

August 2014

TTGmice

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Singapore – no conventional roar

UAE's soaring ambitions

PCOs, associations discuss
the current landscape of
event sponsorship

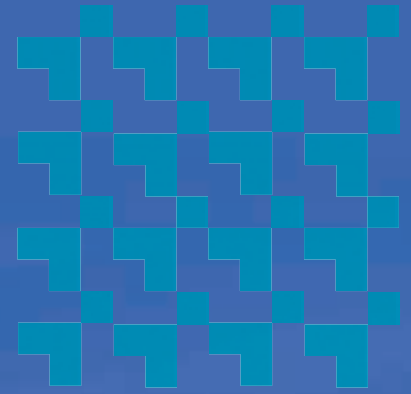


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Incentive ideas

Seeking the ideal destination for your events and conferences?

Dubai delivers the perfect combination of infrastructure, private and public sector support and a community of trained professionals for conferences, incentives, events and exhibitions. The city is easily accessible, with direct air connections to 260 destinations worldwide. It boasts several event venues including the world-class Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre that offers 90,000 square metres of event space. Dubai also offers over 85,000 hotel rooms in all budget classes, including 24,000 hotel rooms within walking distance of a Dubai Metro station. Add all this together and you will realise why Dubai is the perfect destination for successful events.



EDITORIAL

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

Gracia Chiang
Deputy Group Editor
(gracia.chiang@ttgasia.com)

Hannah Koh
Assistant Editor, TTG Asia Online
(hannah.koh@ttgasia.com)

Paige Lee Pei Qi
Assistant Editor, Singapore
(lee.peiqi@ttgasia.com)

Xinyi Liang-Pholsena
Assistant Editor, Thailand/Indochina
(liang.xinyi@ttgasia.com)

Kathy Neo
Copy Editor (kathy.neo@ttgasia.com)

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

Mimi Hudoyo
Editor, Indonesia (idmfasia@cbn.net.id)

Greg Lowe Thailand
(ttg@thegreglowe.com)

Prudence Lui Hong Kong/Greater China
(prului@yahoo.com)

Shekhar Niyogi, Rohit Kaul India
(shekhar.niyogi@ttgasia.com,
rohitkaul23@gmail.com)

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

Marianne Carandang, Rosa Ocampo
The Philippines
(marianne.carandang@ttgasia.com,
rosa.ocampo@gmail.com)

Redmond Sia, Goh Meng Yong
Creative Designers

Lina Tan Editorial Assistant

SALES & MARKETING

Michael Chow Group Publisher
(michael.chow@ttgasia.com)

Mervin Lee Business Manager
(mervin.lee@ttgasia.com)

Stephanie So Business Manager
(Hong Kong, stephanie.so@ttgasia.com)

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

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

Stephanie Toh Marketing Executive
(stephanie.toh@ttgasia.com)

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

Carol Cheng Asst Manager Administration &
Marketing (Hong Kong, carol.cheng@ttgasia.com)

PUBLISHING SERVICES

Tony Yeo Division Manager

Haze Loh Senior Creative Designer

Lynn Lim Web Executive

Carol Wong Senior Circulation Executive

OFFICES

Singapore

TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, 1 Science Park Road,
#04-07 The Capricorn, Singapore Science
Park II, Singapore 117528
Tel: +65 6395 7575, fax: +65 6536 0896,
email: contact@ttgasia.com

Hong Kong

TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, Unit 2011, 20/F,
Harbour Centre, 25 Harbour Road, Wanchai,
Hong Kong
Tel: +852 2237 7888, fax: +852 2237 7227

TTG ASIA MEDIA PTE LTD

Darren Ng Managing Director

Raini Hamdi Senior Editor
(raini.hamdi@ttgasia.com)



Raini Hamdi
Senior Editor

Winners all

As we go oohs and ahhs over the wonderful incentive ideas from around the world compiled by our reporters in this issue's cover story, let's take time to ponder about the very people they are for.

I was speaking to SITE president Paul Miller at the recent IMEX and he was telling me that as an industry, we have been too focused on the procurement process, while delivery of the programme has become rather automated. We've kind of lost sight of the qualifiers who have worked hard to earn their trips and we forget why they are there.

Paul said we are privileged to be serving *winners*, people who do great things in life. "We cannot underachieve with these people. We need to over-achieve their expectations and, when those are met, go to the next level, and the next. What's wrong with over-achieving targets ourselves?" he said.

"Incentive travel is not an 'industry'. It has touch points and is about emotions. In the rush of the world, we just need to stop and ask, why do we do what we are doing, who are we serving, how they got there? If we focus on their journey, we could be delivering better."

I think it is high time indeed that incentive suppliers rethink who the winners are today, especially when the market has become more diverse. What motivates experienced CEOs may not be the carrot for a new generation of high-flyers. Today's winners also come from all over the world, not just the traditional sources of the US and Europe but China, India, Indonesia, Russia and many others. While it is true that people regardless of their title and where they come from all want recognition, good service, etc, these are only the basics now. The 'wow' factor comes from a deeper understanding of their psyche.

The best places and ideas are mere tools to help us create a moment for clients. After all, even a simple room could be transformed into a magical experience if, for example, the surprise is a speaker that all the winners just want to hear. The last thing we want is to have a whole roster of special destinations and out-of-the-world ideas and regard this as the solution to impress winners. These are highly-travelled people; it takes more than that to wow them.

So let's be winners all. Let us be over-achievers serving over-achievers.

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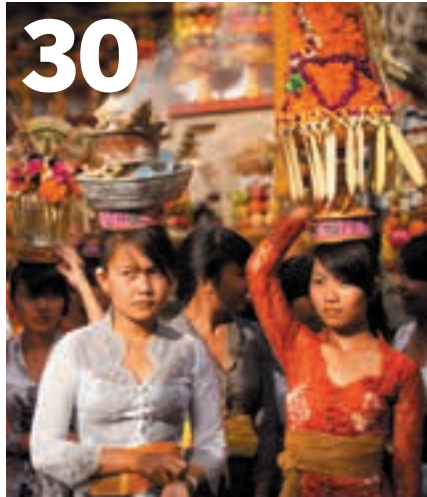
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From swimming with sea giants in one of the world's best conserved dive spots to an unusual game of camel polo, we hunt down some of the world's most interesting travel ideas to reward your top achievers with

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Despite its small size, Singapore commands a large presence in the global events industry to reign as Asia's top convention city. By Paige Lee Pei Qi

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Improved air links between China and Bali has strengthened the Chinese MICE market for the Island of the Gods, writes Mimi Hudoyo

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Spurred by Expo 2020, the UAE is now wooing global association congresses and meetings to sharpen its event destination status, writes Shekhar Niyogi

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MICE prospects are brighter now for New Delhi but several obstacles remain, threatening to stunt growth potential. By Rohit Kaul

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We love



Setting sights for the future

Much ink has been spilled over how airlines and hotels are adopting wearable technology into their operations, but *TTGmice* is excited how Google Glass – a voice-activated, head-mounted eyewear that allows users to take photos and videos as well as search the Internet – can be incorporated into meetings and events as well.

Peter Komornik, CEO of event technology firm Sli.do, believes that Glass can bring “more engaging and immersive experience” for event participants and speakers alike.

“Paired with an audience interaction app, Glass can serve as a private backchannel for event moderators to stay on top of the best questions from the audience (with a single tap of the headset),” he said.

Seeing “countless opportunities” in the utilisation of wearable computing devices in events, Komornik highlighted another potential use: “In a venue equipped with iBeacons (a mobile communication technology for indoor spaces), Glass can provide a real-time context for event participants to see push notifications about what is currently happening in which hall as they walk around the premises.”

Privacy concerns aside, another drawback that early adopters have pointed out, however, is the gadget’s limited battery life, which typically requires recharging after a few hours of usage.

Sli.do has rolled out a Google Glass app for event planners and speakers to interact with their audience.

More information can be found at www.sli.do.



First Courtyard by Marriott opens in South China

The 234-key Courtyard by Marriott Boluo has opened in Huizhou, China, making it the first Courtyard by Marriott in South China and the 71st Marriott International property in the massive country.

It comes outfitted with seven meeting rooms, with the largest being the Kaisa Ballroom which has capacity for 600 guests. All function venues are equipped with modern audiovisual technology and high-speed Internet access.

Other facilities at the hotel include two restaurants, a well-equipped fitness centre, an indoor swimming pool with a dry steam room, and an outdoor pool.

In an email interview with *TTGmice*, Kevin Gong, general manager of Courtyard by Marriott Boluo, said the Pearl River Delta, which comprises primarily of Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong, will provide the hotel’s main source of business event bookings.

The hotel will pursue corporate clients such as Samsung, LG, Sony and Coca-Cola based in Huizhou, and Gong expects to “see interest from local government agencies”.

Since the hotel’s official opening on June 30, it has hosted a 500-pax local association gathering and a two-day corporate meeting for 90 guests. – **Karen Yue**



Bengaluru welcomes second Aloft hotel

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide has opened its second Aloft property in Bengaluru, India. Siting within the city’s high-tech hub, the 191-key Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park shows off a stylish urban design and offers spacious loft inspired guestrooms, a selection of dining outlets such as Re:fuel by Aloft and Nook, an outdoor pool and a gym, among other facilities.

For business event planners, the hotel offers eight meeting venues including a 411m² banquet hall and Backyard, an outdoor terrace perfect for creative business meetings or social gatherings.

“Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park is a significant addition to the brand’s portfolio in India and will energise the hotel market by meeting the pent-up demand for stylish, lifestyle hotel brands,” said Dilip Puri, managing director India and regional vice president South Asia of Starwood Hotels and Resorts.

“This new generation Aloft hotel underscores the strength of Starwood’s network and the power of the Aloft brand. We expect the new Aloft to become a local hotspot, attracting both savvy travellers and tech professionals in the area,” he added.

Hilton Phuket Arcadia unveils new event space

Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa has added a new events space to its MICE inventory in a bid to win more regional business.

The 180m² Andaman Room, which can be divided in two, seats up to 130 people in theatre setting and includes an adjoining 66m² sheltered outdoor area.

General manager David Prince said: "With the addition of the Andaman Room, the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa is one of the most comprehensive MICE venues in South-east Asia."

Jens Frank-Mikkelsen, director of business development, told *TTG-mice* the property was targeting a range of source markets including the US, Australia, Europe, China, Singapore and Hong Kong. Key sectors include banking and finance, healthcare, transportation, logistics, industry associations and international government agencies.

"The hotel is now a part of Hilton Worldwide's Connect+ website, a service which provides industry-leading tools for meeting planners and allows customers to connect with Hilton event experts and sales representatives," Frank-Mikkelsen said. "We also have a special meeting package that is valid from June 1 to December 30, 2014." – **Greg Lowe**



Revamped Grand Hyatt Taipei scores more bookings

The 853-room Grand Hyatt Taipei has completed phase one of its US\$100 million makeover, with rooms in the West and East wings now sporting fresher, modern interiors.

Remaining works to the grand lobby, restaurants and exterior lighting are expected to finish by the start of 2015.

The makeover follows the hotel's refurbishment of its Grand Ballroom in 2000 and Grand Residence meetings area in 2006, as well as other updates to various facilities throughout the years since its opening in September 1990.

Liling Chu, Grand Hyatt Taipei's director of events, said the renovation has helped to generate increased business, especially from new clients who are attracted to new facilities in the hotel.

"Business has been thriving," Chu said, adding that the Grand Ballroom enjoys an average occupancy rate of 70 to 80 per cent.

According to Chu, domestic bookings make up 55 to 60 per cent of the hotel's event business, and these functions are usually weddings and social gatherings. Conference and meeting packages offered by the hotel are mostly consumed by international companies with offices in Taiwan.

Although the hotel is now armed with updated hardware, Chu gave no indication that room rates and venue rental fees would be adjusted upwards. – **Karen Yue**

SilkAir now flies to Hangzhou

Singapore-based SilkAir kicked off its first flights to Hangzhou in late-June, marking the beginning of services to the carrier's eighth destination in China.

The four-times-weekly service operates every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday on Airbus A320 aircraft in a two-class configuration.

Flights depart Singapore at 10.00 to arrive at 15.20 in Hangzhou, while return flights take off from the capital of Zhejiang province at 16.20 to reach the Lion City at 21.25.

SilkAir chief executive, Leslie Thng, said: "SilkAir will be the only full-service carrier connecting Hangzhou directly to Singapore. We are confident that this service will see strong demand from the different market segments flying into and out of Hangzhou to our combined SilkAir and Singapore Airlines network."



Leifeng Pagoda, Hangzhou

HOT DEALS



Holiday Inn Pattaya

Holiday Inn Pattaya has rolled out a special offer along with the launch of its new 200-room Executive Tower.

Valid for stays till September 30 this year, the promotion offers Deluxe Ocean View rooms at 3,399 baht (US\$105), including breakfast,

and Executive Club access rooms at 4,999 baht, including Executive Club perks and breakfast.

The offer is valid only for rooms at the Executive Tower. A seven per cent VAT and 10 per cent service charge apply to prices stated here. Other terms and conditions apply.

To make a reservation, call (66-038) 725-555 or visit www.holidayinn-pattaya.com.

The St. Regis Chengdu

Opening this fall, The St. Regis Chengdu, China is offering a pre-opening meeting package valid until December 31, 2014 for meetings held between July 18 and December 31 this year.

A full-day meeting package is available at RMB699* (US\$113*) per person per day, while a half-day option goes for RMB499*.

Meeting packages include 15 per cent off business centre services, 20 per cent off group dinners at all venues, triple Starpoints and free Wi-Fi Internet access.

Meeting planners can also choose one val-

ue-add for half-day packages or two for full-day arrangements. Options include two complimentary room upgrades for every 30 rooms booked per night, an hour-long pre-dinner cocktail with snacks and beverage, themed coffee break, free flow of coffee and tea, 50 per cent off room rental for one breakout room, and locally designed panda postcards for all participants with free postage to any country.

To make a booking, email stregis.chengdu@stregis.com.

The Venetian Macao

Integrated resort The Venetian Macao has rolled out a limited time offer for meeting planners who contract their events at the venue by August 31 this year.

The *Meetings More Rewarded* package, valid for bookings of at least 25 rooms combined with a meeting package for one night, offers a five per cent off the master bill, complimentary in-room Wi-Fi, complimentary breakfast on selected dates, as well as two benefits from the

Soi 60, where the party is

Singapore's chic riverside dining enclave, Robertson Quay, has just welcomed a new addition that will work perfectly for corporate gatherings bent on having a quality feast.

