

April 2015

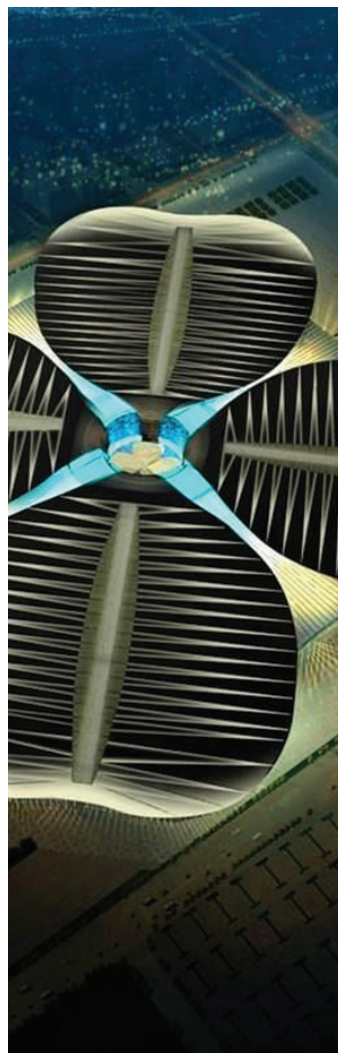
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Buffalo charges into
Singapore

Austerity drive bites
Indonesia hotels

Business is looking up
for Shanghai



Innovating the space

New convention centres across Asia-Pacific show they are greener, smarter and are made to cater to any event. *TTGmice* looks at how they are innovating the space

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Smart, but is it sexy?

A slew of new convention centres in the region have opened or are opening (see our cover story pages 14-20), flexing the latest design and gadgetry.

The International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney, for example, was in an attention-grabbing mode at the recently concluded AIME, showcasing a new virtual look inside the venue with a video overlaying animation and real footage. Blending the virtual with the physical, the stand also featured a model of the venue with detailed floor plans of each level, which allowed people to draw traffic flows, highlight rooms and discover the venue's integration for the first time.

The new kids on the block are definitely smarter, greener, more flexible and more accessible (not only easier for people to get to, but friendlier for the disabled to move around). I would be just happy if they all offer high-speed Wi-Fi without me having to log in and out if I'm on a different floor. Or if the air-con can be adjusted instead of being centrally controlled. Or if the food is better. But these wishes seem the least they can do. Nowadays, a planner can even request for more chairs without even leaving the meeting room, match the ambience of the space to the company's corporate colours, have a live feed of how lunch is being cooked to guests seated in the ballroom (see page 4), and more.

New convention centres are also made to handle everything, meaning they are no longer just for the meeting delegate but for special occasions – weddings, anniversaries, parties – by the general public, which hotels have a stranglehold on.

The issue is, no matter how sleek and fancy a convention centre is, it is still not seen as 'sexy'.

So one of the biggest innovations new convention centres can make is to jack up their appeal factor, so that they are able to compete more effectively with hotels for a larger share of this segment.

Other than that, they've thought of everything.



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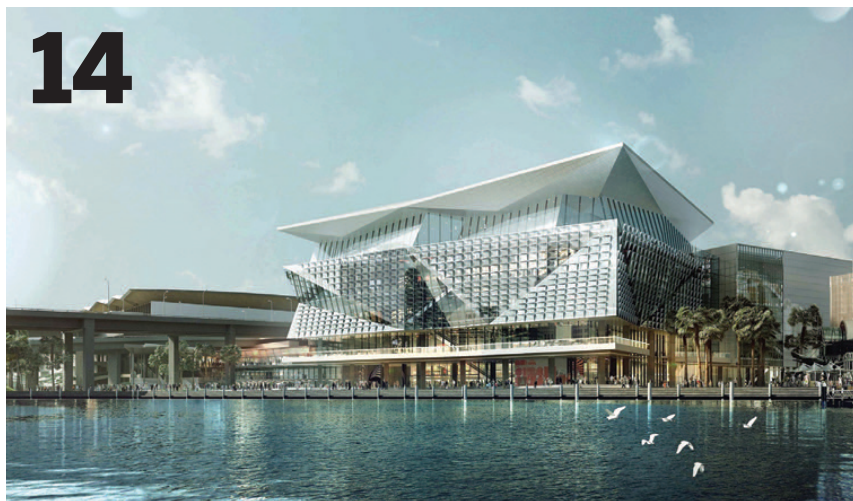
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Latest available ICCA data show meetings are growing in Shanghai and prospects are good in 2015 and beyond. Caroline Boey reports

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Niche industries and booming infrastructure are giving South Korean destinations a chance to welcome MICE business, discovers Hannah Koh

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Australian business event players expect better outcomes from event bids now that the national government has committed to stronger support for the sector, writes Paige Lee Pei Qi

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Innovative One Farrer Hotel & Spa

Just when we think the greatest hotel innovation remains the toilet paper origami fold, in comes One Farrer Hotel & Spa which has, not one, but a slew of imaginative ideas.

