURE

Macau's efforts to promote its cultural and creative side are still nascent, but there's potential to develop this

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Report: Serviced residences



Guide: Theme parks



Destination: Thailand



Destination: Macau

HAVE A LIFESTYLE BRAND



Now my question is, if hotel groups keep on reinventing, shouldn't travel agencies be doing the same?

We've seen how the hotel industry reinvented the economy segment such that it does not look like a dump anymore. The next hottest area of work appears to be in what the industry parlance now terms as the 'lifestyle' brand.

This brand is being crafted with the Millennial generation in mind. Designers are furiously sketching what hotel groups imagine is the product that would earn them the loyalty of new customers. Latest contenders include Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group with its Radisson Red, Langham Hospitality Group with its new Eaton (see *View from the Top*, page 12), or individual properties such as Kwek Leng Beng's South Beach Hotel opening in Singapore in the first quarter of next year.

The lifestyle brand defies a star-rating system and though it has Millennials at heart, it is meant to respond to any generation so long as it embraces today's way of living that has been immensely transformed by technology. It's an attitude, not age. If your client is someone who expects a bottle of champagne and a plate of powdered sugar strawberries upon arrival, he will probably find the lifestyle brand a bit strange – a lobby that's most likely a cross between an art gallery, cafe and workstation, or a guestroom that is small but looks spacious because there isn't a working table or a swivel chair but, oh my, the wall is a canvass for Apple TV, where work and entertainment can be done to the heart's content.

But if that means that hotels can dispense with the niceties such as a personalised welcome greeting, they could not be more mistaken. Self-service, which Millennials are comfortable with, does not mean that no service is required. The lifestyle brands that are coming

up are all pitched to the upscale segment; by no means are they a limited-service economy product. But what is upscale or luxurious today is indeed quite different from the champagne/strawberry expectations of yesterday and hotel chains are quite right in trying to reinterpret the product so that they remain relevant with the times. Today, as Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group's Asia-Pacific president, Thorsten Kirschke, told me, it's not about work-life balance anymore; it is about integrating work and life", which Radisson Red is trying to achieve (read more about Red in our October 10 issue).

Now my question is, if hotel groups keep on reinventing, shouldn't travel agencies be doing the same? Take the retail agency shopfront, for instance. Why can't it also be a cross between an art gallery, cafe and workstation, if that is what appeals to the new generation? Are tours being redesigned such that they speak to a generation that is more well-educated, well-travelled, well-informed and well-connected, i.e. the We the Living Well crowd?

While aspects such as customer relationship management are important, I believe the priority should be on the product. I hope the travel trade will take time to reassess if they have the right product that meets the market's needs at any given time.

Then, you'll see me spending a lot more time in a travel retail agency shopfront.

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WE LIKE



Last month, Royal Caribbean International's *Quantum of the Seas* wowed journalists and those lucky enough to get a first look at one of this year's most anticipated cruise ships, which is nearing completion in its German shipyard and coming to Singapore next June. Boasting innovations such as a skydiving simulator (above), an observation glass capsule that ascends and moves over the sides of the ship, as well as a huge, multi-level public space that offers 270-degree views and morphs from a living room during the day to an entertainment venue at night, other smart experiences include staterooms with virtual balconies and robots shaking up martinis at the Bionic Bar. With technology at its core, it's not hard to imagine why *Quantum* is being introduced as a class of its own.



SEARCHING...

For Available Rooms At Best B2B Rates

VIEW RESULTS ON PAGE 7

TRAVEL 2014 RAVE

**DON'T MISS OUT
ON THE NEXT WAVE
OF TOURISM
GROWTH**

YourSingapore

How do we capture the hearts of Millennial Travellers?

Millennial Travellers rely heavily on word-of-mouth recommendations and travel companies often use platforms such as social media to take advantage of this trait by personalising their online experience, according to a panel discussion held in anticipation of TravelRave 2014, Asia's premier travel and tourism week.

Organised by the Singapore Tourism Board, the dialogue titled “Asian Millennial Travellers, and How to Tap This Growing Market” also pointed out the competitive edge which Millennials can bring to the workforce, when it comes to leveraging this next wave of tourism growth.

The best travel minds will convene and collaborate at TravelRave 2014, held in Singapore between 27 to 31 October. More insights on the opportunities of Asian tourism will be shared at the Asia Travel Leaders Summit 2014 (*by invitation only*), while conferences such as Web in Travel will feature exciting discussions on online travel agencies, online search and more.

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Analysis

Malaysian arrivals to Japan have shot up by over 60 per cent, and are predicted to continue growing for the rest of year. S Puvaneswary finds out why

JAPAN WINS HEARTS

Malaysian travellers are flocking in droves to Japan this year, registering record high arrivals from January to July (16,200) and growing 63 per cent over the same period in 2013.

What's fuelling such figures? Besides the visa exemptions for Malaysians with biometric passports introduced last year, other reasons include the aggressive marketing efforts by Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), a weakened yen against the ringgit and growing flight connections between the two countries, pointed out the trade.

With this surge in arrivals to Japan, Malaysia has moved up in source market rank to claim second spot, while Singapore has dropped to third. Among South-east Asian countries, Thailand leads.

Susan Ong, deputy director, JNTO Singapore, which oversees Malaysia as well, said the market is an important one as Malaysians tend to buy full-board packages and are long-staying visitors, chalking up an average of six nights.

In 2014, JNTO Singapore increased its marketing fund for Malaysia by some 20 per cent, supporting joint activities with airlines and outbound travel agencies.

At the recent MATTA consumer fair in Kuala Lumpur, for example, JNTO Singapore roped in 150 delegates from across the travel and tourism industry to exhibit, occupying the largest booth space among all NTOs. At the upcoming B2B Visit Japan Travel Mart in Tokyo, JNTO Singapore will also host a large delegation from Malaysia.

Said Ong: "This will be an opportunity for participating travel (consultants) from Malaysia to network and familiarise themselves with new destinations."

The NTO also recently partnered Singapore Airlines and Changi Airport to offer promotional airfares to Japan as well as airport shopping vouchers worth S\$40 (US\$32). Exclusive to Malaysians, this one-month campaign started on August 25.

Desmond Lee, group managing director of Apple Vacations & Conventions, said the deal is especially enticing for Johor residents who prefer to depart out of Singapore because of the southern state's close proximity to the border. He added: "This promotion will help us sell packages through our company in Singapore known as Apple Singapore, as Johoreans are always price sensitive and looking for good value."

Meanwhile, Ong said that JNTO Singapore will, in the second half of the year, reach out to more Malaysian travel consultants based outside of Kuala Lumpur, particularly those in Penang and Johor Bahru, through seminars and product briefings.

Seeking to address concerns of Muslim travellers, JNTO Singapore also sponsored a 13-episode travelogue starring local actor, Zizan Razak, who will be sharing his travel experiences traversing Hokkaido to Kyushu. This series commenced this

flights in March. AirAsia X is the only Malaysian airline flying to Nagoya, connecting the Japanese city to its first major Muslim market.

AirAsia X's expansion into Japan has been a boon to Malaysian outbound agen-

ellers have no alternative but to take taxis that impose a midnight surcharge as buses and trains stop operations at midnight.

"The Narita flights arrive in the morning, leaving travellers with plenty of time in the day for sightseeing and shopping."

Besides providing the needed competition to MAS and JAL, Apple Vacations' Lee added that AirAsia X's entry will help pump up capacity on these routes that are popular with Malaysians but unfortunately suffer from a seat crunch during the Malaysian peak travel season (March to May) and the year-end school holiday period.

Even after ringing in double-digit year-on-year increases in the first half of the year for Japan sales, outbound travel consultants in Malaysia are optimistic that this same rate of growth can be achieved in the second half.

According to Lee, Apple Vacations saw 30 per cent year-on-year growth in the first half, and he anticipates the second half will be equally good with external factors driving the market. The Ebola epidemic in Africa is causing travellers to look at other holiday destinations, while the downing of MAS' flight MH17 has also made Malaysians fearful of flying over areas where war is raging, he observed.

Lee said his company will organise six, five-day charter services to Hokkaido this December and January using MAS' A330-300. He said: "Flights are almost full as demand is very good. Charter services are the best option because it saves time. There are no direct flights from Malaysia to Hokkaido, thus if we go via Bangkok, Narita or Osaka, it will take approximately 15 hours. With our charter service, it takes approximately eight hours."

Similarly, Shen said growth in the second half of 2014 "could be double" that of the corresponding period in 2013. He foresees Universal Studios Japan's latest Harry Potter themed attraction would generate interest during the year-end school holidays. The company is also promoting new destinations such as Nikko, a UNESCO World Heritage Site as well as Nagoya, since there are now direct flights on AirAsia X.

From October 1, Japan's appeal as a shopping haven will also receive a boost as its list of tax-free items will expand to include food, beverages, cosmetics and chemicals. Previously, tax-free items included non-consumables such as home appliances, clothing and bags. In addition, non-residents will be exempted from the consumption tax if the total amount of consumables purchased in a single shop in a day is between ¥5,001-¥50,000 (US\$47-US\$469), making this a lower criterion than the previous exemption of a minimum spend of ¥10,001 in a single shop in a day.



We hope that this (new TV) series will create a desire for Malaysians to travel to Japan, and that the Muslim community in Malaysia will be aware of how Muslim friendly the destination is.

Susan Maria Ong
Deputy director, JNTO Singapore



month.

Ong explained: "We hope this series will create a desire for Malaysians to travel to Japan, and that the Muslim community in Malaysia will be aware of how Muslim friendly the destination is."

Exhibitors at the recent MATTA fair were also eager to show how Muslim friendly they were. Among them was Yumi Takahashi, manager, aviation marketing, aviation sales division at Central Japan International Airport. She said the airport opened two prayer rooms and a pork-free Muslim-friendly restaurant when AirAsia X commenced Kuala Lumpur-Nagoya

cies, as they anticipate that the LCC's new direct service between

Kuala Lumpur and Tokyo Narita beginning November will further stimulate the market, complementing the services of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) and Japan Airlines (JAL). The four-weekly flights will be increased to daily in May 2015.

Shen Nordin, senior manager, outbound division, Japan Travel Bureau (Malaysia), described the flights as a "refreshing alternative" to AirAsia X's Tokyo Haneda service, which arrives late at night. He commented: "By the time one clears customs, it is past midnight. Trav-

Analysis

With political tensions running high in Hong Kong, **Prudence Lui** finds out how travel and tourism players are bracing themselves for a shutdown of its business district, if it comes

A cloud of uncertainty has enveloped Hong Kong's travel agencies and hotels, who are making arrangements to deal with the fallout from any further Occupy Central protests if, and when, they strike.

The call for civil disobedience was renewed when the Chinese Central Government last month failed to adopt a genuine universal suffrage for Hong Kong's chief executive election in 2017. The campaign was initiated as early as last year, although it seems to have gathered momentum in recent months.

There have been chatters of a territory-wide school/university boycott on September 22, but details of the long-awaited Occupy Central action – a mass sit-in that will block main roads in the business district of Central for days – have yet to be announced at press time. Tipped to be on October 1, the potential turnout has been estimated at 10,000 participants.