Helmed by award-winning chef Martin Boetz, formerly of Sydney's Longrain restaurant, Soi 60 specialises in contemporary Thai cuisine. Dishes such as grilled prawns with caramelised coconut on betel leaves, Panaeng beef rib curry with peanuts and Thai basil, and BBQ grass-fed sirloin steak salad come highly recommended.

Soi 60's relaxed urban atmosphere is complemented by upbeat lounge music at the bar where patrons can look forward to a Soi 60 Thai-inspired cocktail or two.

Event planners can book Soi 60 partially or entirely for private parties. For full venue hire in the evenings, a minimum spend of S\$10,000 (US\$8,021) applies.

The restaurant will also tailor a menu to suit the taste and needs of individual events.



following list:

- One-way Cotai Water Jet ticket (Hong Kong to Macau)
 - Dedicated coach transfer on arrival or departure
 - Welcome entertainment performance
 - One complimentary room for every 25 rooms booked
 - One complimentary upgrade for every 25 rooms booked
- Promotion ends December 31, 2015. Terms and conditions apply.

Contact sales@sands.com.mo for more information.



Saint Pierre

A reconstructed Saint Pierre is very good news for corporate planners, says **Raini Hamdi**



French fine-dining minus the stiffness, lower pricing than before, resort location in Singapore, corporate-friendly – a reconstructed Saint Pierre has made the restaurant more relevant to MICE planners.

Since moving to Sentosa Cove from its previous location in Central Mall, Saint Pierre has dropped its classic, brooding, romantic ambience, for a more approachable, relaxed, open look-and-feel that is more amenable to groups and befits the resort location.

Excellent French food – the pillar which made chef/owner Emmanuel Stroobant a household name among Singapore's gourmards – has not changed one bit. There are also more group seating options and menus to suit corporate needs and budgets.

MICE application

Because of its modular, open layout, various configurations for a group dinner are possible, from as small as 28 pax, to 58 pax with a chef demonstration table or a dance floor/display space and DJ console. It has even hosted a 120 pax dinner although restaurant manager David Bregere advised this is a bit of a stretch for the client and kitchen/service staff. A good maximum is around 80 pax, he said.

There are also private rooms that can accommodate six, eight or 14 pax.

I love the middle section as it showcases the kitchen and it's fun watching a famous chef and his team at work.

In another occasion, during Relais & Chateau's anniversary celebration, I saw the first section of the restaurant transformed into a cocktail area accommodating around 60 pax. At around 18:30, the views of the quayside were simply marvellous – you might want to start dinner earlier to enjoy the sunset, although Bregere said most corporates usually start dinner at 19.30 due to their time constraints.

The location is a bit far for me, although arguably nowhere in Singapore is too far. It's right in front of W Singapore - Sentosa Cove, so it is especially ideal if the group is staying at W or any of the hotels in Sentosa and wants something outside a hotel environment. The restaurant will arrange for a Sentosa entry fee of S\$2 (US\$1.60) per person (S\$3 on weekends) to be paid in advance if the application is made at least five days before the event.

F&B concept

The F&B concept is modern French and chef Emmanuel's creativity and skills turn out exquisite dishes that make it worthwhile to travel all the way to Sentosa for. His modern French is Escoffier with a dash of today's marvellous ingredients – think Angus beef with Japanese bean barigoule or black cod with white miso. Both are flavourful, melt-in-the-mouth dishes that I savour slowly and make every bite count – when food is this good, eat just the way the French do! His chocolate cake with earl grey ice cream alone is a reason for me to come back.

Planners can choose one of two prepared menus, priced at S\$85⁺⁺ and S\$100⁺⁺ (minimum 20 pax and must be taken by the entire group). At one look, both feature high-quality ingredients.

Planners can tailor their own menu if these do not suit their needs.

Service

Attentive and charming.

Contacts

31 Ocean Way #01-05 Quayside Isle, Singapore
Tel: (65) 6438-0887
Email: info@saintpierre.com.sg

Opening hours

Tue-Sun/PH: 17:30 to 21.30 (last order)
Sat-Sun brunch/PH: 11:30 to 14.30 (last order)

American buyers grow a bigger appetite for Asia

By Xinyi Liang-Pholsena

Driven by a recovering economic climate and stronger desire to venture into new destinations, US meeting and conference planners are showing a rising interest in Asia, according to industry players.

Dirk Ebener, CEO of Marietta-based Global CIF, is keen to explore Asia as a conference and tradeshow destination for his clients that span across 50 industries, ranging from consumer goods to automotive to woodwork.

“Europe and Asia are our top two considerations. Americans are more familiar with Europe whereas Asia is often not the first choice, but it’s my responsibility to change that,” said Ebener, adding that he is interested in South Korea, China, Thailand and Indonesia in particular.

Similarly, Asian destinations are also reporting emerging interest from the US, although a majority are enquiries for events that will take place in the next two to three years.

“Our enquiries for 2016/2017 have picked up by around 10 per cent from the MICE and leisure market from the US,” said Mohit Chopra, director – MICE & special events, Travel Pals (India). “These companies are mainly from the medical, transportation and economic development (governmental) industries, primarily



Ebener: building new demand for Asia

interested in Delhi and Rajasthan.”

“Over the past two years, we have seen a 20 per cent increase in enquiries from the US, mainly for the incentive travel segment,” said Wang Haichen, deputy director of DMC department at China Star, which is expecting a 120-pax group from US Siemens to Shanghai later this year.

“Political figures from the US have also drummed up meeting interest in China,” he added, citing former US president Richard Nixon’s grandson’s visit to China in 2013 as examples of high-profile events that raise the destination’s presence among American planners in recent years.

Wang is also positive United Airlines’ thrice-weekly San Francisco-Chengdu service launched earlier this month will bring more footfalls to western China and surrounding areas like Tibet.

Likewise, Alberto V Santos Jr, OIC – international operations, Rajah Travel Corporation, commented that the maturity of the US market positions it to explore “newer” destinations like the Philippines.

Karem E Miranda, senior project officer, MICE and business development unit at the Philippines’ Tourism Promotion Board (TPB), agreed: “TPB started participating in MICE shows in the US three years ago. A lot of serious enquiries are for two to three years down the road.”

MICE investments in place for Miri

Sarawak is banking on a new international standard hotel and ties with Brunei to promote northern Sarawak, particularly Miri City, as a MICE destination for the Asia-Pacific.

Leveraging Miri’s proximity to Brunei, Sarawak’s tourism minister Abang Johari Openg said the state will collaborate with Royal Brunei Airlines to promote packages to Northern Sarawak, using Bandar Seri Begawan as the main gateway.

He added: “We hope to capitalise on Royal Brunei Airlines’ network in the Asia-Pacific region to attract more leisure and MICE tourists to Miri.”

Miri is a 2.5-hour drive from Brunei and there are currently no direct air connections between Miri and Brunei’s capital, Bandar Seri Begawan.

To attract more foreign airlines to fly to Miri Airport, Malaysia Airports Holdings is throwing in free landing and parking for the first six months. Abang Johari said: “We hope this will entice charter services and when volume picks up, it will evolve into scheduled services.”

He said Miri city can accommodate small- to medium-size MICE groups as there are currently 2,400 rooms, a number that will be boosted by 328 when Pullman Miri Waterfront opens in 4Q2015.

Event facilities at Pullman Miri Waterfront will include a ballroom with seating capacity for 1,000 delegates and six state-of-the-art function rooms.

Currently, the only other international hotel in Miri is Miri Marriott Resort & Spa.

– S Puvanewary

{ Talking numbers }



The percentage increase in China corporate travel market expenditure expected this year, up from 2013’s US\$223.5 billion, according to HRG’s recent China Travel Trends Report. The study has reported stronger demand for structured corporate travel management as more Chinese firms opt for online booking tools and company credit cards.

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The amount, in billions of US dollars, that China’s travel market expenditure will hit by 2015, projected the same report.



New Business Events Week to enlighten MICE players

By S Puvaneswary

Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) is organising the first Business Events Week (BEW) to expose local industry players to key insights, challenges and growth opportunities in the business events arena.

To be held between August 14 and 21 at the Pullman Kuala Lumpur Bangsar, the event will bear the theme *Exceeding Expectations* to encourage participants to see value in being innovative in order to surpass expectations and draw more business to Malaysian shores.

Malaysia's aim is to lure 2.9 million business event arrivals by 2020 to make up about eight per cent of the 36 million targeted tourist arrivals.

Last year, the country welcomed 1.4 million business events arrivals, which translates to 5.2 per cent of total tourist arrivals to Malaysia.

MyCEB CEO, Zulkefli Sharif, said: "The purpose of BEW is to create a platform for all stakeholders of the business



Zulkefli: good for knowledge exchange

events industry to converge, communicate and debate issues that impact on the future growth and sustainability of the business events industry. There will be a series of seminars, workshops, dialogue sessions, expo and networking sessions that engages all levels and segments of the business events industry."

International speakers slated to attend include Jason Fox, motivation strategy and design expert and author of *The Game Changer*, and Mike van der Vijver, meeting designer and advisor, trainer and coach in intercultural management.

Both experts will both speak on topics related to innovation.

Delegates will also hear from North American meeting and event planners on how they can best capture business, and listen in on dialogue sessions between the private and public sector on strategies to enable Malaysia to develop and position itself as a leading business events destination globally.

Perth smashes own record in 2013/14

Financial year 2013/14 has been good for the Western Australian city of Perth, which broke its own target and record for revenue generated through conferences.

According to Perth Convention Bureau (PCB), conference delegates will stay for 201,147 days and spend A\$108.0 million dollars (US\$101.6 million).

The bureau had initially aimed to make A\$104 million in direct delegate expenditure.

Ian Laurance AM, chairman of PCB, said in a press release: "These results indicate that PCB continues to punch above its weight in the business events industry despite new infrastructure and increasing competition across Australia and around the South-east Asian region."

PCB CEO, Paul Beeson, added: "The value of conferencing and business events is increasingly appreciated by governments worldwide, as it is here in Western Australia."

Conferences are the highest-yielding tourism sector, with a single international delegate spending five times more than a leisure tourist.

Understand the future of medical meetings

Healthcare Meetings Forum (UK) and Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre have come together to launch a forum this month to shed light on how current global regulations on the healthcare sector will impact international medical meetings held in Asia.

The one-day forum, titled *The Future for Medical Meetings in Asia*, will be held on August 1 at Suntec Singapore. It aims to provide key stakeholders an unbiased view of medical meetings, placing on record the views and evidence of experts to better understand and deliver meetings and events in the healthcare sector.

The programme, targeted at senior level professionals from related sectors such as medical societies and PCOs/suppliers serving this industry, will feature a mix of presentations, panel discussions and audience engagement sessions.

Featured speakers and panelists include Mark Handforth, founding director of Compliant Venue; Ronald Yeoh, consultant eye surgeon and medical director, Singapore National Eye Centre; and Lisa Sullivan, managing director of INVIVO Communications.

{ 2014 Calendar }

August 19-21

IT&CM India
Delhi, India

September 17-19

PATA Travel Mart
Phnom Penh,
Cambodia

**September 30
- October 2**

IT&CM Asia
Bangkok, Thailand

October 29-31

ITB Asia
Singapore

{ In brief }

Japan offers multi-entry visas to Indians

Japan has on July 3 introduced multiple-entry short-stay visas for Indian nationals in order to tap the high-potential source market of India.

The new visa is valid for three years for up to 15 days at a time and will be issued by Japanese diplomatic offices, the embassy or consulate in the Indian traveller's country of residence. Currently Indian nationals are allowed into Japan on short-stay single-entry visas, and the extension of visa validity was a condition in an MoU signed by the governments of both countries in January.

New milestone for American Express

American Express Global Business Travel has announced the new members of its executive team after the completion of its joint venture arrangement. The new company has an injection of US\$900 million in capital from investors. Pat Bourke has been named chief administrative officer, Norma Corio as chief financial officer and JoAnne Kruse as chief human resources officer.

Singapore tops UIA charts again

Singapore is hanging onto its crown as the world's foremost city and country for international meetings, titles the city-state is holding for the third and seventh year running respectively. This is according to the Union of International Associations' (UIA) 2013 Global Rankings, which reported that some 994 UIA qualified international meetings were held in Singapore last year – a 4.4 per cent increase over 2012's 952.



Pattaya combats sleazy image

By Greg Lowe

North Pattaya Alliance (NPA) has launched destination and branding campaign *North Pattaya – More than you think* to overcome its reputation for having Thailand’s largest red-light district, with the help of MICE business and Indian weddings.

“We’re using the slogan: ‘You think you know Pattaya, think again’, to get potential clients to take another look at Pattaya,” said David Barrett, executive director for events at Onyx Hospitality Group, who has been a driving force behind the initiative.

“(Within North Pattaya) we have a synergy of products. All (member hotels) have meetings space. All are targeting corporate members and Indian weddings.”

Part of the NPA’s campaign is focused on establishing Pattaya as the top destination for Indian weddings in Thailand. It currently enjoys third place, account-



Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort is one of the North Pattaya Alliance member

ing for 15 per cent of such events, after Phuket (40 per cent) and Hua Hin (30 per cent).

Ittipol Khunpluem, mayor of Pattaya, said the initiative will help the city recover from the political crisis as well as develop more sustainable business in the long term. “We fully support the initiative and have set up a special budget for the alliance, so we can also allocate more funds to help mitigate the crisis.”

NPA will hold the Festival of Rice in October, which will include a number of

special events and dining options across NPA’s member hotels. Corporate and media fam trips, brochures, a new website and dedicated YouTube channels are in the works as part of promotions.

The alliance comprises seven hotels – Amari Pattaya, Cape Dara, Dusit Thani Pattaya, Holiday Inn Pattaya, Pullman Pattaya Hotel G, The Zign Hotel and Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort – as well as Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, Tourism Authority of Thailand and City Hall.

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Global Feng Shui congress rotates to Australia

MELBOURNE The annual gathering of feng shui practitioners and enthusiasts from around the world will head to Melbourne this year, making it the first International Feng Shui Convention (IFSC) to be held in Australia since the event's inception in 2004.

To be held on November 15 and 16 at Novotel Melbourne St Kilda, IFSC is organised by the team at the International Feng Shui Association (IFSA) Australia Chapter.

"However, we had valuable support from the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB). It scouted potential venues and made a shortlist for us. It helped me put together a formal proposal which I submitted to the executive committee just to reassure them that we were able to commit fully to an event of such scope. A representative of MCB also came with me to help inspect the venue. The bureau also printed marketing materials for us and referred us to suppliers. MCB basically helped us lay the groundwork for the convention," said Janene Laird, president of the chapter, in an interview with *TTGmice*.