First up is the audio and visual fibre-optic live feed, which can beam how lunch is being made, by a chef working in the hotel's cooking studio, to the Grand Ballroom where guests can even ask the chef a question or two about the ingredients or method of cooking. Video streaming connections from Farrer Park Hospital's 18 operating rooms to the hotel's conference centre are also available. The 243-room five-star hotel is part of a mixed-use lifestyle complex, Connexion, which includes a medical centre.

Another innovation is an electronic ordering system that allows guests to order any food or beverage from all the hotel's menus 24/7 and have it delivered to the room or as a takeaway – so wave goodbye to exorbitant room service prices and charges, and the often long wait before the room service order is fulfilled.

The hotel's location in the Farrer Park district is central and convenient. A colourful, bustling, historical neighbourhood that includes Little India, once inside the property, peace, serenity and greenery (14 gardens over 20 levels) take over. From any guestroom, the view of the city's skyline and Farrer Park surroundings is unique and gives guests a real feeling they are in Singapore, not just any metropolis.

One Farrer Hotel & Spa also boasts a 'hotels within a hotel' concept featuring the Urban Hotel, Loft Apartments and Skyline Hotel & Sky Villas, all with well-appointed and tastefully furnished rooms with the latest in-room technology.

Oh, did we also mention its 600 specially commissioned paintings and sculptures by Asian artists? Pity these aren't for sale.

Website: www.onefarrer.com – **Raini Hamdi**

Southbridge boasts new views

Been there done that with the views at Marina Bay Sands' SkyPark Singapore? The new place to go is Southbridge, which offers, arguably, the sexiest 360-degree sights of the city spanning the historic Parliament House, across the Singapore River, to the iconic Marina Bay Sands and the Boat Quay skyline, which is nostalgic and charming with the roofs of old low-rise houses in Singapore.

Still a secret as it opened only about three months ago, Southbridge is also literally 'hidden' at the rooftop of a five-storey building on 80 Boat Quay. To access, you need to go from the back of Boat Quay, which heightens the anticipation for your group, as they will not know where they are being taken to until they reach the rooftop and – lo and behold – find a chic bar-restaurant with a unique panoramic view of a historical area which has become the icon of Singapore today.

The venue is ideal for planners with a group of 100 pax, who are seeking a fun dining experience that can be trusted and offers value for money. The brainchild of established F&B entrepreneur Bepi de Vito, Southbridge serves modern craft cocktails, the world's greatest boutique champagnes and artisanal sakes. Innovative small plates menu focusing on oyster and seafood as well as other creative delights such as chilli crab croque and truffle and smoked pancetta bikini, complement the specialised drinks menu perfectly.

Opens daily from 17:00 to midnight. Tel: (65) 6536-5818; email: info@southbridge.sg; website: www.southbridge.sg



Do good while meeting in Phuket

Planners holding their events at Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort can participate in CSR programmes which form part of the resort's ongoing collaboration with a local school.

Delegates can show their support for the Ban Bang Rong primary school in the rural north-east of the island through activities such as planting vegetables in the school garden, painting the toilets and canteen, rearranging the library, and donating educational games and materials to the school.

They can also take part in other projects in the greater Phuket community.

Tony Pedroni, general manager of the resort, said: "The primary school has many ongoing needs. In recent weeks we have made repairs to the drinking water filtration system and have installed a playground for the younger kids.

"Outside of the school however, there are several opportunities to provide much needed islandwide community and environmental project support. Ultimately, our aim is to work with clients so that they can give something back to our community in a meaningful way that has a lasting benefit."

Meanwhile, the 255-key resort has also recently unveiled new meeting facilities, the Similan Ballroom as well as the Tongfah, Tawan and Talay meeting rooms.



HOT DEALS



Resorts World Genting

Resorts World Genting

Resorts World Genting MICE division has introduced an Elite C-Suites Deal exclusively for corporates.

Stella Sum, the resort's assistant vice president MICE, said: "Elite C-Suites Deal was conceptualised after listening to meeting planners who told us they wanted more than just standard meeting packages of one lunch and two tea breaks.

"It has been well received because it is flexible and allows planners to pick any offerings that suit their needs and pay accordingly. We sold 42 Elite C-Suites the day it was launched (February 1)."

The offerings include luxury limousine services, helicopter transfers to the resort, reserved car parks, golf, gourmet tea break menus and choice of hotel accommodation, among others.

Arokia Das, senior manager, Luxury Tours Malaysia, said: "The new offerings will further enhance the quality of meetings. Elite C-Suites also makes it easier for us to promote Resorts World Genting to the high-end segment."