Rounding up the industry to express their concerns in a meeting with the security bureau, the Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners' executive director, Michael Li, said: "For hotels with sister properties, we would also assess the feasibility to shift their guests from Central to other districts in case the protest happens. With such arrangements, it is vital for hotel staff stationed at the airport to brief guests on arrival to minimise inconvenience." When required, hotels are also prepared to seal entrances and direct guests to exits used by staff, he added.

Holiday World Tours managing director, Paul Leung, said he is also prepared to refund money to clients who cancel their trips. Leung noted: "Our bookings for the last few months have remained slow; this is the same for October.

"We worry about the situation as a roadblock in Central may affect the sight-seeing journey to the Peak. Nonetheless, the city is still safe to visit given the sophistication of our citizens."

Thankfully, business travellers seem unfazed. DMC – The Destination Management Company's managing director, Jenny May, said she has not received any cancellations or postponements. "No concern has been shown by our clients, and I'm not concerned too. I think it will be business as usual."

Most stakeholders that *TTG Asia* talked



to are hopeful that the demonstrations would be small and short-lived. However, they are not letting down their guard.

Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong's spokesperson said: "As we expect heavy traffic and road transport to be disrupted, we are working hard to make sure there is as little impact on our guests as possible, and we have a contingency plan in place. Should the Occupy Central movement occur, we would keep our guests updated on the situation through bulletin boards located in the lobby and at the main en-

trance of the hotel. These will be updated throughout the day as and when necessary. We will also have additional staff on duty to escort guests arriving via Airport Express.

"Hotels also have strong support from the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) who opened a dedicated enquiry hotline for concierges and from the Transport Department. The Hong Kong police will upload the latest information on their website to keep the public informed on alternative transportation routes and safety

advice should there be a demonstration."

Hong Kong Hotel Association executive director, James Lu, expressed confidence in the police force. He said: "Our hotel members, especially those in Central, work very closely with the police. They also share intelligence, so hotels can react and deploy staff accordingly...As far as I know, our police is ready to cope and has the ability to handle any situation.

"I haven't heard any concerns from overseas about the political situation or any plans to cancel or postpone trips. But if the situation worsens, the story would be quite different. We'll adopt a wait-and-see tactic."

In some ways, the uncertainty has already hit outbound travel. With Hong Kong's disciplinary forces put on standby, staff have been asked not to go on leave as the city remains on high alert, thwarting the holiday plans of many.

Wing On Travel Services assistant general manager (South-east Asia & longhaul operation), Simon Ma, shared: "They were asked not to take leave in July and August. The summer holiday is high season for them to travel with their families."

Though he does not serve this segment of travellers, Lotus Tours general manager, Ken Ng, confirmed that this is what other travel trade members are seeing. He said: "Based on IATA's latest BSP settlement figures, the last two weeks of August saw drops of 16 per cent and 14.2 per cent respectively in volume. This may give us some clue."

Looking at the levy collected by the Tourism Industry Council on outbound group tour and FIT packages, this has also dropped by 11.4 per cent from HK\$2,521,485 (US\$325,334) in July 2013 to 2,234,028 in July 2014.

Legislative councilor for the wholesale and retail sectors, Vincent Fang, said: "It's a very challenging time for us because the protest is related to politics, and the declaration is to occupy Central without disclosing the time frame. It's unlike any usual protest or demonstration we've had before, where the impact on locals' livelihoods would be obvious.

"Some tour groups have asked whether shops would still receive groups during the incident. My answer is...(shoppers) may avoid visiting Central and go to other areas."

NO ROOMS AVAILABLE

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IS NOT SOMETHING WE SAY.

FIND OUT WHO WE ARE
ON PAGE 28



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Take heed of tech-savvy agencies that have transformed their businesses and pick up new ideas on how to do better

INNOVATORS RIDING IN EXOTIC PLACES

By Mimi Hudoyo

WHO Established in 2004 in Ruteng, Flores, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province, Flores Exotic Tours specialises in adventure and ecotourism in NTT and West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), including Komodo Island and the tri-coloured Lake Kelimutu.

"Flores had beautiful nature and scenery but it lacked good infrastructure, so travelling to the destination was an adventure," said Flores Exotic Tours director, Leonardus Nyoman, on how the company started.

In 2008, Flores Exotic Tours started developing ecotourism products to enable tourists to experience the local way of life and culture, as such travel style appeals to the European travellers, the company's major market.

WHAT Flores Exotic Tours launched cycling tour programmes and its own website (www.flo-rescyclingtours.com) last January. Covering Flores and Komodo, the packages range from one to 10

days, combining cycling, walking, car rides and flights. The packages vary from easy cycling on flat trails or downhill cycling to long, challenging routes for serious cyclists.

The new tours are promoted through both online and offline avenues.

"We launched a separate website," said Nyoman. "We introduced the programme to our business partners at ITB Berlin in March and have received positive feedback."

A Dutch travel company has included the cycling tour in its Indonesia package and a couple of Indonesian tour operators have partnered Flores Exotic Tours in cycling tours. "When they get cycling clients, we will handle the tours," Nyoman said.

WHY Constant queries from business partners seeking new products were what prompted Flores Exotic Tours to innovate its product offerings, shared Nyoman.

As cycling is a popular activity in many countries and attracts

riders of all levels, the idea to create cycling tours for international guests struck Nyoman and his wife one day when they were trying out their new bicycles in the Ruteng area.

"With the help of a Swiss cycling consultant, Oskar Ruch, we looked for tracks and routes and came up with a series of products."

A separate website for the product is vital. Said Nyoman: "We do not have a database of operators or communities specialising in this product. Having a separate website gives us a bigger chance to reach out to them through the search engine. Using keywords like 'Flores, cycling', it will be easier to find us on Google," he said.

TARGET The cycling product is a diversification of what the company has been offering.

"This is a special interest tour, and it will take time for the market to grow. At the moment our focus is on getting the message across



Flores Exotic Tours' director Leonardus Nyoman (far right) on a cycling tour

to the right target," he said.

At present, the company can cater for up to six participants per group with up to two guides (for long trips), who cycle and drive too.

"Since the launch we have organised two trips and we have three more bookings coming up," Nyoman said.

WHO GETS THE BOOKING?

Seeking a cruise experience for my family and my aging parents, who have never been on board a cruise ship before, I requested for a short-haul, roundtrip cruise sailing from Hong Kong in July/August.

By Prudence Lui



Wing On Travel Service

APPEARANCE Situated in a commercial block in Tsim Sha Tsui, the branch occupies the entire sixth floor. The décor is pretty grand and elegant as more than two-thirds of the space are dedicated to briefing rooms and a lounge equipped with a travel accessories retail outlet. However, space for the service counter is pretty limited with only three computer terminal counters and six round chairs. There is only one pamphlet stand at the lobby so visitors need to rely on the staff to print out package information at the counter.

PRODUCT Only two packages were available – 4D3N Hong Kong to Halong Bay and 4D3N to Taichung and Kaohsiung, both on *SuperStar Virgo*. While the staff did not explain the limited choices, he recommended me to take up cruise packages inclusive of land tour fees and a tour guide to give more attention for senior travellers.

EASE OF BOOKING Within a few clicks, the staff could tell me the room availability on the Taiwan route. The efficient flow of information via the computer enabled the staff to help clients make decisions swiftly. The staff reminded me that full payment was required for cruise bookings within 30 days of departure while early-bird bookings would get better rates.

PRICE The information was very clear as all incurred fees and taxes were listed on the leaflet. The staff even persuaded me to make an immediate decision to enjoy an extra discount if I booked within the same day. For instance, a HK\$1,000 (US\$129) discount would be given for an inside cabin priced originally at HK\$5,299, plus a HK\$830 tax. The price included two city tours in Taiwan.

VERDICT Though the price was dearer, I would go for Wing On Travel Service because of its service and attractive discounts offered. The consultants also explained the advantage of having a tour guide to take care of my family needs.

Travel Expert

APPEARANCE As the only travel agency on the second floor of Chung Fu Shopping Mall in Yuen Long, Travel Expert's sharp and colourful shopfront draws passers-by's attention. The design is simple with a counter equipped with seven seats and four staff stationed to serve clients. Apart from the abundant display of travel leaflets, posters and electronic displays, there is a dedicated stand for weekly specials or best offers.

PRODUCT I was offered a 4D tour to Vietnam and a 6D tour to Taiwan on *SuperStar Virgo*. The staff informed that such limited choices were due to the typhoon season in July-September. After requesting for a shorter cruise to Taiwan, he then proceeded to the computer and found another 4D option sailing on the same vessel.

EASE OF BOOKING He made a call to a third party and checked availability. Service was efficient and fast. I was reminded about the early-bird offers 45 or 60 days before departure. When asked if there was any accompanying tour guide, the travel consultant clarified that the above-mentioned packages were FIT offers because the company mostly specialised in FIT packages only. Still, he immediately printed out a 5D cruise on *Voyager of the Seas* to Xiamen guided by veteran travel writer Sunny Wong, departing in September.

PRICE Though the FIT packages were priced from HK\$3,130 (excluding HK\$150 fuel surcharge and HK\$680 port handling charges), I was told I had to pay an extra of HK\$500-800 per person if I opted for land excursions in Taiwan.

View from the top

Who can best cater to the new generation with a lifestyle brand? Leave it to a luxury hotel company, says Robert Warman, the new CEO of Langham Hospitality Group. He tells **Raini Hamdi** why he's upbeat about a repositioned Eaton

WARMAN'S WAR CHEST

I hear you have a war chest of US\$1.5 billion and that you intend to take the company from 22 hotels now to 100 hotels in five years, then 500 in 10 years!

We're taking a dual approach: third-party management contracts and strategic real estate. We think we will acquire a decent number of hotels, but what the total amounts to is always hard to say.

We would love to be in Singapore and our parent, Great Eagle Holdings, would also very much like to invest in hospitality real estate in Singapore, which has been a strong market and will continue to be so in the long term although there's a tiny bit of a slowdown now.

We reported in 2012 Langham was in talks for a hotel in Singapore but nothing's happened. What are the issues?

Finding land, the right location – in our business we talk to many people and it takes time for the right deal to materialise.

We're also interested to expand in Europe and North America, where we're currently in negotiation for three and two hotels, respectively.

And like we did with our Langham brand, we will also support the launch of our brand, Eaton, with our own capital.

But Eaton's been launched.

We're repositioning Eaton to become a lifestyle brand. Our existing Eaton hotels will undergo renovations to match that concept. We'll announce the DNA

of the new Eaton soon and by then I believe we'll also be able to announce at least five new-generation Eaton hotels, either renovated or new-builds, four of them city hotels and one resort, in international destinations. We believe we'll have 25 to 30 Eaton hotels in five years.

What is your idea of a lifestyle brand?

It's a brand targeted at those born after 1985 (Millennials or Gen Y'ers). What's unique about these customers is they grew up in fairly well-to-do families, are well-educated, have a lot of disposable income because they don't bog themselves down with commitments and are used to travelling, staying at five-star or luxury hotels, going to good restaurants, so they know what good service and good F&B are.

They want this same lifestyle but in a different environment. Don't fool yourself that they want less service – some hotels actually believe they don't want you to say hello to them! They do, but it does not have to be formal. They still expect people to be friendly; they still have expectations on how long they should wait in line for service, etc.