Laird added that various leaders at the association headquarters had also chipped in to take up various responsibilities in the planning and execution of the event.

IFSC is expected to draw more than 200 attendees from countries such as Holland, Romania, Canada, Japan, China and Brunei.

Highlights at the event include two-track lectures that will see seminars running concurrently in two rooms, allowing a more diverse range of topics of be presented and discussed. Some 25 globally recognised speakers will lead the lectures, with topics



The annual International Feng Shui Convention was held in Singapore for the past 10 years and will move to Melbourne this year

touching on feng shui's influence on certain business sectors such as architecture, interior design and real estate, for instance.

"We want to create a robust programme that isn't just all academic presentations that appeal only to my colleagues and I, but one that encourages the public to come and learn more about feng shui, and how it can help their business and support their clients," Laird explained.

The programme also includes an annual general meeting for association members, workshops and networking opportunities. – **Karen Yue**

FIG Congress sets green example



KUALA LUMPUR The 25th International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) Congress, held for the first time in Kuala Lumpur from June 16 to 21 this year, had incorporated a carbon offset effort in its programme.

Heeding the call to save the environment, the local organising committee held *Let's Meet & Green* on June 18 at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM).

The programme, which is a home-grown carbon offset activity spearheaded by the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) since 2010 and the first environmental programme for business tourism, saw 100 trees of various species such as Malaysian hardwood, chengal and merant being planted by the heads

government's commitment to offset the country's carbon emissions by 40 per cent by 2020.

Malaysia won the rights to host this year's FIG Congress in 2010, fending off competition from destinations such as Turkey.

Commenting on the congress, PEJUTA president Sr Mohammad Azmi Mohd Zin, said: "This congress is a beneficial platform for the exchange of knowledge and ideas while promoting growth and development of the surveyor community".

More than 3,000 surveyors and land professionals had gathered in Kuala Lumpur for the week-long congress, launched by the prime minister of Malaysia, Najib Abdul Razak. – **S Puvaneswary**

Science symposium picks Wellington

WELLINGTON The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) has won the rights to host the 7th International Symposium on Submarine Mass Movements and Their Consequence in Wellington.

The bid was made with the support of Tourism New Zealand (TNZ), Positively Wellington Tourism (PWT) and the Conference Assistance Programme (CAP), and will bring an estimated NZ\$500,000 (US\$435,700) to the country's economy. The symposium, to be held in November 2015, is also expected to attract up to 150 international delegates and speakers from universities, research organisations and the industry.

In a press release, NIWA Marine Geologist and conference convenor Joshu Mountjoy described the event as the "benchmark conference for submarine landslide researchers around the world".

TNZ's international business events manager, Bjoern Spreitzer, believes that international events such as the symposium provide a huge opportunity to grow the value of visitors to New Zealand.

TNZ's management of the CAP has seen the country bid for 39 events over the last financial year, securing nine international events to date.

Cotai Strip Macao

Hosting the largest Tupperware conference ever in Asia-Pacific with flair

Designed for mega events, Cotai Strip Macao, Asia's most comprehensive meeting destination, rose to the challenge when it hosted its largest event ever — the 8,700-delegate Tupperware Brands Corporation's Asia-Pacific conference.

The 2014 Tupperware conference was the largest ever planned and the unprecedented scale of the event seemed daunting initially. But it was a task well suited for Cotai Strip Macao. With its large inventory of rooms across five branded hotels, meeting venues, over 100 restaurants, 600 duty-free shopping options, spas and well-developed capabilities in transport, logistics and banqueting, it was able to present a complete package of solutions that made all the difference.

Multi-mode access

Delegates arrived in Macao by air or by ferry from Hong Kong ferry terminals and Hong Kong International Airport. To ensure smooth transfers for the large number of arrivals, Cotai Strip Macao mobilised its own fleet of ferries and scheduled 30 additional sailings by Cotai Water Jet through its in-house travel agency Cotai Travel. Once in Macao, bus transfers operating from the ferry terminals and Macau International Airport shuttled delegates to their respective hotels, where each hotel's customer service team was available at all times to assist with information and direction.



Cotai Strip Macao — Asia's most comprehensive meeting destination.

For departure, special arrangements were made to enable groups departing from Hong Kong International Airport to check-in at Cotai Expo Hall where they were issued boarding passes with their bags checked to their final destinations. The specially arranged direct ferry service to Hong Kong airport's Sky pier allowed delegates to bypass Hong Kong immigration.

A venue for up to 13,000

One of the main reasons Tupperware chose Cotai Strip Macao is because of the 13,000-capacity Cotai Arena. It is a venue large enough to accommodate the projected 9,000 delegates and a stage set-up. During the event, crowd control worked out well too despite the flow of delegates in and out of the arena throughout the day.





25,000 meals were served over three days.

Cotai Strip Macao performed outstandingly throughout the event.

One-stop coordination

While the logistics may seem daunting for any event of this scale, Cotai Strip Macao was able to simplify the process for the organiser by providing a single point of contact for all operations. This one-stop service covers not only hotel and venue bookings, but also travel and tour, banquet, audio-visual, entertainment and any other special requirements.

Green Meetings – Sands Eco360°

The Tupperware event also saw the Sands Eco360° sustainability programme in action. From a customised menu of green measures, Tupperware opted to switch off air-conditioning, lighting and AV equipment between sessions and keep room temperature set at 23°C. At the conclusion of the event, the organiser received an impact statement highlighting the energy saved and sustainability goals achieved.

A wide selection of hotels

The Tupperware conference took up 5,000 rooms per night across five international hotel brands: The Venetian® Macao; Conrad® Macao, Cotai Central; Holiday Inn Macao Cotai Central; Sheraton Macao Hotel, Cotai Central; and Four Seasons Hotel Macao, Cotai Strip. All hotels are within walking distance of each other and event venues. Delegates indicated that they were pleased with the quality of their accommodation.

Easy check-in and movement

Check-in was initially a concern for Tupperware as a large number of delegates were scheduled to arrive over a short period of time. But this proved not to be an issue as delegates were cleared within 20 seconds across all Cotai Strip Macao hotels using an integrated express check-in system.

Ease of movement was singled out by Tupperware as one of Cotai Strip Macao's success factors because once delegates arrived, they were able to walk to all venues, eliminating the need for additional transportation.



Customised entertainment.

Large-scale banqueting

Not surprisingly, the banqueting team set a new record during the Tupperware conference for serving the greatest number of meals – 25,000 – over three days. It also managed to seat all delegates in the same room for lunch and dinner and about 4,000 of them for breakfast. The gala dinner featured seven menus catering to various cultures and religious requirements with more than 100 buffet and food stations. The organiser complimented that the banqueting team at

Following the Tupperware event, Gene Capuano, Vice President of Convention & Exhibition Operations, Cotai Strip Macao, said, "We are built for this purpose and our staff is well trained to handle such large events of this nature on a daily basis." He said his team started weekly meetings 12 weeks prior to the event to ensure everything was well-coordinated. It is the level of professionalism MICE planners can expect from Cotai Strip Macao. ■



The 13,000-seat Cotai Arena during Tupperware's Asia Pacific conference in February 2014.

Meetings More Rewarded Package

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 - 1 complimentary room for every 25 rooms booked
 - 1 complimentary upgrade for every 25 rooms booked
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Sponsorship woes



Securing event sponsorship is becoming increasingly tough for event organisers, but industry players say maintaining a strong content and offering customised sponsorship deals can ease the process. By **Karen Yue**

Time may have placed several years between the global financial crisis of 2008 and today, but the impact of the world's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s has changed the way companies conduct their business and regard expenditure.

For business event organisers, securing sponsorship has become a challenge as major companies are more selective about what they want – and can afford – to support. And when they do fork out sponsorship dollars, they demand clear reports on their investment.

Nancy Tan, managing director of Ace:Daytons Direct (International), a Singapore-based conference, exhibition and events organiser which has major congresses such as the 7th World Congress of Endoscopic Surgery and the 21st Congress of the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology under its belt, told *TTGmice*: “It has been increasingly tough to secure sponsorships for trade and association events, as money is hard to come by due to the economic climate. Moreover, companies are paying even greater attention

to returns on their investments.”

Shirlena Soh, director of operations with the Human Genome Organisation International, recalled how her convention in Geneva this year had a “difficult sponsorship situation” because “companies were cutting back on their expenditure”.

The challenge of securing event sponsorship is exacerbated by the presence of companies that do not quite understand how such marketing investments work.

Tan said: “There are companies that expect immediate ROI, in the form of sales returns, from a sponsorship investment, and that may not be possible at times. Unfortunately, not all companies understand the true value of sponsorship.”

“Naturally, we find that multinational companies tend to be more aware of what event sponsorship can deliver, as they have experience in such activities and have the money for it. That said, more small, local firms are starting to appreciate what event sponsorship can do for them and some have ventured into sponsoring something at trade and association events.”

Although Oakwood Worldwide is no stranger to event sponsorship, having participated in over 55 global events in 2013 alone, its Asia Pacific managing director, Craig Ryan, admitted that returns on event sponsorship investment can be tricky to determine. “There are, however, a variety of factors we look at to determine the benefit from a sponsor’s point of view. Leads generated, amount of traffic flow, brand impressions of our logo and the amount of media exposure generated are examples of some of the metrics we evaluate to measure ROI from an event,” said Ryan.

Medical considerations

For medical and pharmaceutical associations, stricter laws regarding international healthcare meetings and education seminars add further hurdles to their quest



“Having one or two major sponsors or 10 minor ones does not really matter because at the end of the day, we need to make sure we raise enough funds.”

Leah Maureen Jurado

Sponsorship & exhibition specialist,
Kenes Asia

for event sponsorship. These regulations include prohibition on the use of luxury hotels during such gatherings, a cap on the value of hosted delegate meals and limitations on event sponsorship by healthcare firms.

Roger Lijnen, executive director of the International Society for Fibrinolysis and Proteolysis, lamented: “In the past, we could go to big pharmaceutical companies and tell them that we are hosting an opening dinner for our congress, for instance, and they would say, ‘do it and just send us the bill’. Now, not anymore.”

Richard Holmes, international director of meetings with the International League against Epilepsy, has also faced difficulties. “In the field of epilepsy, many drugs have come off patent, resulting in more generics being made available. Hence, main companies are less keen on sponsoring meetings,” said Holmes, who added that companies are sponsoring fewer delegates to attend congresses, cutting back on hosting social events, and withdrawing from sponsoring congress bags or lunches.

Big sponsors – a thing of the past?

Lijnen and Tan believe that gone are the days when a single major sponsor would come in and pay for multiple aspects of an event. Tan said: “With corporate expenditure being watched so closely, organisers today will find it easier to convince a company to sponsor one relevant item, such as a lunch symposium or a particular education session. It is common now for events to have the support of several small – but still very important – sponsors.”

While the International Feng Shui Association – Australia Chapter has no “shortage” of event sponsors, president Janene Laird said: “We’ve found that rather than rely on a few big sponsors, we get better results from asking for modest amounts from several smaller ones.”

However, Leah Maureen Jurado, sponsorship & exhibition specialist with Kenes Asia, thinks that events today still stand a chance at scoring one or two major sponsors. “It all depends on the event. Some therapeutic areas in the medical field would have new trials and research, which translate to companies having new drugs in the pipeline and would therefore require a huge presence at medical conferences,” she explained.

Impact on events

Lijnen finds that social events during congresses are most affected by the decline in event sponsorship. He said: “We have cut down on the scale and lavishness of social functions over the last two years.”

The society has also raised congress registration fees to cope with the “new reality”.

“(Should we) see sponsorship falling, we will have to evaluate each event on a case-by-case basis because there is no one right formula for all events. Perhaps one (aspect of an event that could see cutback as a result) would be opening parties.”

Stuart Ruff,

Director of meetings, exhibitions & events, The Risk Management Society

Although fewer five-star hotels are used now, Lijnen said the move is in reaction to stricter laws on healthcare events.

“We do not avoid pricey destinations. What we do is to focus on local associations that are very committed to bringing the congress to their country. Because they are hungry for this hosting right, they would do their utmost to attract local attendees and that means more income for the society,” he added.

While Soh noted that the cost of speakers, venue hire and F&B catering make up the bulk of an event’s expenditure, she said these were components the association would never cut back on.

“Other things like gift production and programme print-outs are items that we will look into when restructuring our costs,” she said, adding that her society has always taken a prudent approach to event budgeting which allows conferences to still be held even when sponsorship dollars are down.

For Holmes, the reduction in delegate sponsorship “means that those who come to the congress at their own expense (are serious about it) and will attend sessions”. He added: “It is now easier to predict the size of session rooms needed.”

Should event sponsorship continue to dwindle, Holmes thinks that medical associations may have to eventually “hold smaller meetings on a regional basis”.

Keep the money coming

Association executives and conference organisers agree that event content is key to attracting sponsors. Events with strong content will naturally draw quality attendees – the very people sponsors love.

And in an environment where sponsorship is hard to come by, organisers must never compromise the quality of the programme to suit a key sponsor, warned Tan. “For example, skewing the programme towards the messages of the key sponsor is a no-no. That is not fair to attendees and other sponsors,” she said.

When asked for qualities an event must possess in order to qualify for Oakwood Worldwide’s sponsorship dollars, Ryan said the event must offer an educational aspect, be held in a good location so as to enable the company to reach clients in the area and build new relation-

ships in the market, have a good reputation and strong attendance, offer reach to an audience of decision-makers, and be led by a proactive partner who keeps sponsors regularly updated and ensures sponsor benefits are fulfilled.

Citing an example of a successful sponsorship exercise, Ryan said: “The Worldwide ERC Global Mobility Summit in Shanghai this March allowed us to promote the Oakwood Worldwide brand and solutions to mobility professionals. The event enhanced our competitive position as a serviced accommodation provider. Most importantly, it allowed us to connect with potential clients and existing partners, and expand our market share. We achieved good qualified leads from the event.”

Deals that are customised to the needs of individual sponsors help too, and more are demanding such tailored packages.

Ryan said: “In view of leaner budgets and greater emphasis on event ROIs, organisers need to be more flexible in terms of offering sponsorship packages. Not every standard package caters to every potential sponsor. We look for (partners) that are able to offer flexibility, opportunities for customisation and delivers forward-thinking, innovative ways for us to participate in events.”