Putrajaya International Convention Centre

Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) is showcasing Malaysia through a year-long programme of traditional dances, food and handicraft featuring one or two states each month.

This month, it is featuring the traditional dances, food and local cottage industry products of Malacca and Negri Sembilan. Kedah and Perlis are up next in May, Terengganu in June, Penang in July, Kelantan in August, Sabah in September, Sarawak in October, Pahang in November and a mixture of all states in December.

A 45-minute showcase costs RM50 (US\$14.40) per adult. There are two shows daily, at 11.30 and 14.30. A deluxe package combining show and buffet lunch at Cafe@

PICC costs RM80 per adult.

From mid-May, PICC will also collaborate with an events management company on a 60-minute rainforest musical drama each night, with the possibility of increasing it to two shows per day if response is good.

Empire Hotel Hong Kong

The hotel is offering a 50 per cent discount on meeting packages booked by June 30. To qualify, a minimum booking of eight guestrooms is required.

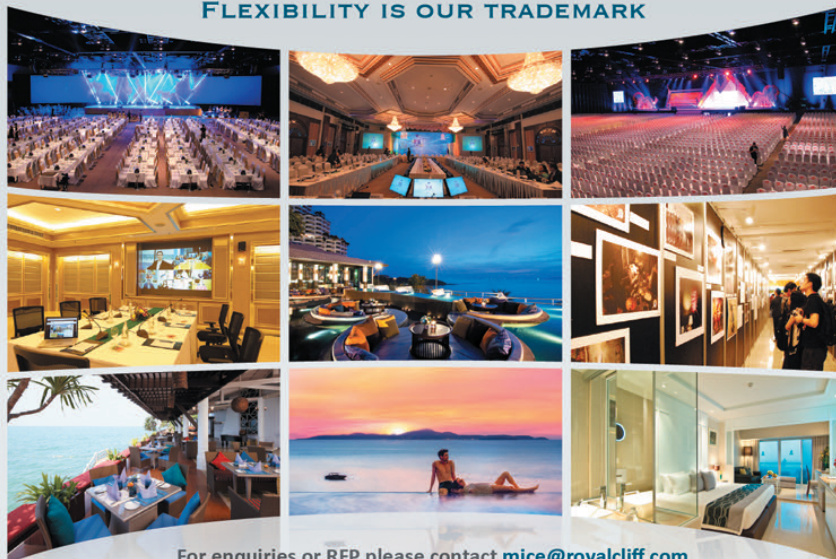
The half-day package is priced at HK\$308 (US\$39) per pax, inclusive of one coffee break, while the full-day option costs HK\$528 per pax, inclusive of two coffee breaks.

Tel: (852) 3692-2134/3692-2163; email: meetings-wc@empirehotelsandresorts.com



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Perrier launches campaign at new venue Stacked Samui

To bolster the idea of Perrier as a lifestyle drink in Thailand, and an ideal base for cocktails and mocktails, Perrier launched a campaign at Stacked, itself a new venue with a fresh concept in Samui, located at the one-year-old Ozo Chaweng Samui.

Some 85 hoteliers, F&B professionals, restaurant owners, suppliers and media members attended the event and were treated to, what else, special mixology using the sparkling mineral water, such as Mango Sparkler. Just the drink needed for the summer season, it comprises a mix of 30ml of mango syrup, 15ml of elder-flower syrup, 10ml of lime juice, a dash of Samui rum and ice, then topped with Perrier to the desired intensity and decorated with diced mango and a slice of lemon.

Traditionally, Perrier is ritually served pure or with just a slice of lemon. But as the brand has since been associated with famous artists and world-class sporting events, Perrier is now a more lively social drink, trending towards mixology. "Sparkling water is generally not well known in the Thai community and rather seen as a cheap drink which can be used with Thai spirits," said Ingo Domaschke,

general manager of Ozo Chaweng Samui.

As Perrier is associated with art, the event at Stacked also featured art such as Andy Warhol, Jean-Claude Forest, Bernard Villemot and Daaniel Vignat. Limited edition Art by Perrier were given to guests.

The event also showcased Stacked as venue for product launches for planners seeking something fresh and new along popular Chaweng Beach Road.

Stacked offers Californian comfort food with a twist. Chef Matthew Rubin, a California native, 'surfs up' hearty dishes such as the Wagyu Tomahawk, an 800g Australian long-bone Rib-Eye steak to satisfy the hardest of carnivores, and lighter dishes, like the Greek Tower Salad, stacked to perfection of course.