It's like when they buy blue jeans, they still want good design, good product and friendly service. The jeans will cost more than a suit pants and sometimes it's got holes in them and you can't wash them (laughs).

So the hotel itself needs to be designed differently. When I wake up in a hotel, I make a cup of coffee or expect the hotel to have the ability to deliver coffee in 15 minutes. I take my hardcopy newspapers and spend an hour reading before I leave for my meeting. So my room needs to

have a coffee machine, chair and couch. They wake up, roll out of bed, go to the lobby to grab a cup of coffee and a Danish, read all the pertinent news that have been sent to them on their hand-held devices, do work and relate to people just like them in the lobby. So hotels require different areas of importance for this group.

We're the only luxury hotel company that is launching a lifestyle brand. There are small companies that do it, but we have the infrastructure that can support that growth. Other bigger chains

have a lifestyle brand but they are not luxury hotel companies. We think our understanding of service and the customer will make a difference.

Are hotel companies imagining the need for a lifestyle brand?

Let's face it, there are two major influences hitting the world, one, the Chinese traveller – you can't ignore the one billion that have not travelled yet (Langham is launching a China brand, *TTG Asia*, August 22, 2014) – and the other is the younger generation travellers and the reason is they can afford the product and demand it. On top of that, the companies they work for – the Googles and the Alibabas – are just like them and will move their corporate and meetings business out of the traditional hotels to where their employees are staying.

What does the name Eaton mean?

It means what we create (it to be).

Was the DNA decided before you joined Langham in March?

There were discussions. Part of my joining is to help the company expand internationally. Ultimately, we would like to be a hotel company that has multiple brands globally and be recognised as being among the best in each of the segments.

By now you would have Eaton's brand specifications. Do share.

The room size will be small, say, on average 30m² as, as discussed, these customers do not use the room, don't need that couch, chair, table. In the luxury market (Warman was 18 years with Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company), we build big rooms and leave a large part of them empty! I think at some point in time people will stop building big rooms, even in the luxury segment.

Yet, the lobby area will be much bigger with a community/social hub area, a technology area, a little bakery where they can grab coffee/Danish if they need a snack, a bar and a restaurant. As mentioned, we don't see this person as economy.

And in the right location, based on space, we'll also do meeting rooms because, again, we think the companies that employ this generation of people are going to look to hold their meetings where their people are comfortable to be in.

It was the same phenomenon with the luxury market years ago when the senior executives wanted to stay in luxury hotels and corporates then started migrating their meetings to these properties. What fuelled the growth of luxury hotels was the fact there were more markets for them, not just high net worth individuals going on holidays but the corporate market, then the corporate meetings market.

With Eaton, we also don't believe it's a one-design-fits-all. Whereas the luxury customer wants some sense of place, this person wants to understand the neighbourhood of where they are staying.

Isn't that the same?

No, the luxury customer wants to get a glimpse of who a Singaporean is when he goes to a luxury hotel. This new customer wants to stay in the neighbourhood and

10 NEED TO KNOWS ABOUT ROBERT WARMAN

- **Who's in your family?** Wife and two sons
- **What do you do for fun?** Enjoy exploring Buddha, history and culture
- **Your ideal vacation?** Visiting hotels
- **How do you book your own leisure trips?** Directly with hotel and airline
- **What are you reading right now?** *The Hit* – David Baldacci
- **How do you stay healthy?** Run when I can
- **Favourite food?** Italian, changing to Chinese
- **A bad habit you cannot kick?** Impatience
- **Your pet peeve, something that never fails to annoy you?** Waiting in lines
- **Most people don't know that you can...** run faster than they think.

live that environment – go to the bars and restaurants locals go – they want to hang out with it.

So if everyone is looking at a lifestyle brand, how do you win?

By delivering more consistently what this traveller wants. And that has to do with design, service, F&B and the environment. For the luxury market and the lifestyle market, it's the same: who can deliver more consistently than the next guy wins.

Langham has 22 hotels now and you're talking of leapfrogging that to 100, then 500. What's changed?

Our parent decided that hospitality management and real estate in the hotel business are a good long-term investment.

A lot of owners think likewise. Doesn't this explosion of hotels, brands and models worry you?

A lesson I learnt from a previous boss was that a recession and additional competition are pretty much the same thing.

In a recession, people don't stop to go out and eat. They do cut back on how many times they go out. The question is, do they cut you or someone else out? If they don't cut you out, you don't have a recession. Same thing with more hotels or brands opening up. What scares me is not another hotel opening next door, it is, when a guest walks out, does he want to come back to me? It's really down to the question: do I do it better than my competition? And I can't look at what's done in the past. I have to stay relevant by understanding what the new customer expectations are. Plus, the market is growing all the time – we spoke about the one billion Chinese that have not travelled and there are many other such markets. Thirty years ago, people said luxury was dead. At the time Ritz-Carlton probably had five hotels and Four Seasons 10 hotels. Now they have 100 hotels collectively, despite the entry of other luxury brands.



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With three award-winning serviced residence brands, we welcome you to enjoy our renowned hospitality in more than 200 properties in over 80 cities spanning more than 20 countries across Asia Pacific, Europe and the Gulf region.

Report Serviced residences

Hundreds more serviced residences will be built (see box below), but how can the product be even more relevant for Asia's outbound leisure market? **Xinyi Liang-Polsena, Mimi Hudoyo, S Puvaneswary, Paige Lee Pei Qi, Rosa Ocampo and Prudence Lui** ask operators

Is the product more relevant to you?

CHAN Serviced apartments are gaining more relevance for leisure travellers, especially families travelling together. Not only do they provide a place for families to gather under one roof and enjoy the comforts of a personalised space complete with all the essentials of a home, they are also value for money as the accommodation cost could be shared among family members while dining costs could be contained with the option of self-catering in the kitchenette. Some serviced apartments also have varied and flexible room layouts to suit the practical needs of families.

LAM It depends, because there aren't many destinations where we can include serviced residences in the FIT package. For instance, in Singapore, a minimum stay of seven days is required, whereas there is no such regulation in Thailand. The mix of room types also plays a pivotal role. For example, we usually opt for a two- to three-bedroom apartment so it's not relevant if the operator has only studio flats. But given the rising number of new players, this means more choices for our clients.

WANIDA Serviced residences are more relevant for us in Australia and New Zealand because these two countries have a lot of apartment offers, plus they are good for families and groups of friends.

Australia is quite competitive – the three- to 3.5-star apartments there are of good standards, plus there are many apartments in destinations such as the Gold Coast. In New Zealand, self-contained serviced apartments like the Golden Chain Motels are especially popular among those on self-drive holidays.

Travellers like serviced residences only if they are affordable. But serviced residences in Asia are usually in the higher-end segment, hence are typically deemed as more expensive and applicable for business travellers than leisure travellers.

ROYANTO Yes, it is a relevant product for us, but only if the operators provide hotel standards. There is increasing demand from both the leisure and business segment, but it is still in the embryonic

Serviced apartments are gaining more relevance for leisure travellers, especially families travelling together... accommodation costs could be shared among family members while dining costs could be contained.



Anthony Chan
Group managing director
Chan Brothers Travel, Singapore

Many serviced apartments have booking facilities via websites or dedicated portals rather than a wider distribution system.



Royanto Handaya
President director
Panorama Tours, Indonesia

I don't see the line blurring (between serviced apartments and hotels). The perception is mostly the same (in the Hong Kong market), ie, serviced residences' standards cannot match hotels' standards.



Jamie Lam
Deputy general manager
Wincastle Travel, Hong Kong

MORE UNITS FO

stage for the Indonesian market. But the uptrend will continue as leisure travellers want spacious, homely and comfortable accommodation, while business travellers seek space, privacy and modern facilities, complemented by refined hotel services.

Is the line between serviced apartments and hotels blurring? Are apartments better perceived than before?

LAM I don't see the line blurring (in the Hong Kong market). The perception is mostly the same, i.e. serviced residences' standards cannot match hotels' standards. More families are now booking them due to a spacious room with kitchenette.

ANG I disagree. Serviced apartments used

to be perceived as cheaper and more suitable for long-term stays than hotels. But some of the new serviced apartments are now comparable to traditional hotels, with better amenities and bigger areas. They also have fewer units, thereby offering a serene environment. All this is making the product attractive to families and friends traveling together.

WANIDA It is still a price factor as Thais, like most Asian travellers, are generally price-conscious, and will consider serviced residences only if prices are competitive. With the growth of LCCs and online bookings, there are plenty of accommodation deals online now and travellers, especially among the younger generation

who care more about prices, are now open to different types of accommodation.

SYED RAZIF It depends largely on pricing and the difference between hotel rates and serviced apartment rates. Usually individual travellers and couples prefer to stay in hotels as this works out to be cheaper.

But the take-up rate for serviced apartments also depends largely on the objectives of those travelling. For example, families with children or extended families travelling together may prefer to stay at serviced apartments if their main objective is to be together as a single unit. Or they may have certain food restrictions, such as halal food requirements and

AT A GLANCE

Paige Lee Pei Qi rounds up the key expansion moves in this sector

The Ascott Group has crossed its milestone of having 35,000 apartment units globally and is stepping up growth in China. It has secured contracts to manage four more properties with over 900 apartment units in Taiyuan, Beijing, Shanghai and Dalian. This beefs Ascott's portfolio

in China to more than 11,600 apartment units in 64 properties across 21 cities.

Fraser's Hospitality, which currently offers 16,000 apartment units in more than 13 gateway cities worldwide, is pumping up supply with four more serviced residences scheduled to open next year in Kuala Lumpur, Bangalore, Barcelona and Brisbane.

Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts raised the curtains on Cassia in June, which it billed as a new brand of extended stay accommodation. Properties are already in development in five destinations, namely Phuket, Bintan, Beruwala (Sri Lanka), Gold Coast (Australia) and Lijiang. Another seven are slated to come up in Brisbane, New York, Japan, the Seychelles, Chiang Mai, Bangkok and Lang Co (Vietnam).

Oakwood Worldwide and **Mapletree Group Singapore** announced a new joint venture in May that will roll out more

Capri by Fraser, Kuala Lumpur



The rise of markets such as family and Muslim travel, and a healthy pipeline of serviced apartments, are among factors that make the product more relevant to outbound agencies across Asia, as *TTG Asia's* Roundtable shows

The Muslim market is a new clientele for serviced apartments (because of the kitchenettes), especially in destinations where it is difficult and/or expensive to get halal food, such as in Eastern Europe.

I think they are becoming more hotel-like, but offering amenities that are lacking in hotels. Serviced apartments are moving in the right direction.



Syed Mohd Razif Al Yahya
Group managing director/group CEO
Sutra Group of Companies, Malaysia

William Ang
CEO
Uni-Orient Travel, Philippines

Not pictured:

Wanida Hongsunirandon
Travel manager
Holiday Tours & Travel, Thailand

and value-for-money accommodation for their employees; to leisure travellers looking for a 'home away from home' where they could enjoy the amenities of a bigger and more personalised space, to larger families looking to stay under one roof.

What are the pros and cons of booking serviced apartments versus hotels from a tour operator's standpoint?

WANIDA Serviced apartments add more choices to the array of accommodation we can offer clients. But due to a smaller room inventory, they tend to have stricter cancellation policies than hotels and also require a minimum stay. This is generally the case for apartments in Europe.