Oakwood Worldwide believes in event sponsorship and will this year be one of the silver sponsors of TTG Asia Media's Corporate Travel World in Bangkok, Thailand



Herbalife Extravaganza Asia Pacific

Herbalife pulls off one of the largest corporate meetings ever to be held in Singapore with an attendance of more than 22,000 delegates. By [Paige Lee Pei Qi](#)

Organiser

Herbalife International Singapore

Venue

Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre

Dates

May 16 – 18, 2014

No. of participants

22,000 over three days

Objective

To showcase the company's profile, range of products and business successes

Challenges

A large and flexible space for up to 22,000 delegates was needed, as well as additional meeting spaces for side sessions

Solution

The venue's five exhibition halls and interlinked MAX Atria met the needs of the organiser and allowed seamless movement of all delegates

When Herbalife International decided to throw its largest ever Extravaganza in Singapore in May earlier this year, it needed a space that could accommodate 22,000 delegates from more than 10 countries.

The global multi-level marketing company eventually chose the Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Explaining the choice, Shobie King, vice president of Herbalife APAC sales, marketing & distributor services, said: "Due to the sheer number of attendees we were expecting this year, Singapore EXPO was a natural choice of venue.

"Not only because of its ability to accommodate the large group, but also the efficient service that the venue has consistently been providing."

Organised by the Singapore division of Herbalife International, the event's space requirement included a large coach area to support transportation for the large number of attendees.

According to James Ong, senior manager marketing & communications of SingEx Holdings, which manages the venue in Singapore's east, the coach area had to be large enough to hold more than 100 buses at one time.

To address this need, Singapore EXPO converted one of its carparks into a pick-up and drop-off point for coaches.

A last minute challenge came when attendee registration for Herbalife Fit Hour surged from an expected 1,000 pax to a whopping 3,000 two days before the event

was due to take place. As the event was a new segment at Herbalife Extravaganza Asia Pacific, the organiser wanted to "get it right" and not turn away the excess participants, revealed Ong.

With only a quarter of a hall catered initially for Herbalife Fit Hour, staff at Singapore EXPO had to scramble to expand the space. It posed an operational challenge too, due to the last minute change in drape and stage orientation. Still, the team was able to make the change in time, said Ong.

"Fortunately the exhibition halls were large enough to cope with this crisis," Ong added.

In addition, the massive Herbalife Extravaganza Asia Pacific was supported by MAX Atria's 32 Wi-Fi-enabled meeting rooms which allowed for multiple breakout sessions, seminars and meetings. MAX Atria's spaces also served as dining halls for delegates to have their meals in.

As MAX Atria is physically linked to the Singapore EXPO, delegates were able to move seamlessly from one activity to another.

Herbalife Extravaganza Asia Pacific's programme also included an exclusive party for all delegates. The venue was fully decorated and participants came in their traditional costumes, a move that reflected the cultural diversity of the global company.

Adding more flavour to the party was an array of attractive food stalls that served up local favourites.

2013 International Dragon Award Annual Conference



Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre overcomes myriad challenges to successfully host China's largest insurance and financial meeting. By **S Puvaneswary**

Event

2013 International Dragon Award Annual Conference

Organiser

IMM International

Date

August 15 to 18, 2013

No. of attendees

Close to 5,500 local and international delegates from more than 16 countries including China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Australia

Challenges

Technical requirements were complex and all participants must be accommodated in one venue; F&B must cater to the palates of a global audience; Mandarin was the preferred language of communication by the client

It was during the ICCA Asia Pacific Business Leads Exchange Workshop in March 2011 when the wheels were set in motion to bid for the 2013 edition of the International Dragon Award (IDA) Annual Conference – an event said to be the largest annual meeting of China's insurance and financial services industry.

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre and the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) submitted a full bid proposal a week later and conducted an official site visit in mid-June.

In order to understand the requirements of the event, representatives from the Centre and MyCEB attended IDA 2011.

Recalling the early stages of the bid, Richard Wu, 2013 IDA Annual Meeting chairman, said: "Zulkefli Sharif, the CEO of MyCEB, (said) we would get government support if we held the event in Malaysia. He promised assistance in inviting government officials."

Indeed, MyCEB helped arrange for local VIPs to attend the opening ceremony, namely Malaysia prime minister, Najib Abdul Razak; minister of tourism and culture, Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz; and Kuala Lumpur mayor, Ahmad Phesal Talib. It also helped in the coordination of the official opening by Najib, presentation of awards to speakers by Mohamed Nazri and a welcome dinner for top CEOs, hosted by Ahmad Phesal.

The Centre's general manager, Alan Pryor, revealed that the technical requirements for the event were complex and the client had insisted on having

all participants altogether in one venue. "This meant multiple revisions to the floor plan to ensure everyone (in the audience) could view the proceedings. For example, to house the opening ceremony, Exhibition Halls 1 and 2 were combined into one massive space with three stages coming together in the centre to form a T-shape," he explained.

Besides an 11.6m main screen on the main stage, 10 additional hanging screens measuring six to eight metres in width were strategically placed across the 167m-wide hall to ensure clear sight lines for all delegates. Wide rectangular seating blocks were configured at different angles so information projected on the various screens remained visible to all.

Another challenge was to create menus that satisfied the palates of delegates from more than 16 countries.

Pryor said: "The culinary team researched the delegates' profile to determine where they were from and what they would probably like to eat."

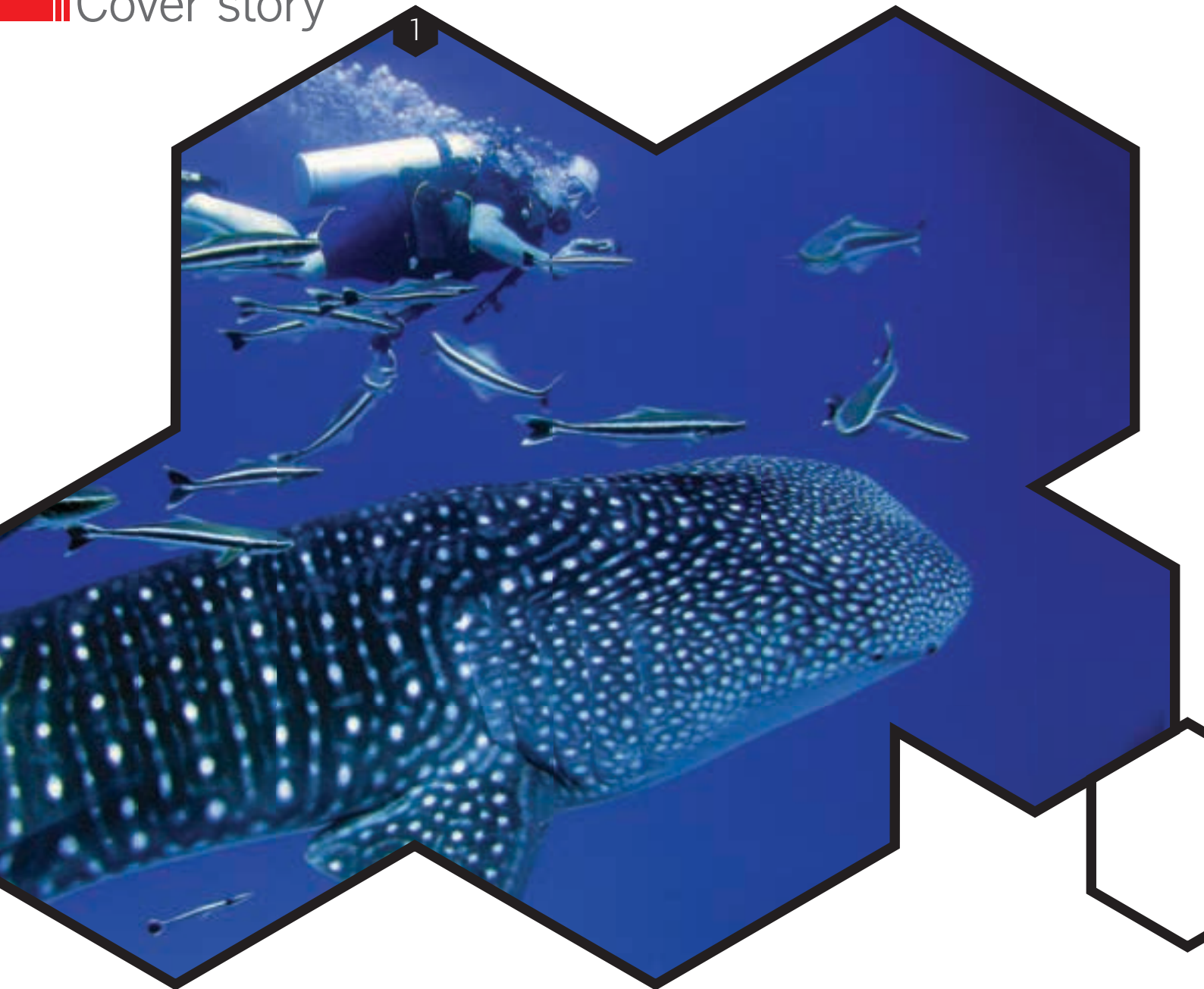
Based on the results, the team came up with a catering solution that enabled delegates to choose from a variety of food kiosks. Pop-up public catering outlets were also conveniently located in Exhibition Hall 4 to offer more food choices and snacks on the go.

The culinary team also came up with popular breakfast and lunch items and updated the menu daily.

Meticulous attention went into F&B planning to avoid food waste, and consumption patterns were monitored daily to manage food quantities and choices.

To cater to the massive audience, the 2,245m² Exhibition Hall 4 was also converted for the first time into a catering facility to provide delegates with easy access to F&B. The space featured a unique set-up of food kiosks and a dining area that resembled a local street food bazaar. A free Wi-Fi Zone was also carved out in Exhibition Hall 4.

As Mandarin was the primary language of the client and a large number of delegates, the Centre chose to have all correspondence and documentation with the client in Mandarin, equip the liaison team with a staff fluent in the language, provide more Mandarin-speaking ambassadors and catering staff, and have all materials such as signage and menus in both English and Mandarin.



33

Incentive ideas

From swimming with sea giants in one of the world's best conserved dive spots to an unusual game of camel polo, we hunt down some of the world's most interesting travel ideas to reward your top achievers with

By Karen Yue, S Puvaneswary, Mimi Hudoyo, Xinyi Liang-Pholsena, Paige Lee Pei Qi, Prudence Lui, Caroline Boey and Shekhar Niyogi

1

Explore an almost-perfect reef

The diving community won't like what we are about to tell you now. Pulau Tenggol, a small island in the South China Sea and part of Malaysia's Terengganu Marine Park, is regarded as a well-kept secret among avid divers. The reef here is in almost-perfect condition and for people in the know, it is considered the best diving spot in Peninsular Malaysia.

Take your incentive winners on an educational and memorable dive around Pulau Tenggol, with the luxurious Tanjong Jara Resort as their base. The resort has its own dive centre and will provide expert guides, dive masters and PADI dive instructors to accompany groups on each dive.

Capacity 14 to 12 pax

Email travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my

Website www.tanjongjararesort.com

2

Be one with the Incan spirit

Reward your top achievers with a trip to the archaeological marvel that is Machu Picchu, but give the experience a spectacular twist by timing it with the *Inti Raymi* or Festival of the Sun, the largest and longest celebration held every June in Cuzco, Peru.

The adventure begins with a train ride to the ancient Inca ruins, and time is given for participants to explore the iconic site. The return trip will take the group back to Cuzco on June 24, the high point of *Inti Raymi* when the streets come alive with colourful dances, processions showcasing indigenous culture, parades, music and revelry. The group will get to savour Peru's gastronomic delights such as ceviche, cuy (baked or barbecued guinea pig), fish roe as well as Incan dishes that are only served during *Inti Raymi*.

Capacity Flexible

Email events@pirkkotroy.com

Website www.pirkkotroy.com

3

Desert dreams

Wahiba Sands is one of the most fascinating deserts in the Arab Gulf, and boasts shifting colours of sand at different times of the day. It is also home to a few thousand Bedouins who are known to have inhabited this inhospitable landscape for at least 7,000 years.

For your top achievers, however, Tour Oman will ensure Wahiba Sands makes a delightful destination for an overnight stay. Utmost comfort is promised at this private campsite which comes equipped with all modern amenities.

Upon arrival at Wahiba Sands' campsite, winners are welcomed by Bedouins who come bearing Omani coffee, fresh fruits and mineral water. Skilled drivers will then take participants for an exciting dune drive. A camel ride may also be arranged.

When night falls the group will enjoy a moonlit dinner at the campsite, under millions of twinkling stars.

Next day, rise early to catch a dazzling sunrise before journeying back to the city.

Capacity 10 to 60 guests

Email touroman@travelcity-oman.com

Website www.touroman.om

3



5



4

Camp in luxury in the great Australian outback

Situated at Yulara, close to the border of World Heritage-listed Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Longitude 131 is touted as one of the best luxury wilderness camps in the world. With 15 luxury tents, Longitude 131 caters for those seeking an exclusive and unique outback experience. Your top achievers will enjoy five-star comfort and private views of Uluru and Ayers Rock.

Capacity Maximum of 30 pax

Email reception@longitude131.com.au

Website <http://longitude131.com.au/>

5

Go deep sea fishing

This four-hour adventure begins right after breakfast at your incentive group's hotel. Your top achievers will set sail on the 27-foot *Coast Craft* catamaran, said to be the best boat for Gulf waters, and try their hand at sport fishing under the guidance of an experienced captain.

The *Coast Craft* is comfortably furnished with a canopy and cushioned seats, and equipped with four trawling fishing rods and eight bottom-fishing lines. Bait is provided.

Refreshments are served on board to keep participants hydrated and energised.

Alpha Tours Dubai, which arranges this programme, can provide two to four boats for each group.

Capacity 12 to 48 pax

Email mice@alphatoursdubai.com

Website www.alphatoursdubai.com

Incentive ideas

6

Everybody was kung fu fighting

This two-day programme can be organised in Shanghai and Guangdong's Foshan where there are Shaolin martial arts schools. Top achievers will spend a night at the school with Shaolin monks and join the students in intensive training. At the end of the programme, participants will learn the importance of cooperation and the kung fu spirit of 'fighting with control'.

Capacity 20 to 50 pax
Email moreview@mvdmc.com
Website www.mvdmc.com

8

Glacier flightseeing in Alaska

Take in the sights of North America's largest glacier region onboard sea planes. The journey begins at Anchorage and within minutes your winners will fly into wilderness, soaring over pristine mountains, spectacular glaciers, crystal-blue pools and roaming wildlife, together with an experienced Alaska bush pilot who will share his rich knowledge of the region, and experience a glacier landing. Combine a flightseeing tour with other unique activities such as glacier dog sledding, fly-in fishing and bear viewing.

Capacity Up to 50 pax
Email info@flyrusts.com
Website www.flyrusts.com

9

Into the wild

Spend the night in the middle of the remote Cambodian hinterland, deep in the jungle beside the thousand-year-old temple of Preah Khan Kompong Svay.

The HG Travel team will set up a luxury camp with all facilities, including a safari-style living tent with bathroom and showers, a lounge and dining area near the temple, which, when candle-lit in the evenings, paints an unforgettable picture straight from the pages of the wildest imagination.

Nothing bonds a team as much as unforgettable experiences shared together, so be rest assured that your group will always be connected by having survived the jungle together.

Capacity Two to 20 pax
Email info@hgtravel.com
Website www.hgtravel.com

7

Get a power trip behind some splendid wheels

Let your winners be at the wheel of a Ginetta or Porsche on some of the world's most beautiful race tracks in exotic locations such as Barcelona, Italy and Dubai.

Made possible by France-based Astur Cars, top winners will get the chance to be part of an actual race team made up of some 20 professionals. After training on a GT race circuit, they will drive solo in a high performance car – and in dramatic race fashion, they will be watched by an audience of up to 8,000.

Whether amateur or skilled drivers, your winners will integrate with the team and benefit from a professional infrastructure that will analyse their strengths and weaknesses.

Capacity Minimum two drivers per car
Email john@johnbsutherland.com
Website www.astur-car.com/partners/index.html#!/splash



7

10



10

Go on a golf pilgrimage in China

Mission Hills, long recognised for offering excellent golfing experiences, will appeal to top achievers who may have played the best greens of the world.

In Guangdong province, incentive groups can play a friendly game at 12 championship golf courses that are designed by golf legends such as Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman, Nick Faldo and Vijay Singh. On Hainan island, Mission Hills Haikou tantalises with 10 spectacularly scenic golf courses.

Non-golfers in your group are not left out. They can take lessons at the Golf Academy, play tennis, swim or cycle around the sprawling locations. The less active can enjoy a luxurious spa experience, relax in the tranquil surroundings and play chess, take cooking classes or learn about organic farming.

Capacity More than 500 people
Email MHSalesCenter@missionhillschina.com
Website www.missionhillschina.com

11



11

Seafood seduction

The unspoilt paradise of Bruny Island is home to Tasmania's finest seafood. Onboard a specialised cruise vessel and with the help of experienced guides, your winners will try their hand at catching their own lunch – abalone, crayfish, oysters, sea urchin, salmon and mussels – which will be enjoyed with local wine, beers, ciders and juices.

Once the bounty is in the bag, the vessel will anchor in a calm and secluded bay where lunch will be cooked and served.

Capacity 10 pax per cruise vessel

Email info@pennicottjourneys.com.au

Website <http://pennicottjourneys.com.au/tasmanian-seafood-seduction/>

12

Up high and down below

In 1991 a Vietnamese farmer discovered by accident the biggest cave in the world but it was only in 2009 that British cave specialist Howard Limbert was able to unveil the full extent of the Son Doong Cave in central Vietnam.

Until now only a handful of privileged adventurers had the pleasure of exploring this natural wonderland, which was recently named the most captivating by National Geographic. Experience the thrill of exploring underworld rivers, forests and bizarre stone formations on an expedition led by Howard Limbert himself.

To contrast this underworld journey and give it the extra oomph for your incentive group, take the helicopter to reach the remote cave.

Capacity 6-12 pax

Email info@hgtravel.com

Website www.hgtravel.com

13

Hang out at a headhunters village in Sarawak

Journey through the rugged terrain of the Sarawak rainforest on four-wheel-drive vehicles to Kampung Bengoh, home to the Bidayuh tribe whose ancestors were fearless headhunters. Have your top achievers kayak up upriver while they soak in the beautiful, lush surroundings and spot different species of local wildlife along the way. Tip them off to the few small rapids along the way, which should give them an adrenaline rush.

At the end of the adventure, recharge with a traditional Bidayuh picnic in a small village. Be entertained by cultural performances and stories while feasting on scrumptious local delicacies and rice wine.

Capacity Eight to 40 pax

Email info@sarawakcb.com

Website www.sarawakcb.com

14

Kuman burah suneh

You are forgiven if you fail to understand “kuman burah suneh”. In Orang Ulu language, this phrase means to “eat a lot”. It is little wonder then that the objective of this activity in Sarawak is to have your top achievers indulge in local dishes and experience the culture of their local hosts.

After departing from the luxurious Royal Mulu Resort, your group will take a short stroll down the Deer Cave's ancient riverbed and pause to consider the power of the water that once roared through this cave, tumbling huge boulders and carving the scalloped walls.

Cocktails are served as the sun sets at Mulu Caves. Have your winners ready their cameras for the magnificent spectacle as millions of bats leave the dark recesses of the cave and swoop out through the night sky.

Participants can enter the cave holding flaming torches that pick out some of the beautiful cave formations, spot a well-known character or two before sitting down to a candlelight dinner of local delicacies. Local musical performances such as the haunting sounds of the Sape complete the evening.

Should time be lacking, delegates may opt to have cocktails at Turn Red Cave in Serikin, on the outskirts of Sarawak state capital, Kuching.

Capacity 10 to 50 delegates

Email info@sarawakcb.com

Website www.sarawakcb.com

14



Incentive ideas

15

Explore Bremen Ratskeller

This wine cellar beneath the 600-year-old Town Hall of Bremen houses about 5,200 bottles, boasting the most extensive collection of fine German wines from 13 regions.

The three-hour excursion begins when the guide opens the cellar's historical wooden door. Participants access the office, barrel and storage area in order to learn how trading took place then. They will also get to lay their eyes on an old cask that dates back to 1653.

The educational experience ends with a glass of bubbly. *Prost!*

Capacity 10 to 30 pax

Email kellerfuehrung@ratskeller.de

Website www.ratskeller.de

16

Sail down Manhattan

Sail through the New York harbour aboard the Clipper City, an imposing 48m-long vessel with masts and rigging reaching up 37m from the deck, built as a replica of the lumber-hauling schooners that drove America's industry more than a century ago. Incentive groups can charter the boat for a variety of activities, from private cocktails to craft beer tasting sessions, while watching the sun set behind the iconic Statue of Liberty.

Capacity Up to 134 pax

Email reservations@manhattanbysail.com

Website www.manhattanbysail.com

16



17



17

Experience zero gravity

Experience true weightlessness in a specially modified Boeing 727-200 aircraft, G-Force One, which performs a series of parabolic arcs that counteract the gravitational pull.

The five-hour experience begins with an introduction session conducted by a NASA veteran astronaut and once up in the air, passengers can flip, float and fly like Superman and even perform physical feats such as releasing water and candy in the cabin under the assistance of a trained Zero-G coach.

This activity is available at four primary locations in the US: Cape Canaveral and Fort Lauderdale in Florida, Las Vegas and San Jose.

Capacity Up to 36 pax per flight

Email sales@gozerog.com

Website www.gozerog.com

18

Get to know a popular shellfish

Spend a day at Long Island's Blue Island Oyster Farm, where the owners will take your winners on a private tour to learn about the delicate ecosystems that support oyster life. Participants will get the chance to go into the ocean and collect oysters, working side by side with the farmers.

The educational experience, coordinated by the team at The Peninsula New York, begins with a private seaplane ride from Manhattan's East River and ends on high note with a private dockside gourmet dinner.

Capacity Up to eight pax

Email academypny@peninsula.com

Website www.peninsula.com/newyork

19

Take in the best sights of Banaue and Sagada

One of the best ways to enjoy views of the Philippines' ancient Banaue rice terraces – testament to the ingenuity and engineering prowess of the indigenous Ifugaos – and the remote highland settlement of Sagada, with its stunning landscape, waterfalls and ancient caves, has to be by helicopter.

Pair the ride in the sky with a luxurious picnic comprising local delicacies from Manila, but only after a trek to the terraces, visits to the hanging coffins of Sagada and a cultural performance.

Capacity Flexible

Email info@islasphilippines.com

Website www.BlueHorizons.travel

20

Hire the entire Lizard Island

Beautiful, natural and wild, the most northern Great Barrier Reef resort - Lizard Island - is a place reserved for the fortunate few. Consistently ranked as one of the top resorts of the world for more than a decade, Lizard Island offers the natural beauty of the Great Barrier Reef, uninterrupted by the rest of the world.

Reward your winners by hiring the island exclusively. The 24 white sand beaches lie undisturbed but for the occasional footprints. Groups can take advantage of Lizard Island's facilities and activities including snorkelling, diving, deep-sea game fishing excursions, and indulge in secluded picnics on the private beaches too.

Capacity 80 pax

Email travel@dncinc.com

Website www.lizardisland.com.au

19



21

Visit a longhouse – but not just any longhouse

A visit to a longhouse is often the highlight of a trip to Sarawak, as it offers a glimpse into the lifestyle of the various tribes that have for generations inhabited the remote interior of Borneo. While there are many areas in Sarawak where longhouses stand, Ulu Ai is one of the best. It is blessed with a stunning natural environment, comprising clean rivers and jungle streams, refreshing waterfalls and undisturbed tracts of rainforest.

At Ulu Ai, Nanga Sumpa Lodge serves as a base for a range of nature-based activities and excursions, and offers visitors the chance to learn about the culture and lifestyle of the Iban community who live in the adjacent longhouse.

Your winners can travel further upriver by longboat to have a swim at a waterfall, participate in the daily activities of the Iban people, and trek through the jungle on trails that take them along streams and through farmlands. If they are lucky, they will sight the orang-utans that dwell in the area.

Capacity No more than 36 pax

Email info@borneoadventure.com

Website www.borneoadventure.com

22

Get the royal treatment

When you house your winners at the heritage hotel Royal Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta, they will be treated like royalty from the get-go. Upon arrival at the hotel, they will be transported from the lobby to the centuries-old Pendopo hall in horse carts. From here, they will be escorted to Gadri dining hall where lunch is served by a parade of hotel staff dressed in traditional attire, carrying dishes in a *jodang* wooden carriage from the kitchen – the same way ancient Javanese kings were served.

After a hearty lunch, your winners will return to Pendopo hall to master *jempirangan*, traditional Javanese archery, and have their competitive spirits stirred by an archery contest.

Capacity No more than 30 pax

Email info@royalambarrukmo.com

Website www.royalambarrukmo.com

22



23

Soar over the Lubéron

For a highly exclusive gathering of top achievers, a stay in the luxurious Le Phébus & Spa in Joucas-Gordes, France should be in order. A member of Relais & Chateaux, the hotel occupies a charming dry-stone walled farmhouse and offers beautiful guestrooms, exquisite dining destinations and a spa. Kick your winners' experience here up a notch with a 30-minute panoramic flight over the Lubéron in a four-seat plane.

Capacity 24 rooms in hotel; four pax for flight

Email phebus@relaischateaux.com

Website [www.relaischateaux.com /](http://www.relaischateaux.com/)
www.lephebus.com

Incentive ideas

24

See Tokyo from up high

Tokyo is no stranger to most high-flying businessmen, so give your top achievers a different view of the bustling Japanese capital from up high in the sky.

Lifting off in a special edition EC135 Hermès helicopter from ARK Hills Heliport in Akasaka, your winners will soar above Roppongi Hills and take in a bird's-eye view of the Tokyo Skytree. Other desired scenic routes can also be arranged. Only one EC135 Hermès helicopter is available but Mori Building City Air Services Co can arrange for multiple departures for larger groups.

Complete the sky cruise with lunch at ARK Hills Club, a prestigious member-only destination, or throw in a golf game at Shishido Hills Country Club or Eagle Point Golf Club.

Capacity No more than five pax per flight, subject to weather conditions, load weight, etc

Email mcas@mori.co.jp

Website www.mcas.co.jp/en/private/package/cruise

25

Conquer the ice mountains

Give your winners a winter wonderland in Hokkaido's Niseko ski resort where they will be housed exclusively in luxurious properties such as Kimamaya by Odin boutique hotel or the Glass House (for smaller incentive groups), enjoy several days of fun on the snowy slopes, get a chance to explore the remote back-country via a guided snowmobile and Snowcat tour, and warm themselves up with indulgent dips in Niseko's renowned *onsens*. And on the last day of their trip, dinner at Kamimura, one of Niseko's top Japanese restaurants, awaits.

Capacity Unavailable at press time

Email nikki@lightfoottravel.com

Website www.lightfoottravel.com

24



25



26



26

A night of kaiseki and geisha in historical Mukojima

A dinner function with entertainment provided by elegant geisha is an experience hard to come by in modern Japan, but experienced DMCs in the country will be able to whip up some magic. Opportunities are aplenty in Tokyo's Mukojima, a historical *hanamachi* district that boasts 16 traditional *ryotei* (luxurious traditional Japanese restaurant) and a community of at least 120 geisha.

A party in one of Mukojima's *ryotei* will see your top achievers partake in an exquisite *kaiseki* meal with geisha showcasing their talents in dance and music.

Capacity Varies from *ryotei* to *ryotei*

Email businessevents@tcvb.or.jp

Website www.businesseventstokyo.org

27

Have Jiro Ono make your winners a fine sushi meal

Helmed by Jiro Ono, recognised by Guinness World Records to be the oldest living Michelin three-star chef, Sukiyabashi Jiro in Tokyo's Ginza is known for serving up top quality sushi which costs ¥30,000 (US\$294) and up per set. It counts celebrities and politicians among its patrons, and this year it welcomed US president Barack Obama.

Securing a seat at this revered restaurant can be a challenge (reservations only by phone), which makes this meal for your winners even more exclusive.

Capacity 10 pax

Tel (81-3) 3535-3600

Website www.sushi-jiro.jp

28

Play a game of camel polo

Here's an activity that will give your serious top achievers a chance to laugh at themselves.

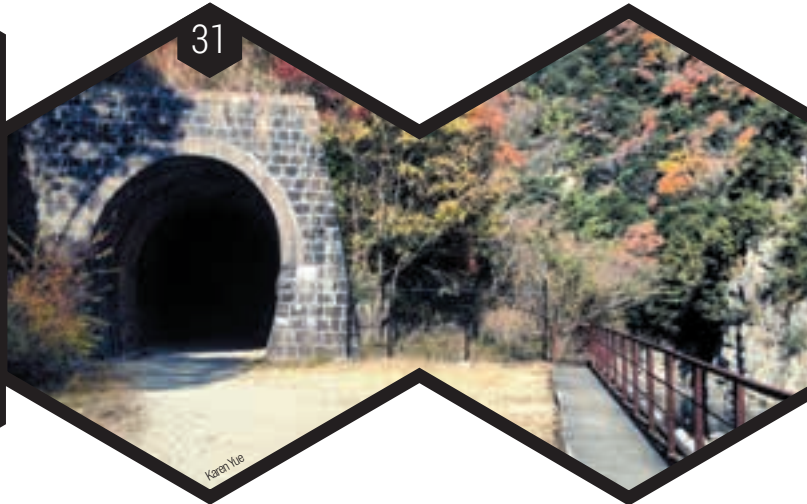
Camel polo requires no skills to play and is said to offer more fun than the version on horses. The sport, available in Dubai, follows the rules of the traditional game and can accommodate eight to 60 players.