SYED RAZIF Serviced residences are mainly located in cities. Choices are limited in small towns. As the daily rates of serviced apartments are more expensive than their weekly and monthly rates, service apartments are not popular for short-stay visitors. Usually hotels have more rooms than serviced residences.

ANG Many of the lesser-known apartments can only be booked through OTAs.

ible on Gullivers and Gateway, and make it easier for travel consultants to include them as a choice for clients. For example, we use Calypso to get wholesale rates, which are secured and placed into the system by Qantas Holidays.

CHAN To attract more leisure travellers looking for shorter-term accommodation, more serviced apartments should recalibrate their pricing policy and make short-term rates as competitive as their longer-term rates.

SYED RAZIF They should offer promotional rates and attractive commissions to tour operators. If they offer net rates to tour operators, these rates should be lower than what the travelling public gets.

LAM They should offer more two or three-bedroom units in their inventory as that's what our clients look for. The interior design and décor of some of the older properties look unattractive and ordinary.

ROYANTO They need to do some homework. Firstly, most serviced apartments are not very aware of the leisure or business segments that tour operators can generate for them. We can work together better. Secondly, they need to promote themselves more in order to create awareness among customers that they are a viable alternative to hotels.

Are serviced residence developers building the right type of products?

SYED RAZIF Yes, they are building apartments with a family concept and modern facilities you'd find in homes such as TV, Wi-Fi, sofa bed, washing machine, etc. It is also important they are located near public transport and food marts.

WANIDA The apartments are good for FITs or small groups but they are still not quite suitable for bigger or collective groups due to their fewer facilities and services, for example, the lack of porters to assist with luggage or round-the-clock reception to receive guests at the front desk. Serviced residences should therefore consider recruiting more service staff.

ANG I think they are becoming more hotel-like, but offering amenities that are lacking in hotels. Serviced apartments are moving towards the right direction.

ROYANTO Many Indonesians travel with families and sometimes extended families. An apartment nearby a popular theme park or a hospital/medical centre can offer an alternative option.

R NEW CLIENTS

choose service apartments because of the kitchenettes. The Muslim market is thus a new clientele for serviced apartments, especially in destinations where it is difficult and/or expensive to get halal food, such as in Eastern Europe. Some Muslim single travellers do not mind paying more for a serviced apartment because of the cooking facilities available.

Five years ago the supply of service apartments was a lot less and consequently demand was low. There was not much awareness about them and the perception was they were only for long-stay travellers, such as those on business. Now, it is possible to book serviced apartments for short stays of one or two nights. This makes it an option for leisure travellers wishing to

stay in an environment similar to their homes and for everyone to be together.

CHAN I agree. Traditionally, serviced apartments are commonly perceived as most suitable for business travellers on overseas work assignments who need longer-term accommodation. That said, as serviced apartments continually look to improve their products and services to attract a bigger market, such as offering more competitive short-term and daily rates, enhancing room service menus, having a 24-hour reception, concierge, security services, gyms and even entertainment facilities such as bars, we see a potentially larger market opening up, from corporate clients looking for an optimal

ROYANTO Many serviced apartments have booking facilities via websites or dedicated portals rather than have a wider distribution system. Hotels use a global distribution system like Pegasus, Abacus, Galileo, Amadeus, Worldspan, etc. They also offer loyalty programmes and marketing partnerships.

What should serviced apartments do to increase bookings from you?

WANIDA Serviced residences must work with inbound tour operators to promote their apartments to Thai outbound travel consultants, who prefer booking from systems such as Gullivers and Gateway (a hotel consolidator). Also, serviced apartments must make themselves more vis-

than 100 Oakwood properties globally within the next five years. Under the terms of the agreement, Mapletree will acquire and develop serviced apartments under the Oakwood brand in markets outside of North America. Oakwood Worldwide will contribute to the same portfolio for properties located within North America.

Lanson Place, which prides its serviced suites on a younger and sleeker look, has targeted to grow them in secondary locations in prime cities, as well as in secondary cities. Scheduled for a soft opening at

the end of the year is the Aroma Garden Serviced Suites by Lanson Place in Shanghai, which will offer 79 units.

Swiss-Garden International will add two serviced residences in Malacca and Kuantan to its collection by the end of this year. Its portfolio is set to grow further with the opening of D'Majestic Kuala Lumpur and Swiss-Garden Johor Bahru in 2015, while the Pavilion-Garden Suites in Kota Bahru and Swiss-Garden Hotel & Residences Cameron Highlands are slated to welcome guests by 2016.



PLAYTIME FOR ALL



 Officially opened in 2014

Which markets are you targeting?
China, Malaysia, India, Indonesia and the Philippines

What is your unique selling point?
River Safari is Asia's first and only river-themed wildlife park. With 6,000 animals representing 200 species, it is home to unique river giants and megafishes such as the giant river otter, giant freshwater stingray and the critically endangered Mekong giant catfish, all curated in thematic exhibits representing each river zone.

Key attractions include the Giant Panda Forest, home to Kai Kai and Jia Jia, and the Amazon Flooded Forest which features the world's largest freshwater aquarium and where manatees and arapaimas can be seen swimming among giant trees. The park also features two boat rides: the Amazon River Quest and River Safari Cruise, both of which offer an immersive wildlife experience into the world of freshwater habitats.

How can travellers get there?
Public trains and buses are readily available for visitors. In addition, bus shuttle services by Singapore Attractions Express and Safari Gate transport visitors to and from the wildlife parks and selected locations around Singapore. Tour companies

also provide transfer services to the wildlife parks.

How should the trade sell your theme park?
Tour companies may choose to bundle admission to two wildlife parks together with meals. For example, a trip may start with a visit to Singapore Zoo in the morning followed by River Safari in the afternoon. This package includes Chinese buffet lunch at the River Safari Tea House.

There are also packages where visitors make a trip to River Safari in the afternoon followed by a choice of Asian or Indian buffet dinner at Night Safari's Ulu Ulu Safari Restaurant, before embarking on their tour of Night Safari.

In addition to the above packages, an additional snack set can be included in the River Safari itinerary. This set comes with the park's signature panda *pau* (bun) and a soft drink in a souvenir cup.

Operational hours
09.00-18.00 daily

Ticket prices
Adults: S\$25 (US\$20)
Children (three to 12 years): S\$16
Boat ride: Top-up fee of S\$5 (adults) and S\$3 (children)

Isabel Cheng
Chief marketing officer
Wildlife Reserves Singapore



"River Safari opens another platform for us to create another experience for our guests. I suggest it teams up with reputable research institutions and even NGOs, as well as bring in specialist talent to upgrade the attraction beyond its touch-and-go programme. It can provide relevant activities and tour programmes targeting guests who want greater insights."

Jaclyn Yeoh
Director, Siam Express, Singapore

"This new attraction has yet to create a huge enough impact to make every traveller want to list it as a must-do activity in Singapore, so I think more can be done to promote it. Perhaps it is still overshadowed by the award-winning Singapore Zoo and Night Safari.

However, the Amazon boat ride is a fantastic experience because it allows visitors to get really close to the animals, yet not within reach to ensure safety – and this is an attractive point."

Dominic Ong
Managing director, Star Holiday Mart, Singapore



 Opened in August 2014

Which markets are you targeting?
Those who enjoy extreme sports and outdoor activities, nature lovers and adrenaline junkies from within the country and overseas

What is your unique selling point?
The park's three challenges comprise the Little Legend Adventure, Island Extreme and Eagle Thrill.
Little Legend Adventure circuit has more than 20 fun adventure challenges for all ages. Eagle Thrill, for adults only, has more than 25 adventure challenges with various levels of difficulty. Island Extreme is also for adults only and offers more than 30 adrenaline-pumping extreme challenges.

How can travellers get there?
The park is located in the Lifestyle Precinct of the integrated development of Perdana Quay, which is around 20 minutes' drive from Kuah town as well as from Langkawi International Airport.

How should the trade sell your theme park?
Tour operators can combine a visit to the park with other activities such as a mangrove tour or visit to Langkawi Oriental

Village where one can take a ride on the SkyCab.

Operational hours
09.00-17.00 daily

Ticket prices
Little Legend: RM35 (US\$11)
Eagle Thrill: RM45
Island Extreme: RM55
Group bookings of minimum 10 people: 10 per cent discount; incentive for travel agencies: more favourable rates through a contractual arrangement with Skytrex to bring tourists to the park

Note: Minimum age for guests is eight years old. Height requirements are 110cm for children and 140cm for adults.

Azlan Idrus
Director
Skytrex Langkawi



"Skytrex@Perdana Quay Langkawi attracts adventurous international visitors looking for challenges. The park also gives an additional reason for business event organisers to choose Langkawi, as it can be used for teambuilding activities.

Langkawi has always been known as a family destination. Thus, I hope the park will have activities that allow everyone to participate in together as a family."

Arokia Das
Senior manager, Luxury Tours Malaysia

Attraction operators are clearly not worried about theme park fatigue in Asia, with more set to make their debut in the coming year. [Paige Lee Pei Qi](#), [S Puvaneswary](#), [Caroline Boey](#), [Marianne Carandang](#), [Prudence Lui](#) and [Xinyi Liang-Pholsena](#) find out

Movie Animation Park Studios, Ipoh



Opening in late 2015

Which markets are you targeting?

Families with children and young adults. We expect to attract 1.4 million visitors in the first year, with 80 per cent from Malaysia and 20 per cent from overseas.

What is your unique selling point?

The park will be Asia's first animation theme park, comprising 40 attractions and rides including the world's first DreamWorks-dedicated zone featuring The Croods, Mr Peabody & Sherman, Casper and Megamind. It will also feature Asia's first car stunt show and a one-of-a-kind live TV broadcast.

It will also serve as a springboard for Malaysia's growing creative industry, including projects with local animation studios and a performance stage concept dedicated to young adults.

How can travellers get there?

The park is about 2.5-hours' drive from the heart of Kuala Lumpur and 15-20 minutes from Ipoh city, Perak. It will be within walking distance of the new Amanjaya Bus Terminal served by intercity bus companies. By air, Firefly connects Singapore to Ipoh with two daily flights.

How should the trade sell your theme park?

We aim to put Perak on the list of Malaysia's top five destinations for international tourists when the park opens.

The park can be combined with Ipoh Heritage Trail, Royal Belum Rainforest and Taiping Zoo. There are a number of new hotels in Ipoh, including Ibis Styles Ipoh, Casuarina @ Meru and Best Western Premier The Haven Ipoh, making it easy to stay overnight and create packages.

Operational hours

To be confirmed

Ticket prices

To be confirmed, along with incentives for travel agencies

Ramelle Ramli

Director, Animation Theme Park



"It will be a stopover destination for those travelling from south to north or vice versa, or from the east coast of peninsular Malaysia to the south or vice versa.

Being Asia's first animation theme park will make the park a must-see attraction for Perak. Currently, there is no single attraction in the state that is a real crowd-puller. We do not see much demand for Perak now; I hope this will change when the park is open. It will create a lot of spillover business for the local tourism industry, benefiting the hotels, restaurants and transportation-related businesses. In time, I hope there will be adjoining hotels to the theme park, making it easier to package it with overnight stays.

Perak should ride on the park's presence to showcase other products in the state to draw longer-staying travellers."