As a fitting finale for the outdoor activity, throw a feast of grilled meats and seafood and ice-cold beers for your group.

Capacity Eight to 60 pax

Email mice@alphatoursdubai.com

Website www.alphatoursdubai.com



29

Enchanted volunteerism

Here's a do-good idea for your incentive winners. Let your winners establish deeper connection and aspiration by immersing them in 'voluntourism' at the sustainable community of GK Enchanted Farm in Angat, Bulacan, just a few hours overland from Manila.

GK, which stands for non-profit Gawad Kalinga or 'give care', aims to raise social entrepreneurs, help farmers and create wealth in the countryside.

The farm offers a slew of activities, from building houses for the poor and teaching to lending a hand in farming and social enterprises like making stuffed toys, gourmet cheeses, etc. Overnight stays are available.

Capacity 40 pax

Email info@gkenchantedfarm.com

Website gk1world.com/gk-enchanted-farm

30

Help some turtles

While celebrating your winners' achievements with all things fancy, give them also a chance to be part of turtle conservation efforts to make their experience even more memorable.

Organised by the team at Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa and Golden Sands Resort in Penang, Malaysia, the half-day programme begins with briefings by the Fisheries Department, during which they will learn about the conservation efforts of the Green Turtle and Olive Ridley Turtle species at Penang Turtle Sanctuary at Kerachut Beach. The experience can be enhanced with additional tailor-made activities such as an eco-hunt.

Later, lunch will be enjoyed in the resort before your winners get to retire and enjoy the extensive recreational facilities on property at their own pace.

Capacity No maximum limit

Email events.rsr@shangri-la.com

Website www.shangri-la.com/penang/rasasayan-resort/meetings-events/experience-it/

31

Go in search of an abandoned train line

Official tourism sites will not let you in on this secret location between the Japanese prefectures of Hyogo and Osaka, but the abandoned section of JR Fukuchiyama train line offers one of the most scenic and serene views in the Kansai region.

Running along the Mukogawa river valley, the abandoned track is loved by locals of all ages. Few foreigners are aware of its existence, which will give your winners something to brag about back home.

The trail goes on for six kilometres and the terrain is easy enough for amateur hikers. Pack strong flashlights for this hike, as your winners will need to pass through at least six unlit train tunnels.

The best times to go in search of this abandoned rail line is in autumn, when the weather is cool and the Mukogawa river valley is covered in glorious shades of amber, red and gold.

The start of the abandoned track is close to JR Namaze Station.

Capacity No limit

32

Master culinary skills from a celebrity chef

Whip up a delectable meal like a professional with the help of chef Sarab Kapoor, a Singapore-based celebrity chef and cooking instructor who is also the host of the TV series, *Cook Love Eat with Sarab*.

Chef Sarab is able to teach a wide variety of dishes, from vegetarian to non-vegetarian options, including traditional Indian favourites such as *Paneer Butter Masala* to classic Singaporean delights like chicken rice and chilli crab.

Classes are conducted in a cosy kitchen and participants can dig into their culinary creations at the end in a plush dining area.

Capacity Five to eight pax

Email enquiry@cookingclass-singapore.com

Website www.cookingclass-singapore.com/celebrity-chef-sarab

33

Try heli-fishing

Been there, done that with deep sea fishing? Well, how about heli-fishing? The luxurious Seafields coastal resort in Auckland's suburbs offers heli-fishing – an activity that will transport participants by helicopter to scenic locations for fishing under professional guidance.

Seafields can arrange heli-fishing in the Hauraki Gulf, around Great Barrier Island and at the Coromande. Rods and reels, bait, tackle and light lunch are provided.

And when the action is over, your group of winners can head back to Seafields and enjoy a barbeque dinner at the coastal retreat's BBQ Terrace.

Capacity Four per helicopter

Website www.seafields.co.nz

No conventional roar

Despite its small size, Singapore commands a large presence in the global events industry to reign as Asia's top convention city. By **Paige Lee Pei Qi**



International associations or regional offices based in Singapore have helped the city to anchor a growing number of world congresses

Singapore continues to outshine its regional counterparts in the business events sector, having garnered the accolade of being the only Asian city to be ranked among the top 10 convention cities in the world alongside Berlin, Paris and Vienna by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) last year.

Maintaining its position as Asia's top convention city for 12 consecutive years, Singapore hosted a record 175 ICCA qualified events in 2013, up from 150 events in 2012 – achieving the strongest year-on-year growth since 2005.

Last year, Singapore hosted 12 world congresses and several key meetings, including some first-in-Asia or Singapore events such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' General Conference and Assembly which

attracted 3,900 top international librarians from 114 countries to Singapore over eight days in August.

Jeannie Lim, executive director of conventions, meetings & incentive travel at Singapore Tourism Board (STB), said: "Singapore's stable and conducive business environment, financial strength and highly-skilled, multicultural workforce tend to attract international organisations to base their regional offices here."

According to Lim, there are more than 140 international non-profit organisations and associations based in Singapore, which reinforce the city's value proposition of being the "leading business and knowledge hub in Asia".

"Singapore is well-positioned to stage association congresses in view of its political neutrality and stability in the world," said Edward Liu, group managing director, Conference

& Exhibition Management Services.

"In addition, many prominent Singaporeans are playing significant roles in several international organisations which put Singapore in good stead in hosting global events," he added.

Not only does Singapore possess world-class infrastructure and services for hosting events, the city also harbours the domain knowledge and expertise in some of these fields, Liu posited, a view widely shared among industry stakeholders.

Of note, Singapore has been viewed as "a key base for entry into the Asia market among medical companies" lured by its positive economic growth and a prominent geographical location, according to Ng Sok Hia, executive assistant manager, sales and marketing, Fairmont Singapore and Swissôtel The Stamford.

She said: "Numerous medical corporations have since set up base in Singapore, which led to an increase in the number of pharmaceutical congresses held in Singapore."

The presence of global biomedical MNCs and their manufacturing bases in Singapore will in turn attract more medical event organisers, declared Arun Madhok, CEO of Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre. He said: "This (biomedical) hub effect is self-reinforcing, so we foresee continued mid-term growth for this industry."

Suntec Singapore has hosted inaugural medical events such as the International Congress on Glaucoma Surgery and the International Diabetes Federation Western Pacific Region congress.

Likewise, Singex Venues' director, sales & commercial development, Janice Yee, has also observed a "significant upward trend" of events from key industries like medicine and information technology at the Singapore Expo Convention and Exhibition Centre. Events held at the venue include the inaugural edition of Internet of Things Asia 2014 in April, and the upcoming Singapore Health & Biomedical Congress in

"Singapore is well-positioned to stage association congresses in view of its political neutrality and stability in the world."

Edward Liu

Group managing director, Conference & Exhibition Management Services





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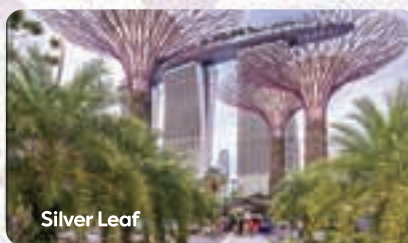
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Flower Field Hall



The Meadow



Silver Leaf



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18 Marina Gardens Drive, Singapore 018953



The first Internet of Things Asia was held at the Singapore Expo in April

September and the MRO Asia Conference & Exhibition in November.

Marcel Ewals, director, business development from Kenes Asia, which specialises in organising medical and scientific conferences, concurred: "Singapore wins a fair share of these events due to the active medical professionals in the (respective) regional and global associations, with about three to five of such conferences

each year."

Recognising that Singapore's strengths lie in its strong research and development capabilities and well-established business infrastructure, particularly in industries such as biomedical and healthcare, banking and finance, science and technology and urban solutions, STB is hence focusing on attracting association events that complement these industries, revealed Lim.

Having existing expertise in these industries will also provide local associations learning opportunities to support their international bids for hosting events in Singapore, she pointed out.

"We work with individuals, usually recognised experts or key opinion-makers in their respective fields, to play a key role in profiling Singapore and championing bids," she said. "Tapping on their networks, insights and expertise, these ambassadors will partner the Singapore Exhibition & Convention Bureau (SECB) to co-

create relevant content and influence key conferences and meetings to be held in Singapore."

To attract international associations, "high-quality distinctive content" is the differentiating factor, acknowledged Lim. She added: "We encourage international associations to leverage on Singapore's key industries and strategic location in Asia. Singapore will provide interesting Asia-centric topics for the international audience."

SECB will collaborate with the Singapore Economic Development Board's International Organisations Programme Office to support the needs of associations looking to establish their regional base in Singapore, said Lim.

To reinforce the city's allure as a congress destination, Lim said SECB also offers customised support like facilitation in securing venues and introduction with leading government agencies, local associations and business partners.

Sentosa – state of fun and feasts

The leisure island of Sentosa is no stranger to any traveler or event planner who is used to selling Singapore, especially after the completion of the widely publicised Resorts World Sentosa integrated resort in 2010.

New hotels and attractions that came online in recent years, such as Mövenpick Heritage Hotel Sentosa and iFly Singapore, have also helped to draw greater attention to the destination loved by many for its sun, sand and sea. Earlier in May, a new multimedia show, *Wings of Time*, debuted at Siloso Beach to offer

visitors a fresh option for night-time entertainment. By the end of this year Madame Tussauds wax museum will join Sentosa's growing list of attractions.

Bringing the Sentosa of today into focus is a brand new campaign and tagline, *The State of Fun*, which was launched in late-May. Explaining the tagline, Susan Ang, divisional director, island investment and branding, Sentosa Development Corporation, said: "The portrayal of Sentosa as a 'State' where all visitors are its 'citizens' with the 'freedom of right' to have fun, is a playful proposition that speaks to an increasingly open local and international target audience who can appreciate humour with a cheeky spin."

But Sentosa's MICE team wants to take destination marketing even further and show business event planners that the island can also be the state of unique feasts.

In an interview with *TTGmice*, Sentosa Leisure Group's events director of Island Business, Jimmy Wong, said: "Now that the dust (from years of construction) has settled, it is time for us to rejuvenate, rekindle and reignite interest in the island. We have the hardware to support events, so what we need to do is to create memorable experiences for event delegates."

To do that, Wong's team is rolling out a series of experiential dining opportunities on the island. The star product now is BBQ by the Beach, a private dinner party that is held under the stars in a scenic nook on Palawan Beach. The unique feature of the party is the use of sand dining furniture – sturdy tables and benches crafted masterfully out of fine sand.

An imu, a traditional Polynesian earth oven, dug four to five feet deep into the ground is another highlight at this party.

BBQ by the Beach is suitable for events with no more than 30 guests, utilising five sand dining furniture sets. It is priced from S\$180⁺⁺ (US\$145⁺⁺) per pax. The menu and package can be customised.

The beachfront dinner idea can accommodate larger groups of up to 200 pax by using a mix of sand dining furniture, floor seats and standing cocktail tables.

"We've only just started to talk to local PCOs and DMCs about BBQ by the Beach but sales is moving very well," Wong said, adding that the first client was a private bank that took 60 high-net-worth clients to dinner on July 18.

Add variety to a meeting programme by ending the day with a beachfront dinner party on Sentosa island



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corporate_events@sentosa.com.sg

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Continued from page 26

Another new experiential dining idea is offered on floating cabanas built out at sea. While this concept was first executed for a wedding party, Wong said it could be replicated for corporate groups.

Up to 20 floating cabanas can be fabricated, with each offering capacity for two to 10 people. These unique floating cabanas cost between S\$3,000 to S\$12,000 to build, excluding decoration. F&B catering is charged separately; a minimum spend of S\$80⁺⁺ per pax applies.

Although a floating cabana party can be held at any of Sentosa's three beaches, the team highly recommends Palawan for its stunning background offered by the Southernmost Point and greater serenity.

There are plans to develop even more dining concepts that leverage the island's natural environment, such as its forests.

"These ideas offer a different dimension to dining for conference

delegates, whom I'm sure do not want to have all their functions within the hotel or convention centre."

Wong is quick to clarify that Sentosa is "not out to compete with the MICE facilities on the island or on Singapore's mainland".

"We want to complement these hotels and convention centres by providing the leisure aspect of any business event programme," he said.

"In fact, we are working with island partners now to create other experiential dining ideas. For instance, we are looking to partner Segway (GoGreen Segway Eco Adventure) in a dine-around activity which will see delegates moving from one dining location to another on Segways.

"We are also keen to develop a larger food trail adventure that will see delegates do fun things like race down the luge (Skyline Luge Sentosa) and at the finish line roll their own chicken rice balls, then make their way down to Tanjong Beach, for instance, for another activity, and maybe end with a durian party somewhere else on the



The Southernmost Point adds to Palawan Beach's allure as an outdoor function venue

island," shared Wong.

"With the strong currency that Singapore has in comparison with its neighbours, the only way Sentosa – or any other tourism seller here – can compete well is to offer unique, memorable experiences that are not yet available elsewhere. And we must keep developing new ideas – on our own and with our partners – to keep interest high because our ideas today will one day be replicated elsewhere," he said. – **Karen Yue**



Need to know

A fine-dining experience in Lewin Terrace

The elegant Lewin Terrace, which specialises in Japanese-French cuisine, has opened in the tranquil Fort Canning Park. Housed in a black-and-white colonial bungalow, the fine-dining restaurant features chef de cuisine Ryoichi Kano at its helm.

Already drawing interest from corporate groups, Lewin Terrace recently hosted a private group of approximately 20 for lunch.

It can seat up to 82 guests, split between the well-appointed and spacious interior (66 pax) and the charming terrace (12 pax).

Email info@lewinterrace.com.sg for reservations.

New space for medical and lifestyle meetings

The five-star luxury One Farrer Hotel & Spa will open this month within the mixed-use lifestyle complex Connexion, offering a total of 250 rooms spread across three distinct hotel concepts.

Soft opening in phases, the hotel is located within Singapore's historic neighbourhood of Farrer Park. The Connexion complex will also include the Farrer Park Medical Clinics and Farrer Park Hospital.

One Farrer Hotel & Spa will target MICE groups with its One Farrer Conference Centre. Its 698m² Grand Ballroom, which can sit up to 650 guests and be split into two sections, is equipped with three multimedia screens, touchscreen control panels for presenters, handheld Samsung interactive tablets for conference delegates and a smart light system for customised light projections.

Video streaming connections allow real-time transmission of activities happening in other locations in Connexion, such as Farrer Park Hospital's 18 operating rooms, positioning the conference centre as a venue for medical and lifestyle meetings.

Events can also be held at the hotel's meeting rooms, the air-conditioned marquee on the Lifestyle Podium and poolside venues.

Chinatown goes digital

Chinatown is the latest district in Singapore to offer free Wi-Fi access to visitors. The complimentary network covers five popular tourist areas: Smith Street, Trengganu Street, Pagoda Street, Sago Street and Kreta Ayer Square.

Besides being able to surf the Internet, visitors who log into the network can also access a map of Chinatown that highlights popular landmarks and places of interest such as the Sri Mariamman Temple and the Chinatown Food Street.

Look for the brightest star

If you are planning to escape the busy city centre for your next event, The Star Theatre in Buona Vista may be considered. Lauded as Singapore's first massive performing arts theatre, The Star Theatre can seat 5,000 people in its iconic horseshoe structure.

Venue options include the auditorium which offers stalls and two circle levels, and the Star Gallery which is a multipurpose hall with retractable walls and flexible outdoor spaces. The latter can accommodate 770 guests in theatre-style or 400 guests in a banquet setting.



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The Importance of Professionalising Association Management

1100 – 1200hrs | Forum 2

Best Practices – Developing Middle Level Association Professionals

1400 – 1500hrs | Forum 3

Benefits of Attracting International Meetings to India

Corporate Performance Forum

21 August 2014 | Thursday
Catered Specially For Incentive & Corporate Executives

0930 – 1030hrs | Forum 1

Harnessing the Power of Incentive Travel (In collaboration with Site)

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Bali's charms are working their way into the hearts of more Chinese MICE groups; pictured here is the Melasti Ritual in progress in Ubud

Charming the Chinese

Improved air links between China and Bali has strengthened the Chinese MICE market for the Island of the Gods, writes **Mimi Hudoyo**

Indonesia's MICE business from China has been dominated by clan meetings, retail and B2B exhibitions, most of which take place in Jakarta. In recent years, however, Bali's appeal to the Chinese MICE market has soared on the wings of improved air access between China and the destination.

According to Herman, Jetwings' senior operations manager, Bali is now connected to China by various airlines including Hong Kong Express, China Eastern Airlines, China Southern Airlines, Hainan Airlines, Garuda Indonesia, as well as Singapore Airlines via Singapore and Asiana Airlines via Seoul.

More air services by Chinese carriers will soon come online to put Bali within reach for even more Chinese

travellers, said Bambang Sugiono, director of Gajah Bali Tour.

Data from Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy showed that Chinese arrivals in Bali from January to April this year was 191,413, compared to 128,125 during the same period last year. Indonesia, in general, welcomed 324,334 Chinese travellers in the first four months of this year, an increase of 30.4 per cent over the same period in 2013.

Commenting on the rising number of Chinese footfalls in Bali, Bambang said: "There has been a steady growth in Chinese arrivals over the last couple of years. Today, China has become the second biggest market for the island. While most of the traffic is still group and leisure FIT, we have

started to see growth in the corporate meeting and incentive segments."

Come September, Gajah Bali Tour will receive a 400-pax incentive group from a Chinese pharmaceutical company.

Bambang observed that the travel requirements of Chinese incentive groups are similar to leisure travellers – both would stay in Bali for five days/four nights and tour popular landmarks and destinations such as Tanah Lot, Ubud and Pulau Penyu (Turtle Island).

"The only difference is that the incentive package is full-board, including two day tours and one free day," he added.

The Westin Resort Nusa Dua, Bali has also reported busy days with the Chinese market. It welcomed two corporate incentive groups from China last April. One was from an insurance company with 156 delegates who arrived in two batches, and the other was from a consultancy firm with 84 people, revealed Saraswati Subadia, the resort's director of sales MICE.

Other sellers in Bali are eager to get in on the action.

Bali Adventure Tours, which operates Ubud Adventure and Function Centre, and Elephant Safari Park & Lodge, exhibited at IT&CM China this year to tap the market. The company's director of sales and marketing, Arifin Tirta Wijata, said: "Most of our Chinese business comes from the leisure segment, but we see a potential to grow the incentive market. Our participation in (IT&CM China) gave us a few pieces of business, so we have now placed IT&CM China on our yearly agenda."

To attract the Chinese MICE market, Bali Adventure Tour has rolled out two packages, one a day tour and the other a two-night arrangement.

The day package, good for up to 30 people per group, includes white-water rafting with teambuilding elements, activities and shows at Elephant Safari Park & Lodge, lunch, refreshments and hotel transfers. The two-day option features the same activities and includes accommodation at the lodge plus a mountain cycling tour. It is suitable for groups of up to 20 people.

Bali Hai Cruises, which operates day and evening cruises around Bali and Nusa Lembongan Island, as well as a beach club on Nusa Lembongan Island, is also keen to attract more Chinese incentive groups with its area of specialisation. It currently handles the Chinese leisure segment.

Need to know



New spaces at Padma Resort

Padma Resort Bali at Legian is revitalising its banquet and meeting facilities with a US\$5 million renovation project which will give it a larger ballroom and four new breakout rooms.

Slated to open this month, the refreshed grand ballroom, Plumeria, will have capacity for 700 guests, theatre-style. It can be divided into three smaller spaces, and comes with a pre-function room.

New stay at Seminyak

Courtyard by Marriott Bali Seminyak will open this month in the entertainment enclave, offering 290 rooms and suites, 308m2 of event facilities including a poolside pre-function area, all-day-dining Seminyak Kitchen, Pool Bar & Lounge, a fitness centre and swimming pool.

Free Wi-Fi access is available throughout the hotel.

Table for more than eight

TABLE8 is the latest dining destination at luxury hotel, The Mulia Bali. The oriental restaurant specialises in authentic Cantonese and Sichuan delicacies, and even offers a tea corner where guests can enjoy imported varieties of premium leaves from China.



Menu highlights at the exquisitely designed restaurant include Australian five-head whole abalone braised with wild mushroom, and roasted suckling pig. Diners can also choose to have dim sum or pick off a buffet spread.

TABLE8 opens for lunch and dinner, and can seat 100 guests.

For private functions, the restaurant offers a private dining room for 48 guests.

DoubleTree by Hilton arrives in Indonesia

DoubleTree by Hilton Jakarta - Diponegoro opened its doors to guests in June, the latest property in Hilton Worldwide's Indonesian portfolio and the first DoubleTree by Hilton hotel in the country.

It offers 253 rooms and suites, a ballroom for 700 pax in a theatre setting, six breakout rooms for 50 to 120 people, a 24-hour business centre, three dining outlets, and various recreational facilities including an outdoor pool.

It is located near the city's CBD.

Zip around Bali in a vintage limousine

VW Limo Bali has reconstructed a vintage 1980 Brazilian Volkswagen Kombi to make it a fun transportation option for tours around Bali.

Good for small groups of five people, the iconic vehicle features an L-shape living room equipped with air-conditioning, a minibar, an eight-speaker sound system with hundreds of music albums to make the journey a fun party, and Wi-Fi Internet.

The Kombi is available for day or night charters at US\$150 for eight hours, and includes a driver and concierge staff who will assist clients in creating itineraries and booking restaurants and bars.

VW Limo Bali will add four more Kombis to its fleet by early next year.

Email owner Brett Morgan at brett@privatevillasandhouses.com for more information.



Mimi Hudopo

Ideas A day in Bali's countryside

morning Drive to Jatiluwih in Tabanan Regency, where the rice terraces have been named a UNESCO Cultural Landscape. Learn about the Subak irrigation system and the rice plantation method, and then partake in hands-on activities such as traditional field ploughing, paddy planting or harvesting, depending on the season.

midday Journey on to Bedugul for lunch at a local restau-

rant that serves Indonesian and international cuisine, then onwards to Candikuning to visit a traditional market where fruits, spices and local snacks can be purchased.

afternoon Spend the afternoon at three Balinese landmarks – the Pura Ulun Danu, a water temple located at the edge of Lake Bratan, Pura Taman Ayun in Mengwi and Tanah Lot.

Itinerary provided by Floressa Wisata Bali

The UNESCO protected rice terraces at Jatiluwih



Checking in

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 Website: www.nikkobali.com

Grand Nikko Bali



FACT FILE

Maximum pax for meetings
 1,000 at the MPF space, theatre-style

Recent events handled
 114th Asia CEO Insurance Summit, two days, 150 pax; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development SEA Regional Forum, three days, 80 pax

VERDICT



Great for business events and delegates who intend to extend their trip with their spouse and children.

Mimi Hudoyo

Many good things can be expected at Grand Nikko Bali. It is, after all, the first upper-scale Grand Nikko branded property by JAL Hotels. Following its rebranding exercise last year, from Nikko Bali Resort & Spa, the hotel gained hardware upgrades which included the addition of a second function hall, boardrooms and luxury villas.

Furthermore, its location in the South Nusa Dua area, atop a 40m cliff, affords it stunning views of the Indian Ocean. It is also one of the few hotels in Bali that still retain a rich Balinese architecture.

Meeting facilities The MPF (Multi-Purpose Function) is the newest meeting facility in the hotel. The 1,008m² pillar-less ballroom boasts its own entrance and is fitted with large glass walls to let in maximum daylight. MPF can be divided into three smaller spaces that can each accommodate 332 people, theatre-style.

MPF also comes with a 140-seat boardroom that can be split in three.

Grand Nikko also offers Graha Sawangan ballroom, which is good for 600 pax, theatre-style. This space can be transformed into five smaller meeting rooms.

These spaces come with free broadband Internet access, air-conditioning, sound systems with multiple microphones and telephone points.

Rooms I stayed at the new one-bedroom Pool Villa, a stunning 300m² property that resembles a Balinese house with a main gate that opens into a small, neat garden, which in turn leads into the villa.

What glorious views the bedroom has! Glass windows for walls and sliding doors bring the outdoors in. I was able to enjoy a full view of my villa's gazebo, terrace, private swimming pool and flower planta-

tions. A daybed set under a huge window in the bedroom makes a pleasant area for reading.

The villa offers a walk-in closet, a powder room and a spacious bathroom that comes with his and her sinks, a vanity counter, separate shower and toilet booths and a bathtub. I love how the bathroom opens to a garden where an outdoor shower stands.

Quality entertainment amenities, such as an LCD TV with international channels, BOSE sound system and iPod dock, are provided, along with a mini bar with one-time complimentary selected drinks, butler service and free Internet access.

It is great that the air-conditioning system is automated and shuts down when doors are opened.

F&B As a villa guest, I could have breakfast at any of the hotel's F&B outlets or in the comfort of my villa. The Villa Lounge and Grand Nikko Club Lounge offer excellent à la carte breakfast options. While the Brasserie's breakfast buffet featured a great variety of Indonesian and international dishes, I found their taste and quality pale in comparison with what was served at the lounges.

My dinner at Benkay Japanese Restaurant was splendid.

Other facilities The hotel has a departure and arrival lounge for business travellers and MICE groups, and a business centre. To unwind, guests can utilise the spa, gym, four pools, three tennis courts and equipment for water and beach sports. Meeting delegates who wish to extend their trip in Bali with their children will appreciate the hotel's Children's Jungle Camp (a kid's club) and lagoon and pool for children.

Meet Stay Golf @



A 75-minute direct ferry ride from Singapore, Bintan Lagoon Resort offers the perfect setting for private parties, corporate meetings, conferences, incentives and team building events.

The newly built Great Hall, is a state-of-the-art conference centre covering a combined open space area of more than 20,000 square feet and an astounding column-free banquet hall holding up to 1300 guests.

Offering the latest in lighting and audio-visual capabilities as well as high-speed wireless internet, the Great Hall is designed to deliver smart technological features required by today's MICE and corporate planners.

Smaller function rooms are also available in the main Resort for 10 to 400 delegates. With 470 deluxe rooms, suites and villas, a day spa, over 50 land and sea activities including two championship golf courses, supported by a team of dedicated professionals, Bintan Lagoon Resort is an excellent location for your next event.

Email: reservations@mozaichotels.com

Soaring ambitions

Spurred by Expo 2020, the UAE is now wooing global association congresses and meetings to sharpen its event destination status, writes **Shekhar Niyogi**



Offices and residential apartments reach lofty heights in Dubai Marina, a new district built around a yacht marina

Dubai and Abu Dhabi are seeing strong inbound MICE business growth, driven by rapid development in meeting infrastructure and hotel room inventory ahead of the Expo 2020.

Meetings and incentives have been identified as a pivotal segment for Dubai, which is projecting 20 million annual visitors by 2020. The number of international trade visitors to the emirate is projected to reach 1.9 million by 2020, up from 900,000 in 2012.

Dubai Trade Centre-Jebel Ali, the 438ha site comprising a dedicated 150ha Expo area and a surrounding residential, hospitality and logistics zone, will play host to the 25 million visitors expected during the six-month Expo 2020. All major construction are targeted to complete by October 2019.

While Najeh Boughzala, MICE project manager at Alpha Tours, has not observed any impact from the Expo in winning events, he is confident that

Dubai “will be in a better position to leverage the Expo” once new infrastructure, develop projects and hotels come on stream from 2016.

“Events are a key pillar of our Tourism Vision for 2020, with the objective of transforming Dubai from a regional events hub to a global destination for events,” said Helal Saeed Al Marri, director general at Dubai’s Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing.

Steen Jakobsen, director, Dubai Convention Bureau, said: “A recent ICCA survey showed that the number of associations, conferences and meetings in the Middle East has tripled over the past 10 years. In the rest of the world, it has doubled.”

The Dubai Association Centre (DAC) was launched earlier this year to attract association meetings and congresses to set up offices in the city. With a DAC license, international associations can leverage such

benefits as the use and facilities at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), residency visas for employees, and offering services and products to the UAE and other GCC markets.

Ahmed Alkhaja, senior vice president – venues, DWTC said: “Dubai’s position as a premier international business tourism destination has grown steadily in recent years, buoyed by our core focus on developing our credentials as a global hub for key industries to hold meetings, conferences and exhibitions.”

DWTC is seeing “a robust 2014 calendar”, said Alkhaja, with its 11 global congresses expected to be attended by 12,000 international delegates and generate a combined revenue of US\$32 million.