Syed Mohd Razif Al Yahya

Group managing director and group CEO
Sutra Group of Companies, Malaysia

Shanghai Disney Resort



Opening in late 2015

Which markets are you targeting?

The population of 330 million who live within a three-hour drive or train ride from Shanghai is our core market.

What is your unique selling point?

The resort will be a world-class family vacation destination that combines classic Disney characters and storytelling with the uniqueness and beauty of China. F&B and merchandising will incorporate many Chinese elements.

Unique features include the largest and most immersive castle at any Disney park around the world, the iconic central attraction Enchanted Storybook Castle, the first pirates-themed land in a Disney park and the first Disney Broadway-style theatre, which will stage the global premiere of *The Lion King* in Mandarin.

In short, it is a mega resort comprising a variety of products under one roof – a theme park, two themed hotels, a large retail, dining and entertainment venue, a theatre and outdoor recreation areas.

How can travellers get there?

A high-speed rail line will connect Shanghai Disney Resort to the city, and Disney Express rail services will connect the attraction to other Chinese cities.

Operational hours

To be confirmed

Ticket prices

To be confirmed

Frances Li

Director, communications
Shanghai Disney Resort



"Shanghai is known as a business destination, so the resort will add a fresh family travel dimension. Widely travelled Singaporeans have visited Disney theme parks in the US, Europe and Asia, so the resort may have limited appeal for them. However, it might appeal to the Malaysian and Indonesian markets; we need more information to repackage tours to Shanghai when the resort opens.

Unfortunately, I foresee the opening of the resort impacting our inbound business from China."

Nancy Tan Li Keng

Managing director, Ik Chin Travel, Singapore

"The resort can help to attract younger tourists and encourage families to travel to Shanghai. However, I doubt it will have a big impact on international visitors.

Still, we will promote the resort to family travellers. Of course, special rates and promotions will help us sell it."

Voo Wei Keong

Director, WTS Travel, Singapore

Kidzania Manila, Bonifacio Global City, Metro Manila



KidZania Mexico



Opening in early 2015

Which markets are you targeting?

Families with kids, educators, non-profit organisations and government agencies

What is your unique selling point?

KidZania believes in the power of play in child development. It is an interactive kids' play city that offers nearly 100 role-playing activities in more than 60 establishments, featuring real brands, with various levels of difficulty to meet the abilities and interests of every child. It combines fun and learning for children aged three to 14 years.

There is the credibility of the brand to boot as well – it has over 500 partners around the world with hundreds of major international and regional brands that authenticate the content at the park, including American Airlines, Avis, Coca-Cola, Domino's, Dunkin' Donuts, Duracell, Fuji Film, Gillette, Honda, HP, Johnson & Johnson, Mattel, McDonald's, Mitsubishi, Nestle, Nike, HSBC, Unilever, Seiko, Sony and Wal-Mart.

How can travellers get there?

By public transport; there's also a shuttle bus going around Bonifacio Global City. The park is about 20-30 minutes by car from Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, but a bit longer if coming from Terminals 1 and 2.

Operational hours

Kidzania operates by five-hour shifts

Mondays-Thursdays: One shift

Fridays-Sundays: Two shifts

Ticket prices

To be confirmed

Maricel Pangilinan-Arenas

CEO and president
Play Innovations, Inc



KidZania Japan



"It will do well if it is sold to schools. For foreigners, it can be attached to day tours of the city, offered to families."

Thaemar Achacoso

Operations manager, Travelhub Inc, Philippines

Guide Theme parks

DreamPlay by DreamWorks, Entertainment City, Manila



Opening in late 2014

Which markets are you targeting?

Besides the large domestic market, we anticipate key markets for leisure-seeking visitors and families will include overseas markets such as South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, China and Thailand, among others.

What is your unique selling point?

DreamPlay by DreamWorks will be the first of its kind in the world. Inspired by the mantra of learning through play, it represents a revolutionary approach to family entertainment.

The park also represents an exciting blend of integrated live and digital play spaces, featuring popular characters and creative storytelling combined with innovative educational play appealing to children and adults alike.

Interactive environments, featuring the very latest digital technologies, will enable kids to engage in a wide range of thrilling activities, interacting with beloved characters from DreamWorks Animation's world-famous franchises including *Kung Fu Panda*, *Shrek*, *Madagascar* and *How to Train Your Dragon*.

Each experience is designed exclusively for City of Dreams Manila.

How can travellers get there?

By taxi, it is 15-20 minutes away from Ninoy Aquino International Airport, or 10-15 minutes from SM Mall of Asia.

Operational hours

To be confirmed

Ticket prices

To be confirmed

Melco Crown Philippines



"It's time we came up with something relevant, and I am for it. Kids these days know all the fads and can be hard to please.

If Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia have theme parks, then this is our way of stepping it up."

Dino Manila

Head of sales and marketing, Rajah Travel Corp, Philippines

Vana Nava Hua Hin Water Jungle



Soft opening in October 2014

Which markets are you targeting?

About 70 per cent Thai and 30 per cent foreigners from Germany, China, Hong Kong, the UK, Australia and Scandinavia

What is your unique selling point?

The park is Asia's first water jungle concept combining a lush tropical environment with modern design, world-class attractions, interactive facilities and latest technology to create 'an oasis of fun' for all.

It features over 19 attractions, such as Thailand's first and only Aqua Course, a multi-level challenge and interactive adventure; one of Thailand's longest lazy rivers; Asia's tallest man-made waterfall; and Thailand's first Abyss, one of the world's most popular and award-winning slides.

How can travellers get there?

From Bangkok, the park is 2.5-hour drive away or 40 minutes by private jet to Hua Hin Airport. It is just five minutes from Hua Hin's city centre.

How should the trade sell your theme park?

The park can be bundled with accommodation and transfers or as an optional tour offer. Guests can spend an entire day in the park for its other facilities besides the 19 attractions, such as the double flow rider, restaurants and cafes, lounges, private sala, weekend market and concerts.

Operational hours (tentative)

Waterpark (Wet) Zone: 10.00-18.00 from Sundays to Thursdays and 10.00-21.00 on Fridays and Saturdays
Adventure (Dry) Zone: 10.00-21.00 from Sundays to Thursdays and 10.00-23.00 on Fridays and Saturdays

Ticket prices

To be confirmed

Usa Boonchalakulkosol

Director of sales and marketing



"This may be a nice addition for Hua Hin, Cha Am and Pranburi residents and tourists. The area already has other smaller water theme parks that are very popular with mainly the Thais. I'm sure this new park will be 'invaded' by weekend guests from Bangkok.

Will this lead overseas guests to choose Hua Hin instead of Pattaya or Phuket? I don't think so; after all it's not Disney World right?"

Hans van den Born

Managing director, Diethelm Travel (Thailand)

"I don't think this park will be a game changer, especially for the international market. It will not be the deciding factor when foreign travellers decide where to spend their beach break. But it will be very interesting for the domestic market, and will have more influence on people's decision for short breaks from Bangkok."

Michael Lynden-Bell

General manager, Thailand, Exotissimo Travel

Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, Hengqin, Zhuhai



Opened in March 2014

Which markets are you targeting?

Mainly China, Hong Kong and Macau. We are developing the Taiwanese and South-east Asian markets. Our target segments include families with kids for school holidays; young adults in non-school holiday seasons and MICE groups.

What is your unique selling point?

The Whale Shark Aquarium claims to be the world's largest acrylic panel, which in turn sets a record for the world's largest aquarium window. It also features the largest underwater viewing dome where visitors can enjoy the experience with a spectacular underwater view.

How can travellers get there?

Located on Hengqin Island, the park is near Macau and only a 30-minute ride from Taipa/Hengqin Port to Hengqin Chimelong. At Taipa Ferry Terminal, board the Taipa Chimelong shuttle bus (departs hourly from 10.25 to 17.25) to Macau Lotus Port and through to Zhuhai Hengqin Port, disembarking at both ports for immigration formalities. After completing the immigration procedure, board the Taipa Chimelong shuttle bus to Chimelong.

How should the trade sell your theme park?

They may promote the FIT package for one night's accommodation at Chimelong Hengqin Bay Hotel inclusive of return ferry tickets, shuttle bus transfer, admission to Chimelong Ocean Kingdom and Chimelong Hengqin International Circus City. The group tour package may include transportation, Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, Chimelong Hengqin International Circus City and Zhuhai cuisine.

Operational hours

10.00-21.00

Ticket prices

Adults: RMB350 (US\$57)

Children (height 1m-1.5m): RMB245

Seniors (65 years old or above): RMB245

Holders of registration card for people with disabilities: RMB245



"The new park has generated more tourist traffic to Zhuhai, which had been lacking new tourism products like theme parks. It also draws many domestic travellers who extend their visit to Hengqin Island after touring around Guangdong province. I observe that Chinese travellers now tend to stay longer than before.

This new attraction also draws traffic from Macau and Hong Kong. Business is good with high demand for weekend packages. However, the park needs to improve accessibility given its remote location on Hengqin Island. It's an issue for FITs, and I hope to see more shuttle bus or public transportation connecting to the park. The shuttle service from Taipa Ferry Terminal is not frequent."

Wing Wong

Managing director, W Travel, Hong Kong



CONFERENCE 2014

Technology and The 5Cs



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Channels

- What does it mean to have a mobile-first strategy?
- How should agencies use mobile to sell and service clients?
- How can the cloud help?

Content

- How can travel agencies use technology to expand their range of content at little cost?

Customer Marketing

- As a click-and-mortar agency, how should you approach marketing platforms such as social media, user-generated content sites and search?
- How can marketing messages be consistent across all touch points?

C - Level

- As a travel agency boss, how can you use technology to boost staff productivity and automate your operations?
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Alaska Guam Northern Marianas

From magnificent glaciers to pristine marine reserves and luxurious tropical islands, these three states offer endless outdoor adventures at every turn with breath-taking landscapes and unique cultures.



What to sell

Wildlife

Wildlife watching is a must-do in Alaska. Bald eagles, polar bears, whales, moose, salmon and grizzly bears are just some of the abundance of wildlife inhabiting its national parks and waters. Together with other rare and endangered species, this is one of the few places on earth to encounter wildlife in their original, untouched natural habitats.



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Traverse wide open roads as you embark on an unforgettable journey to awe-inspiring mountain ranges, road accessible glaciers and crystal clear lakes. Three routes have been designated **National "Scenic byways"** - the **Glenn and Seward Highways** and the **Alaska Marine Highway**. Or, hop on the **Alaska Railroad** for a spectacular journey stretching 470 miles from **Seward to Fairbanks**.



National Parks

Alaska houses 17 **national park** areas, which spans two-thirds of the land in America's entire national park system. Pick from volcanoes, mountains, rivers and tundra – visitors will be spoiled for choice of **outdoor adventure**.



Flightseeing

Air taxis are a way of life in Alaska, soaring over evergreen trees, snow-capped mountain peaks, deep valleys and pristine waters. A once-in-a-lifetime experience for travelers, flightseeing gives you a **bird's eye view** of a land so steeped in natural history while you cruise to your next wilderness destination.



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Dash through the snow while dog sledding, or carve through fresh powder while snowboarding in this classic winter wonderland. Or, engage in popular experiences like Northern Lights viewing and **cultural events**. One surprising thing to note is that Alaska is neither dark nor cold in winter as one might expect, so visitors get to experience and enjoy this magical season in comfort.