Major events for Dubai this year include the 19th Conference of the International Association of Prosecutors, Annual Congress of the International Association of Law and Forensic Sciences, Asia Pacific Dental Congress and International Cotton Association Congress. Dubai has also outshone Copenhagen, Paris and Rome to win the bid for the 34th International Congress of the Society of Blood Transfusion in 2016.

Similarly, Abu Dhabi has also established its own Convention Bureau and is eyeing to be listed among ICCA’s top 50 association meetings destinations by 2018.

According to the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi), the MICE sector currently generates 2.4 billion dirhams (US\$653 million) per annum for Abu Dhabi, with the figure expected to grow seven per cent to 5.1 billion dirhams by 2020.

“We are targeting 14 major wins in 2014 and 10 more in 2015” said Jasem Al Darmaki, deputy director general, TCA Abu Dhabi.

Major congresses taking place in Abu Dhabi in 2015 include the 20th Asia Pacific Society of Cardiology Congress, the 16th World Congress on Tobacco and Health and the 70th Annual Conference of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Need to know



Enchanting Arabic dining at Al Hadheerah

Located at the luxurious Bab Al Shams Desert Resort and Spa, Al Hadheerah incorporates live cooking stations, wood-fired ovens and spit roasts in its eclectic menu. A falconry display, camel caravan, horse show, Arabic singers and Tamoura dancers create an unforgettable ambience at the fort-like venue. Delicacies with distinct Middle Eastern flavour include *kebbeh*, traditional fired meat and crushed wheat balls filled with minced meat and spices; and cheese *sambousek*, a light pastry filled with Arabic cheese and parsley. The restaurant is open from sunset to 23.30.

More information available at www.meydanhotels.com/babalshams.

Jockeying for position at Meydan Racecourse

Accommodating 60,000 spectators in a 1.6km-long grandstand, the Meydan Racecourse is home to the world's most luxurious horse racing facility. When not used for races, it also serves as a conference and business facility, with the Meydan hotel offering 284 rooms and dining facilities for incentive groups and meeting delegates.

Email info@meydan.ae or call (971-4) 327-0000

Dive into the emirate's pearling traditions

Visitors can experience the thrill of pearling, once a source of wealth in the emirates before the discovery of oil. Clad in traditional shirts and baggy trousers and equipped with a nose clip, delegates can board a dhow (traditional boat) off the shores of Jebel Ali and set out to collect oysters under the supervision of highly trained crew and instructors, who will teach the ancient pearl-diving techniques. Pearling is also popular as a teambuilding activity.

Contact Pavilion Dive Centre at divecentre@jumeirah.com or call (971-4) 406-8828.

How I did a 16,500-pax incentive

When 16,500 sales reps from Nu Skin China visited the UAE for their incentive trip, they made up the largest-ever incentive delegation for the company and the host destination alike.

Yas Island Destination Management was engaged to provide full logistic support for the mega corporate getaway event, with the itinerary encompassing Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah.

For the Abu Dhabi leg, the Chinese visitors filled 16 hotels and enjoyed a tour of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, a city tour and the Ferrari World Abu Dhabi experience, over two days in April. The packed itinerary centred around the Yas Marina Circuit, including workshops, tours and a large group dinner.

More than 2,500 staff were in-

involved and 14,000 man hours spent to deliver the event, which featured festival celebrations each day and F1-style display races. All in all, 13,500kg of F&B provisions, 64 performers, 200 buses, 200 flights and 40,000 roomnights were utilised, and close to a million photographs were taken of the event.

Al Tareq Al Ameri, CEO of Yas Marina Circuit, said: "This was an extremely complex, multi-faceted event which took months of planning and a lot of hard work to execute."

Notwithstanding the huge variables likely for such mega events, Yas Island Destination Management director, Clive Dwyer, stressed that the destination offers myriad opportunities. "Anything is possible," he added.

Dubai sings out to new opera house

Envisioned to rival the Sydney Opera House, the 2,000-seat Dubai Opera House is being built as part of The Opera District in downtown Dubai. Designed in the shape of a traditional sailing vessel, the 60,000m² multi-use venue is expected to complete in 2015. The venue can be converted into a banqueting hall or exhibition space, as 900 of the 2,000 seats can be removed with the use of hydraulic technology and stored beneath the theatre.



Wildlife calling at new safari

Scheduled to complete in 2015, the Dubai Safari Park will house over 1,000 animals across four distinct sections – an open safari, plus Arabian, Asian and African villages. In addition to a butterfly park, a botanical garden, a resort and a golf course, the 120ha eco-friendly park will also boast educational, conservation and veterinary facilities. It is being heralded as a dynamic site for incentive groups and teambuilding exercises.

Nu Skin China's mega party on Yas Island



Room for improvement

MICE prospects are brighter now for New Delhi but several obstacles remain, threatening to stunt growth potential. By **Rohit Kaul**



Laxmi Narayan Temple is one of Delhi's major temples and a key tourist attraction

There is a general air of positivity among New Delhi's MICE players lately, with much of the optimism resulting from ongoing hardware developments in the Indian destination.

Three new hotels had emerged in New Delhi Aerocity in the second half of 2013 – JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi Aerocity, Lemon Tree Premier, Delhi Airport and Red Fox Hotel, Delhi Airport – and all offer meeting facilities on-site.

On the exhibitions front, a major facelift is being planned for one of India's top exhibition venues, Pragati Maidan. Some Rs8.2 billion (US\$137.2 million) will be invested in the five-year revamp which will include the construction of new exhibition centres, convention halls, food plazas and a five-star hotel.

Ashok Jha, chairman of the Indian

Trade Promotion Organisation which manages the venue, said: "The new facility will be among the best in the world. It will be on par with some of the facilities in Europe."

These infrastructure improvements have inspired Chander Mansharamani, managing director of Alpcord Network Travel & Conferences, to believe that "the future is bright for the city".

He also told *TTGmice* that business today is improving. "The MICE market in New Delhi has grown at a rate of 10 to 15 per cent this year so far. Being the capital of India and having good international (air) connections give New Delhi an edge over other Indian destinations," he said.

Also optimistic is Prashant Narayan, senior vice president and head of leisure travel for inbound, Thomas Cook (India). "New Delhi is ideal for incentive groups as, apart from its own

offerings, it has a lot of getaways in the vicinity. New convention facilities in New Delhi Aerocity and the Pragati Maidan facelift will further strengthen the city's position as an incentive destination," he said.

New Delhi has, for a while, been attracting international MICE groups from mainly Europe, the US and Australia. While demand from the domestic market far exceeds bookings from the international market, some business hotels with convention facilities are seeing a welcome change in the winds.

Balan Paravantavida, general manager of JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi Aerocity, said: "MICE makes up around 40 per cent of our overall revenue. Currently, 20 per cent of our events are international ones while 80 per cent are domestic. However, we expect the share of international events to grow to 40 per cent in the near future."

Despite the optimism, industry players are frustrated with their government's lack of focus in marketing the city for business events, and have been demanding that the ministry come up with a clear strategy for the segment.

Anup Nair, managing director of Incentive Destinations, lamented: "New Delhi has a lot to offer as an incentive destination, but because of a weak marketing approach the city is not considered a priority destination for international groups."

Rajeev Kohli, joint managing director of Creative Travel, agrees: "The government needs to understand that the needs of the MICE segment are different from others."

Another obstacle for the industry is the city's lack of integrated convention and exhibition venues of global standards, which puts New Delhi at a disadvantage when competing with other MICE cities for business events.

Ritu Saigal, director of Travel With Us, added that infrastructure that can support mega events are lacking too.

Local conference organisers are also lamenting the number of permissions required from government agencies in order to run an event.

"(The system) results in a lot of hassle. A single-window clearance is needed," urged Mansharamani.

The India Convention Promotion Bureau has heeded the calls of trade players and is trying to implement a streamlined system. Updates on its efforts are expected to be announced during its annual convention this month.

Ideas

Two nights in and around Delhi

Day1 Your first day in Delhi will be spent getting to know the city's rich history and culture. A full-day tour is in order, with visits to key landmarks such as Red Fort, Qutab Minar, Lotus Temple, India Gate and Raj Ghat.

Come evening, enjoy a feast worthy of the ancient royals. Delhi 6 - Royal Cuisine of the Walled City specialises in Mughlai cuisine and features both royal recipes of Mughals and homemade delicacies of Muslim families.

If energy is still running high at night, head to Pangaea and party with the elite of Delhi. The night club, located at the Ashok Hotel, can accommodate up to 400 guests and offers 20 VIP tables. Private functions are possible.

Day2 Say goodbye to Delhi for now, as you head to Agra, home of the majestic Taj Mahal.

But before that, pay a visit to Sikandra Fort along the way. It is the final resting place of the great Mughal emperor Akbar.

Also, take the afternoon to explore Agra Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and Tomb of I'timad-ud-Daulah.

Taj Mahal will make the grand finale on the itinerary today, as it is most beautiful at dusk.

Check into your hotel in Agra and rest for the night.



Day3 Jaipur is on the menu today. Upon reaching the Pink City in the afternoon, you will call at the City Palace where many antiques and artefacts belonging to the ruling family are kept here, including a valuable collection of weaponry.

Next stop, Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds), the open-air Jantar Mantar Observatory and the sprawling Albert Hall Museum.

Later, stroll through one of Jaipur's many colourful bazaars before returning to your hotel.

Day4 Today you will make your way back to Delhi. But first, a visit to Amber Fort just outside of Jaipur. Completed in the early 18th



century, the fort took more than a century to build and offers a fascinating insight into the lifestyle of the ruling families.

From top: Qutab Minar in New Delhi, and Pangaea

Need to know



Recharge at Rishikesh

Recognised as the yoga capital of the world, Rishikesh, about 250km from New Delhi, is home to Sanskriti Vedic Retreat which offers yoga and meditation workshops. Business warriors can choose to stay at the retreat after their meetings in the Indian capital and unwind through some of the best of Indian traditions of ayurveda and yoga.

Grilled delights

The Indian Grill Room in Gurgaon's Suncity Business Tower, specialises in cuisine prepared with various Indian grilling techniques like the tawa, charcoal grill, pathar and tandoor. The establishment has indoor and outdoor sections, with the former featuring a large open kitchen with interactive grill stations, and the latter gazebos and a performance area. Guests pay a fixed price for a set menu that includes 12 varieties of Indian grills.

Vibrant Park Inn opens in Gurgaon

The new Park Inn by Radisson Gurgaon Bilaspur, about an hour's drive from New Delhi Indira Gandhi International Airport, offers 98 rooms and suites,

more than 200m² of flexible meeting rooms that are supported by a team of events management specialists, a business centre, an all-day-dining restaurant and a fitness centre, among other facilities.





Alexander Wassermann



Yngvar Stray



Urs Solenthaler



Tane Picken

Australia

Outrigger Hotels & Resorts has appointed **John Gerrard** its area general manager Australia and general manager of the 409-room **Outrigger Surfers Paradise** in Queensland. Gerrard comes with extensive work experience in various South-east Asian destinations. He was recently operational consultant for Temple Tree and Bon Ton Resorts in Malaysia.

China

Dorsett Hospitality International has named **Adeline Sang** the new general manager of **Lushan Resort** in Jiangxi Province, China. Sang has over 32 years of extensive operational and management capabilities in the hotel industry and was involved in the successful opening of properties such as Sheraton Towers Singapore and Hotel Mulia Senayan, Jakarta.

Nick Porter has taken on the role of general manager at **Regent Beijing**. He has a wealth of experience in sales and marketing leadership and hotel management, including stints at resorts in Langkawi and Bali and city hotels in Shanghai and Beijing.

Hong Kong

Alexander Wassermann is now general manager of **InterContinental Grand**

Stanford Hong Kong.

Wassermann returns to the hotel after his departure in 2010 as hotel manager. He was last general manager of the InterContinental Beijing Beichen and area general manager of InterContinental Hotels & Resorts, North China.

Yngvar Stray now heads **Harbour Grand Kowloon** as general manager. He joins from Banyan Tree Shanghai on the Bund where he played the same role.

Malaysia

Taro Tan has joined **Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa** as hotel manager. Tan, who had started his hospitality career in 1989, was most recently with the Landmark Lancaster Hotel Group in Thailand, where he held dual roles of area director of rooms and hotel manager of Lancaster Bangkok. Meanwhile, the hotel has also welcomed **Colin Yeoh** as resident manager. He joins from Raffles Hainan where he held the same title.

New Zealand

Australasian Society of Association Executives (AuSAE) has appointed **Brett Jeffery** general manager, New Zealand. He has served on the AuSAE board for the past five years, and has more

than 20 years of industry experience. He was recently sales and marketing manager at Rotorua Events and Venues.

Philippines

Edsa Shangri-La, Manila has appointed **Urs Solenthaler** resident manager. Prior to this appointment, Solenthaler served as senior executive service manager A&G at Shangri-La Hotel, Jakarta and also at Shangri-La's Mactan Resort & Spa.



Vernon Lee

Singapore

Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa Resort & Spa, Singapore has made **Tane Picken** its new resident manager. Picken brings over 13 years of hospitality experience across China, Africa, the Middle East, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand to his new role. He was last cluster director of business development for a five-star hospitality establishment in Thailand.

Vernon Lee is the new general manager of **Capri by Fraser, Changi City/Singapore**. Lee was most recently hotel manager of Village Hotel Albert Court Singapore, under Far East Hospitality.



Carl V Sladen

and marketing at **Regent Hotels & Resorts**. Chia brings more than 25 years of hotel sales and marketing experience to the role, with his most recent position being vice president of sales and marketing for the Rosewood Hotel Group.

Vietnam

Caravelle Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City has appointed **Carl V Sladen** its director of sales and marketing. Sladen joins from Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi.

Taiwan

Dexter Chia is now global senior vice president of sales



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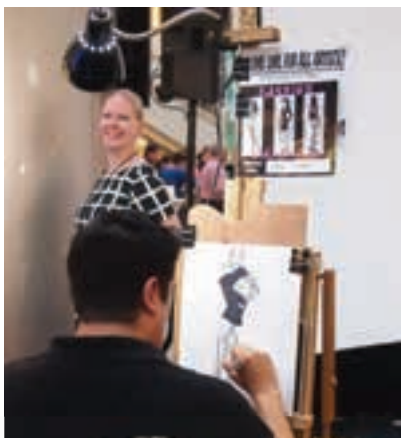
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The Americas Incentive, Business Travel & Meetings Exhibition welcomed a global cast of buyers and sellers for its Orlando debut in June, showcasing how a multitude of theme parks, flexible spaces and sunny days anchor the city as a top MICE destination in the US. Photos by Xinyi Liang-Pholsena



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What's next?

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