Awe-inspiring mountain ranges, road accessible glaciers and crystal clear lakes



Alaska

Soak in a world of stunning natural beauty to take your breath away

With its abundance of captivating scenic beauty, majestic glaciers and diverse wildlife, the grandeur and vastness of Alaska is quite an incredible sight to behold. Be it a **road trip, cruise or hike**, Alaska promises an unforgettable journey to embark on. This postcard perfect destination is the largest state in America and home to some of the country's most untouched landscapes, offering a plethora of sightseeing opportunities for everyone. Be awestruck by the kaleidoscopic colors of the **Northern Lights**, kayak along its rugged coastlines or walk through a glacier – the superlative beauty of Alaska will surpass your imagination and whet your appetite for adventure.



The largest glacier in Alaska is at 850 square miles, an equivalent to 400,000 football fields!

DO YOU KNOW?



Guam

Island in the Sun,
Jewel in the Pacific



An island paradise and hidden gem only 30 miles long and nine miles wide, the U.S. territory of Guam has carved a name for itself with pristine beaches and deep-sea diving. Hike to a waterfall, go dolphin watching or tuck into a hearty feast of local cuisine – this fun-filled destination promises to relax and rejuvenate travelers.

What to sell Chamorro Culture

The biggest island in the Mariana Islands is perched between Asia and North America, with a colorful history as a colony of Spain, United States and Japan. The seafaring people who were its original inhabitants from over 4000 years ago brought along a language and culture that has evolved to become native Chamorro culture. Woven together with colonial influences, Guam offers a rich tapestry of history and heritage.

Natural Beauty

From sun-kissed beaches and turquoise waters to its rugged coastline and lush forests, Guam is an idyllic tropical paradise far from the hustle and bustle of daily life. Flora and fauna flourish here, with over 600 species of plants calling this island home.

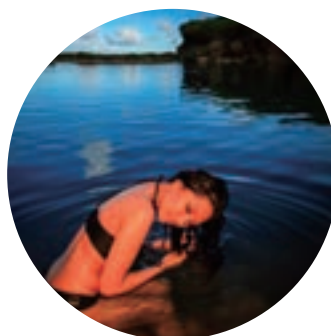
Outdoor Activities

Surfing, diving, kayaking, fishing or golfing – the sheer range of outdoor activities in Guam alone will leave you spoilt for choice. Days can be as action-packed or as relaxing as you want them to be, making for a true escape in every sense of the word.

Vibrant Cultural Scene

The petite size of this island belies its celebratory spirit. Festivals thrive here, with each of Guam's 19 villages having their own fiesta day. There is no better way to immerse yourself in Guam's Chamorro culture than by partaking in a lively yet intimate celebration with the friendly locals.

<http://www.visitguam.com>



Action-packed
or relaxing
escape in a
charming island
paradise



Northern Marianas

Just northeast of Guam lies a charming, little-known getaway known as the Northern Mariana Islands. Composed of 14 distinct islands including **Saipan**, **Tinian** and **Rota**, this lush, tropical getaway lets you bask in the unhurried pace of life and tropical warmth. It is here that you will find hidden beaches, historic sites like World War II relics, underwater wrecks, flourishing coral reefs, world-class golf courses and street markets filled with local delights.

<http://www.mymarianas.com>



Shopping in Guam is duty free. This means all the products by Guam's independent designers and big brands are more affordable here than elsewhere in the USA.

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Destination Thailand

A TRANSFORMATION C

Hotellers are making moves to shake off Pattaya's long-held reputation as a sleazy, adult-oriented destination and reimagine the Gulf of Thailand resort town, or at least its northern part, as a family-friendly location which is also ideal for hosting MICE events and Indian weddings.

North Pattaya Alliance (NPA) – comprising seven hotels including Amari Pattaya, Cape Dara, Dusit Thani Pattaya, Holiday Inn Pattaya, Pullman Pattaya Hotel G, The Zign Hotel and Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort – was officially launched in July. Supported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau and Pattaya City Hall, the alliance is focused on establishing the destination under the *North Pattaya – More than you think* branding campaign.

David Barrett, executive director for events at Onyx Hospitality Group, who played an instrumental role in forming the alliance, said the cluster of high-end internationally branded hotels in the city's north creates a different experience to that which may be more commonly associated with the destination.

"Pattaya has been changing for some years now, but we're making a concerted effort to get people to take another look (at the destination)," he said. "(NPA) has a synergy of products. All (member hotels) have meetings space; all are targeting corporate members and Indian weddings."

He added: "There's also a lot more for families to do around Pattaya these days. The opening of new major attractions like Cartoon Network (Amazone) water park



Pattaya has built up a raucous reputation over the years (above); the North Pattaya Alliance is keen to overcome this perception by wooing families to the destination

Viewpoint

Can Pattaya successfully rebrand itself as a family-friendly destination?

Peter de Ruiter, managing director, Oriental Travel Thailand

"It's not the first time that they've wanted to attract more families. Many things would have to change (to achieve that), and I think that will be rather difficult as it seems that most hotels are quite happy with the situation as it is right now. Why do we have to change it into a more family(-targeted) destination knowing it will be difficult to change? For family holidays, it's better to concentrate on Hua Hin or some other nice places."



Roman Czabaj, business development manager, ITC Bangkok

"I think the seven hotels have a huge potential for attracting Indian weddings or MICE groups, but I just don't see how they can attract families. Pattaya is simply not a family destination."

MY WAY

Alex Chakrabarti

General manager, Hotel Baraquda Pattaya

How do you spend your days off in Pattaya?

I love using my weekends to get away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Pattaya. This is surprisingly easy. My family and I usually head to Bang Saray Beach which is about a 20-minute drive from town in good traffic. It's very relaxing there and less crowded than Pattaya Beach. To round the day off we tend to swing by Silverlake Vineyard on the way back and open a bottle or two of wine at the Italian restaurant there.

What are the good restaurants downtown?

There are a lot of good places to eat in Pattaya. I like Momento Beach off Theprasit Road; it serves a good range of mostly western food at very reasonable prices. Woodlands Hotel & Resort has La Ferme, a very good French restaurant – they have a cafe and bakery too if you want to stop by for a snack during the day.

Are there many reputable bars or clubs that visitors can go to?

Certainly, Pattaya has changed a lot in recent years. There are plenty of upscale places. Of course, I recommend you start off at Sunset Lounge, our open bar on the sixth floor which is perfect for a couple of cocktails. Then there's Differ



Can Pattaya shed its less savoury reputation and successfully morph into the family-friendly and wedding destination that it desires to become? **Greg Lowe** reports

HALLENGE



Destination in numbers

15%

Pattaya's share of Thailand's Indian wedding market

1,197

The number of properties in Pattaya, of which only 187 are legal hotels

1,200

The number of hotel rooms coming online in Pattaya in 2014



Pub, which is popular with high-society Thais and expats. It's a good place to enjoy some champagne, good wine or whisky while listening to great music.

For clubs, I recommend Mixx. It is on Walking Street but it's bringing in top international deejays. It's the best club in town.

Are there any activities that adventurous visitors should try?

We love island hopping on a catamaran. It's surprisingly good value. If you have a group of 20 to 25 people it's only a couple of thousand baht each, and that includes the crew. So you can have some bottles of Veuve Clicquot on ice while the barbecue sizzles away at the back. We tend to visit the local islands such as Koh Lan and Koh Krok, or just jump in and do some snorkelling. We always use Serenity Yachting for this. It's great for leisure groups and MICE.

If you like golf, there are plenty of top-class courses around Pattaya. More people are now coming here for golf than Phuket.

this year and Ramayana (Water Park) next year will help bring in more families."

While DMCs support the initiative, they are sceptical about how much the alliance can achieve. Rebranding Pattaya as a family destination is considered to be a much harder task than attracting the MICE and wedding markets.

While Pattaya's major, Ittipol Khunpluem, admits that there are some less desirable elements that "do not help attract tourists, especially family groups", he believes the NPA cluster presents a new offering that can pull in families, with the City Hall prepared to put its money where its mouth is.

"We fully support the initiative and have set up a special budget for the alliance," said Ittiphol.

NPA has outlined some ambitious goals. It is targeting Pattaya to become Thailand's top Indian weddings destination. Currently the city is ranked third with 15 per cent of the market after Phuket and Hua Hin, which account for 40 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. It is also investing heavily in marketing and promotions, including printing 20,000 brochures and developing social media and digital platforms such as www.pattayamore.com and dedicated YouTube channels. Festival of Rice, a culinary celebration of the grain, will take place from

October 11-12.

Despite being one of Thailand's lower-end destinations, Pattaya still attracts reasonable MICE business and that segment may respond positively to the alliance's initiatives, said Roman Czabaj, business development manager at ITC Bangkok.

"Pattaya is a good choice for our short-staying incentive groups, staying five nights, where we combine Bangkok, Kanchanaburi and Pattaya," he said.

"Pattaya has been very successful in attracting Russian, Chinese and Indian tourists when it comes to the numbers, but on the other hand Pattaya has come to be seen as a Russian and Chinese destination that is not quite suitable for other markets – Europe, Australia, the Americas," Czabaj added. "That is a challenge: how to balance and diversify the markets?"

Peter de Ruiter, managing director of Oriental Travel Thailand, which focuses on the Benelux markets, agrees that the city is attracting more tourists from new source markets, but this changing face of the destination could hamper NPA's attempts to draw in higher-spending guests to its hotels.

"Before we sent many groups and FITs (to Pattaya)," he said. "Now our groups are going to Hua Hin and Cha-Am, and just a few FIT clients are visiting Pattaya."

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Destination Thailand

How to sell

DO **Cartoon Network Amazone**, one of South-east Asia's largest water parks, recently opened just outside of Pattaya. When all phases are complete, the 5.7ha development will feature 10 themed zones and more than 150 different water features. Other attractions include meet-and-greet activities with key Cartoon Network characters, the Foodville dining facility and live acrobatic shows. Prices start from 1,590 baht/1,190 baht (US\$50/US\$37) for adults and children respectively.



EAT **Cadillac Cafe & Bar** offers a solid selection of American and Thai home cooking all served in slightly lurid Miami South Beach-style surrounds. The food is good and prices are very reasonable in this restaurant which is suitable for families and small groups.

SEE **Silverlake Vineyard** makes for a decent afternoon out. Located just outside of Pattaya, it features a winery, guesthouse, community mall, restaurants and wide expanses of vineyards and manicured gardens. Vineyard and winery tours run throughout the day, and are best rounded off with a tasting of the local vino.

STAY **Holiday Inn Pattaya**, one of the destination's newest properties, features 567 guest rooms and targets family and business travellers. It has three swimming pools, six bars and restaurants, and a kids eat free policy. Events facilities include a workshop meeting floor with a 950-pax ballroom and three flexible meetings rooms.

NEWS IN A MINUTE

- 1 Thailand Travel Shield**
The Tourism Authority of Thailand has partnered four local insurance companies – Muang Thai Insurance, Chao Phaya Insurance, Siam City Insurance and Krungthai Panich Insurance – to provide instant online coverage for foreign visitors who cannot buy travel insurance from overseas insurers as Thailand remains under martial law. Thailand Travel Shield offers a range of policies from 650 baht (US\$20) to 12,000 baht for durations varying from one day to a year, available for online purchase at www.tourismthailand.org/Thailand-TravelShield.
- 2 Vana Nava Hua Hin**
Vana Nava Hua Hin Jungle water park will debut in Hua Hin come November, hot on the heels of Cartoon Network Amazone's recent debut in Pattaya. Located in the city centre near InterContinental Hua Hin Resort and Cicada Market, the 3.2ha jungle-themed water park boasts over 19 attractions designed by Canadian water park specialist, WhiteWater West. Highlights include Thailand's first Abyss slide, a surf shack with a surf simulator, a 1,600m² wave pool, a multi-level aqua course and a 345m lazy river. Other facilities include an open-air concert venue, F&B outlets, massage pavilions and souvenir shops.
- 3 Central Embassy**
After several delays, Central Embassy finally opened its doors in May to offer a new luxury shopping option in Bangkok. The mall offers eight floors of upscale retail brands, both international and domestic, scores of high-end restaurants, bistros and cafes as well as Embassy Diplomat Screens for an indulgent cinematic experience. The connecting Park Hyatt Bangkok is set to debut next year.
- 4 Longer visa exemption**
The Thai Immigration Bureau has announced a new regulation that permits tourists to extend their stay in the country by another 30 days, effective since August 29. Under this new ruling, tourists from 49 countries who enter Thailand under the 30-day visa exemption can extend their stay for another 30 days – instead of the former seven days – which allows an effective stay in the country without a visa for up to 60 stays. Visitors holding the 60-day tourist visa will also be eligible for the 30-day extension.
- 5 Terminal X**
Phuket International Airport expanded its facilities with the opening of Terminal X in February. All international charter flights will now be channelled through the 1,320m² terminal, which has 10 check-in counters, a waiting area and baggage storage space, plus a processing capacity of 1,000 passengers per hour.
- 6 Hyatt Regency Hua Hin**
The 12-year-old Hyatt Regency Hua Hin, which first opened its doors in December 2001, has completed a comprehensive makeover in July to boast an entirely new look and feel. The remodel started in 2010 with the overhaul of the Regency Club rooms and suites, and continued in 2012 with the restoration of the Presidential Villas. Activity then ceased until earlier this year, when construction began on the refurbishment of 79 Hyatt Guestrooms and the establishment of 50 Deluxe Rooms, a new room category at the 213-room sea-side resort.



Meetings & Events

This is where a tropical resort, idyllic villas and convenient relaxation facilities surround an epicentre of 11 meeting rooms, all on one floor.

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A meeting room with a long table, several green glass bottles, and a laptop. The room has large windows and a modern, clean design.

Destination Macau

While laudable, Macau's efforts to promote its cultural and creative side are still nascent. There's potential to develop this further, writes **Prudence Lui**

St Anthony's church, considered to be Macau's very first church

Destination in numbers

12,851,806

The number of visitors Macau welcomed in January-May 2014, up 8.8 per cent year-on-year

85.9%

The average occupancy rate of Macau's hotels in 1H2014, up six per cent year-on-year

12%

The year-on-year rise in Macau's average room rate in 1H2014, to MOP1,599 (US\$200)

ALL GAME ABOUT CULTURE

Macau is bent on refreshing its image as a destination not just for gaming facilities but also for culture and creativity.

In the latest initiative, the Cultural Affairs Bureau launched in April the *Macao Cultural and Creative Map*, along with a mobile app version, to facilitate locals' and tourists' discovery of Macau's cultural and creative spaces. The map is distributed in 158 locations in Hong Kong and Macau, including checkpoints, museums, hotels, travel agencies, and cultural and creative entities.

It covers seven parishes and their respective cultural and creative spaces through text and pictures. It also provides information about the city's World Heritage sites, museums and bus routes for sites like Our Lady of Fatima Parish, St Anthony Parish, St Lazarus Parish, The Cathedral Parish and St Lawrence Parish.

For example, St Lazarus Parish houses the G17 Gallery which provides the ex-

hibition, sale and exchange of ceramics, while the nearby G32 Gallery is a creative space converted from a local's home with original features and household items.

Kevin Chan, deputy general manager of Hotel Royal, which is strategically located near the historic Tap Seac Square, said: "I think it is a good start to present something other than gaming to tourists. I would not say the majority of our tourists are looking for cultural activities or that these cultural elements will draw tons of tourists at this moment. But it is certainly refreshing to put together a map for interested parties."

"Macau has always been a cultural melting pot due to our Portuguese colonial heritage. Culture is, however, not only history; it is evolving with everyday life, trends and most importantly, people."

China Travel Service (Macau) deputy general manager, Huang Can-hui, said he had already been incorporating creative and cultural elements into his Macau programmes. Nevertheless, he added: "Any product that supports tourism is welcome. This dedicated map is a kind of gimmick for us to impress clients. Indeed,

it provides another option for us to sell Macau."

In fact, Macau Government Tourist Office's (MGTO) efforts to promote the creative and cultural industries kicked off in 2010, when a development team was set up, a dedicated website was created and flexible subsidies were provided to nurture related talents. In recent years, the bureau has also realigned cultural spaces and unutilised facilities, promoting them alongside UNESCO sites.

For instance, the Ruins of St Paul's is positioned as the centre of three cultural tourism walking routes from the east, west and south of the city. From the Ruins, the walks direct visitors to Tap Seac Square's Glass House, which is being revitalised to house cultural and creative shops, bookstores, special F&B outlets, exhibitions and workshops. This project is expected to be completed in 2015.

Said a spokesperson: "MGTO's promotions abroad take local artists along and showcase many made-in-Macau creations. Additionally, MGTO does its best to make Macau's cultural and creative spaces known to many opinion industry leaders

we welcome here on fam trips.

"We also try to show independent travellers this side of Macau through tools like our website and the *Step Out, Experience Macau's Communities* (programme); the latter comprises two (out of four) walking tour routes, namely *A Tour of Arts and Culture* and *A Tour of Nature and Creativity*."

Tina Fu, instructor and coordinator for creative and IT studies, Tourism and Hotel School, Institute for Tourism Studies, said: "We observe that the cultural and creative policy is working, and is motivating the growth of the industry. However, as the initiative is still at a developmental stage, there is lots of room for improvement, like creating more (job) positions for the cultural and creative industries."

She suggested: "It is important to link cultural heritage spots with (relevant) cultural and creative elements (such as workshops where tourists can try their hand at making arts and crafts or souvenir shops), so tourists will find it interesting at each spot along the route. I'd also suggest extending this concept to more cultural and creative locations in order to develop new routes."

Destination Macau

How to sell



Fado

STAY Rebranded from **The Westin Resort Macau** to **Grand Coloane Resort** in June, the resort completed its makeover for all 208 guestrooms and suites last December. Each room and suite now has a Philips 40- or 46-inch full HD LED television, brand new carpets and armoire, and accent wallpaper. Located on the quiet side of Coloane and adjacent to Hac Sa Beach, the resort has no gaming facilities, but is an ideal escape from the hustle and bustle of downtown.

EAT Newly opened **Fado** excites guests' palates by offering traditional Portuguese cuisine with a contemporary twist. Situated in Hotel Royal on the Macau Peninsula, it's one of the newest restaurants helmed by Chef Luis Americao and Marco Gomes from Portugal. The 120-seat outlet features four private rooms and boasts ingredients like squid and olive oil imported directly from Portugal. A live cooking demonstration is available when ordering the *bolinhos de bacalhau* (a type of codfish pastry).

SEE Gardens, parks and verdant squares are aplenty in Macau. The Suzhou-style **Lou Lim Leoc Garden** in the downtown area offers a restful respite, while the **Seac Pai Van Park** in Coloane Island houses a zoo and an agrarian museum. For those wanting something challenging, embark on one of the walking trails surrounding the **Alto de Coloane** hill. The trails offer different levels of physical endurance along with beautiful views and rejuvenating fresh air.

Viewpoint

What challenges does Macau face in promoting its culture and creative side to tourists?

Tina Fu, instructor and coordinator for creative and IT studies, Tourism and Hotel School, Institute for Tourism Studies

"Macau's challenge is eliminating the image of a mono-industry, i.e. gambling. The economy relies heavily on the gambling industry that has been growing fast over the years. It may thus be difficult for us to change people's perception and arouse their interest in our creative and cultural events. However, we should still continue to reinforce cultural and creative development, and put more effort into making this industry outstanding, e.g. strengthening the promotion of cultural and creative activities to local and overseas markets. By doing this, we can also provide more choices for our tourists."



Johnny Choi, director of sales, Estoril Tours Travel Agency



"I reckon only upmarket or sophisticated travellers like association groups may be interested in the creative and cultural industries, which are not for the masses. Travel consultants are seldom approached by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, but I hope both MGTO and the bureau could work together to organise some seminars for us and teach us how to promote and market this segment. It's hard for us to do it alone."

MY WAY



Senado Square

Rutger Verschuren

General manager
Grand Lapa Macau

What are your hobbies?

When you have a busy job and a family like me, free time is definitely for the family. My kids are young and they fill my spare time with lots of joy and action.

Where do you usually go for your hobby?

My family and I love to go out and stroll downtown, no matter how busy the streets are. We enjoy watching people, trying out small eateries, shopping around without a shopping list, watching a movie and swimming at the gorgeous pools of Grand Coloane Resort or Grand Lapa Macau.

Where do you go to destress?

I can very easily relax anywhere, but the best is with a pool or a garden nearby. I love green spaces and nature, so Coloane is one of the best options for me. Although just a short drive from Macau's city, it is an ultra-relaxing whole new world!

Which part of Macau are you most familiar with?

I am most familiar with Taipa, where I live, and of course with Coloane and even downtown Macau, near my office. Macau isn't very difficult to get around with its mere 30km² of land, and one can't really get lost. Having said that, Macau Peninsula can be hard to grasp due to a labyrinth of small one-way roads in the residential areas.

Any favourite place you enjoy hanging out at?

Senado Square (San Malo), as well as Old Taipa and Old Coloane Village where there are many small and historical streets with shops, restaurants and churches. These are where one can still feel the Macanese lifestyle and culture, and forget that one is in one of the world's busiest tourist destinations.

Where do you go for an authentic taste of your favourite food?

I love Thai food, and it's no secret that Naam, Grand Lapa's Thai restaurant, serves the best and most authentic Thai cuisine in town. Additionally, Café on 4 on Macau Tower's fourth floor is such a hidden place – it offers views of the sea, a peaceful ambience, and nice food and drinks at the most reasonable prices!



Naam, Grand Lapa's Thai restaurant

NEWS IN A MINUTE

1 Macau Fisherman's Wharf

Redevelopment of Macau Fisherman's Wharf is under way, and is slated for completion in 3Q2016. The project will welcome three hotels – Harbourview Hotel (3Q2014), Legend Palace Hotel (2Q2015) and Legendale Hotel (2016). The four-star Harbourview Hotel is modelled after 18th century architecture in Prague and will offer 445 rooms, F&B outlets, a health club and retail spaces.

Existing facilities and buildings at Macau Fisherman's Wharf will also be refurbished, and visitors can expect to see new restaurants. Once complete, the attraction will increase in size by about 23,500m² to approximately 133,000m².

2 TurboJET

TurboJET has made improvements to its passenger experience, offering free Wi-Fi connection on board its full fleet and shortening its sea-to-air minimum connection time by 10 minutes. Passengers with checked baggage using the Upstream Check-in Service in Macau will require a

transfer time of only 80 minutes, while passengers without checked baggage need 65 minutes.

Furthermore, four new Airport Route counters have been deployed on level two of the departure hall at Macau Maritime Ferry Terminal. These will shorten passengers' waiting time, facilitate check-in for ferry and flight, and improve baggage processing efficiency.

3 Macau Open Top Bus

Macau Open Top Bus, operated by Goldspark Macau Tours, will have two new buses coming into operations soon. This will mean an enhancement of the tour bus service's schedule and bus routes, including new tourism hotspots. There are also plans to launch a Taipa route soon.

Currently, Macau Open Top Bus takes passengers on a 75-minute tour of the Macau Peninsula, covering 10 attractions such as the Macau Science Center, Kun Lam Statue and The Red Market.

An audio commentary is avail-



able in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Italian, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. There are 10 departures per day, from 09.30 to 16.15.

The tour costs HK\$150 (US\$19)

per adult and passengers can enjoy free Wi-Fi on board. A special two-day package, which expires on October 5, bundles tickets to the Transformers 30th Anniversary Expo at The Venetian Macao.

TRIED & TESTED

Wynn Macau

Prudence Lui checks into Wynn Macau and experiences its extravagance after the completion of its first major refurbishment since inception in 2006.

LOCATION Located next to the eastern end of Nam Van Lake, Wynn Macau enjoys a prominent downtown spot with a panoramic view of the lake. It is only five minutes by taxi from Macau Ferry Pier in smooth traffic. Neighbouring establishments include MGM, Lisboa and Grand Lisboa.

ROOMS I stayed in a 185m² one-bedroom suite in the Wynn Tower facing the stunning Nam Van Lake, Hengqin Island and Macau's skyline. The floor-to-ceiling

windows ensured abundant daylight in the suite's bar, bedroom, massage room and entertainment space. With the revamp, my suite boasted simple décor, while the spacious living area complete with new sofas and carpeting was cosy enough for a small party of friends. There was also a large LCD television, an iPod docking station and a BluRay player in a custom-designed media console.

Wynn's attention to detail and sense of luxury is reflected in its hardware. I am a tea lover so I was naturally impressed by the array of Chinese and Western tea provided. It would be nice to have a couple of cushions on the sofa though.

As a female traveller, a spacious bathroom is an advantage, and mine featured a dressing area with bathtub, glass-enclosed

shower, walk-in closet and an LCD television. The space was even bigger than the bedroom.

FACILITIES The hotel's signature Spa boasts a new and refreshed look. The treatment rooms have new wall coverings and carpeting. The massage rooms feature a new in-wall iPod docking station connected to well-designed speakers for the complete spa experience.

For business travellers, the hotel offers a 2,000m² multi-purpose meeting space catering for small- to medium-sized functions.

F&B I was spoiled for choice given the range of casual to fine dining options available. Many of the chefs have been working at the outlets since the hotel's opening. Out of the eight dining outlets, the Golden

Flower and Wing Lei are Michelin-starred restaurants.

SERVICE Attentive service was given when I mistakenly walked into the Wynn Tower lobby for check-in. I was swiftly escorted to the Wynn Club, which had a separate entrance and reception desk.

VERDICT The hotel stayed true to the brand's image and is worth the expense.

Name Wynn Macau
No. of rooms 594 (Wynn Tower)
Rates HK\$5,276 (US\$678, including service charge and tax)
Contact details
Tel: (853) 2888-9966
Email: roomreservations@wynnmacau.com
Website: wynnmacau.com





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Social

From the newest executive movements to recent trade celebrations and major upcoming events, we round up the latest happenings to keep you plugged in

GALLERY

TRAVELRAVE ROUNDTABLE

As a preview to TravelRave 2014, the Singapore Tourism Board held a panel session in Jakarta on August 26 to discuss the trends behind the new generation of travellers in Asia and how businesses can tap onto the growing market. This rounds off a series of dialogues held across Asia.



From left: Gracia Chiang of TTG Asia Media moderating the media session with panellists Singapore Tourism Board's Neeta Lachmandas, Google's Nicolas Oudin, Panorama Group Indonesia's Budi Tirtawisata and McKinsey & Company's Ajay Sohoni

SICHUAN-THEMED OUTLET OF SUNFLOWER TRAVEL

Panda, anyone? Hong Kong's Sunflower Travel Service recently revamped its Causeway Bay shopfront in line with its Sichuan travel promotion. Some 1,599 pandas (representing the population of pandas worldwide) are up for grabs for customers who sign up for luxury tour packages to Sichuan. This offer lasts until November.



APPOINTMENTS



Erik Anderouard

ERIK ANDEROUARD
NOW Senior vice president, operations, Pan Pacific Hotels Group (PPHG)
THEN Vice president, hotel operations, United Capital Corp

TIMUR SENTURK
NOW Vice president, operations, ASEAN, PPHG
THEN Managing director, Interstate China Hotels & Resorts

ANGIE VAUX
NOW Commercial director, APAC, TripAdvisor for Business
THEN Senior director, business unit head, South-east Asia, SAP



Bernard Rodrigues

JEFF CHENG
NOW General manager, Fairmont Yancheng Lake
THEN Hotel manager at Fairmont Nanjing

GRAHAM HEWITT
NOW General manager, Fairmont Nanjing
THEN Various positions at The St Regis Beijing, Sheraton Wenzhou and Le Meridien Angkor, among others

BERNARD RODRIGUES
NOW General manager, New World Millennium Hong Kong
THEN General manager, The Charterhouse Causeway Bay Hong Kong



Vincent Lelay

VINCENT LELAY
NOW Cluster general manager, The Singapore Resort & Spa Sentosa and Sofitel So Singapore
THEN Project liaison manager, The Singapore Resort & Spa Sentosa

EDWINA SAN
NOW Director of sales & marketing, Park Hyatt Melbourne
THEN General manager, commercial partnerships, Melbourne Convention Bureau

PIYA YODMANI
NOW CEO, NokScoot
THEN Leadership positions at



Edwina San



Lucia Franziska

Thai Airways International and Nok Air

LUCIA FRANZISKA
NOW General manager, Banjaran Hotspings Retreat Ipoh
THEN Managed Le Planteur Restaurant in Yangon alongside her Michelin-starred chef husband, Felix Eppisser, who is now Banjaran's culinary director

ANDREAS FLAIG
NOW Executive vice president, development, Asia Pacific, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group
THEN Managing director for advisory, Asia and China, Jones Lang LaSalle's Hotels and Hospitality Group

CHERYL ONG
NOW Director of sales & marketing, Raffles Singapore
THEN Director of sales & marketing, The St Regis Singapore



Best Western to set foot in Shah Alam, Malaysia

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

Best Western International is delighted to launch its first hotel in Shah Alam, just 50km from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Strategically located in the economic hub and capital of Selangor, BEST WESTERN i-City Hotel & Suites Shah Alam will be a modern midscale hotel offering optimum comfort, convenience and service excellence.

Scheduled to open in the fourth quarter of 2014, this new-generation hotel will feature 3 meeting rooms (for up to 120 delegates), as well as a Coffee House restaurant serving local and international dishes in contemporary surroundings. The hotel will feature a total of 214 guest rooms and suites, all equipped with the latest amenities, including complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi, 32-inch LCD TV, minibar, desk, and tea & coffee making facilities.

With four hotels already open in this exciting, fast-growing country - and a further ten in the pipeline- we look forward to serving the needs of ever more Malaysian and international guests in the future.



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ICYMI: Tune in to what's been going on at ttgasia.com and the social media space. Plus, we end off on a light-hearted note

HEADLINES

Videos are a growing catalyst for travel purchases with viewers looking to connect with creators and travel brands, said MyTravelResearch.com, who has released a guide on how to latch on to video as a vehicle for marketing.

According to Google statistics based on the US market and released in August, two out of three US consumers now watch online travel videos when considering taking a trip.

Other statistics related to travel videos have skyrocketed – views of travel-related content on YouTube are up 118 per cent year-on-year; and travel video watching has increased 97 per cent on smartphones and 205 per cent on tablets.

Google also found that 67 per cent of travel-related views are for brand or professionally released videos, while 71 per cent of travel-related searches on YouTube are for destinations.

Furthermore, video-watching is not a one-off affair, and most want to stay in the loop by subscribing to YouTube channels.

Most popular travel videos are those featuring authentic, real-life stories, and almost 50 per cent of travel subscriptions are to video blogs that feature personal travel experiences.

Meanwhile 88 per cent of YouTube travel searches focus on destinations, attractions, points of interest and general travel ideas in that order.



WHO'S SAYING WHAT

Instagram



It's a champagne and confetti affair at the launch of the Bangkok-Khon Kaen Isan Indulgence media fam trip, as part of the Thailand - MICE United alliance to boost the country's #MICE industry. Seen here from left are Thai Airways' Charles Pamommontri, Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Sek Wannamethee, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Nopparat Maythaveekulchai and Ratchaprasong Square Trade Association's Chai Srivikorn



Molecular gastronomy meets traditional Indian cuisine in a mad explosion of flavours at the newly opened Saha on #Singapore's Duxton Hill. We suss out its #MICE potential in the October issue of #TTGmice

Tweets



Booking.com (@bookingcom) reached out to the Twittersphere this month with what may be the most fun 30-day questionnaire in recent times, if there are indeed other 30-day questionnaires out there. Users respond to a different topic every day in September with the hashtag #30stays. Here are some of the interesting answers we found:

- @life_muses #30stays best freebie-In Sydney upgrade 2 glamour suite with amazing view & treats cause @ check-in they saw it was my birthday!!
- @AdventureJca #30stays Weirdest place I've woken up: In a hotel made out of salt in southern Bolivia.
- @TravelEater Why I love solo #travel: when something goes wrong, no one complains! #30stays



@endesignonline My favorite travel buddy overlooking the Saar after a hike in South Germany #puppies #30stays

@lifeonashelf My most exciting holiday was seeing Mount Everest. I will never forget the way it felt seeing it. #30stays

@Ayundya #30stays the trip that changed my life! London 2010; really opened my eyes that people should be broad minded!



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- At present, these exceptional organisations and their years of induction are:
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 - Singapore Changi Airport (2002)
 - Hertz Asia Pacific (2005)
 - Royal Cliff Hotels Group (2006)
 - Star Cruises (2008)
 - Abacus International (2009)
 - SilkAir (2010)
 - Lotte Tour (2011)
 - Hong Kong International Airport (2013)
 - Raffles Hotel Singapore (2013)

TTG Asia Media is pleased to announce that it is setting up a virtual TTG Travel Hall of Fame, which will enable us to showcase the accolades, artefacts and memorabilia of the region's most exceptional travel organisations in a far more effective way and to a global audience.



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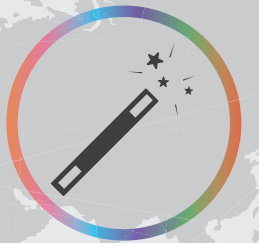
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