The venue's chic and fun vibes make it a relaxing place to break the ice among delegates. Raised two metres above street level, delegates on the outdoor wooden deck



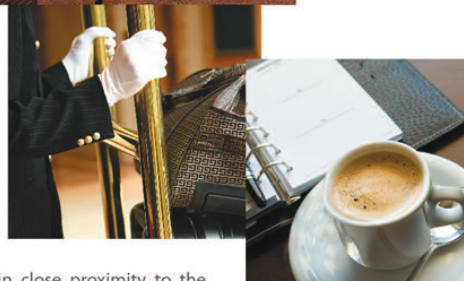
From right: Ozo Chaweng's Ingo Domaschke, TWG Tea's Patchaya Soonthonchote, Italthai's Anongporn Manopichetwatana, Ozo Chaweng's Chewin Mitpirom and Nestlé (Thai)'s Worapong Kietdumrongwong at the Perrier launch at Stacked

which can seat 110 diners are able to see the full action of Chaweng Beach Road without the discomfort of the crowd. The indoor area seats 75 pax.

Stacked is open daily from 12.00 to 01.00, with a special late-night menu from 23.00 onwards. Tel: (66) 77-915-222

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Rivals 'swop' US rep

By Raini Hamdi

Destination Asia (DA) has picked World Marketing Group (WMG) to represent it in North America after rival Pacific World dropped its 32-year relationship with the group in December and appointed DA's North America representative Ruby Serra on January 1.

With the US incentives market being in its strongest position since the Lehman crisis, according to SITE International, DA aims to increase its pie of the market through a "shared legacy of market knowledge and customer service in incentive travel and event management" between the two companies. WMG is led by a veteran, Jane Schuldt, its president.

James Reed, CEO, DA's group MD, said the company is now forecasting a 50 per cent increase in US and Canadian incentives this year and 2016, compared with 25 per cent prior to this appointment. The US/Canada market comprises 20 per cent

of its business now.

"With Asia's economies tipped to boom for the foreseeable future, we are very excited about this new marketing co-operation in North America as most international corporations will be sending incentives and organising meetings on behalf of their overseas manufacturing and services divisions in the Far East.

"Most Fortune 600 corporations in the US have a factory, regional HQ, or service/research centre somewhere in China, for example."



Reed: shared legacy

Asked about the two rivals trading places, Reed said: "Several of our friends in the travel industry have contacted me saying it looks like two baseball or soccer or NBA teams 'trading players', which is actually not. It was compatibility, Asia MICE expertise and on-the-ground professionalism – so we'll see which team comes out the winner at the end of 2015!"

HelmsBriscoe enters Philippines

By Marianne Carandang

US meetings procurer firm HelmsBriscoe has entered the Philippines.

Butch Cabalu, manager for global accounts, predicts significant business in the Philippines from religious events, product launches and corporate accounts.

One of its biggest bookings so far is a 10,000 pax religious event in 2016, where 2,000 of the participants will be from overseas, he said.

The company will not charge associations or groups contracting its services, but earns through the standard industry placement fee of 10 per cent from partner hotels.

Associations are promised they will not receive higher quotes from hotels if they partner HelmsBriscoe. They can also protect themselves from overbudgeting for events, or falling short of room reservations, because HelmsBriscoe will tap its network of associates globally to fill in excess bookings, said Christopher Crame, manager for global accounts.

WORLDHOTELS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015

Dream Dare Do

Worldhotels, a global brand that brings together 500 of the world's most unique independent hotels, celebrated the start of its 45th anniversary year with a bold new mission – to generate significant growth in room nights in 2015 for its member hotels across the globe.

Ambitious targets and roadmaps were announced at the group's annual conference entitled "Dream Dare Do", which was held for the third time in Worldhotels' 45-year history in China, at the legendary and newly renovated Garden Hotel Guangzhou from 22nd to 25th January.

1 Check 5 Programme

Important initiatives such as vital education about key markets, quarterly webinar updates from sales experts, face-to-face meetings with Worldhotels experts at the Annual Conference, a "Market Concierge", and an individual 'Check 5' review as to help hotels increase sales intelligence.



2 Enhancements for Peakpoints, Worldhotels' loyalty programme

New benefits: A digitally encoded electronic luggage tag which can be used for tracking down missing baggage and providing information on travel destinations, plus a one-year complimentary Travel Assurance programme activated upon registration of the luggage tag.

3 Upcoming developments

What to look out for: Launch of a new website in the third quarter and new booking engine to be developed by the final quarter of 2015. The conference also gave its members a glimpse into some of the developing innovations with its partner, Trust International.

With high profile keynote and motivational speakers, experienced professionals, senior executives from Worldhotels, Trust International, TrustYou, Duetto, Derby Soft and many more, the conference also included a series of insightful knowledge sessions designed to give more detailed knowledge about key markets and marketing developments.



ADVERTORIAL

Pacto picks Euromic to grow MICE business

By Mimi Hudoyo

Indonesian DMC Pacto has joined Euro-mic as part of its drive to make MICE the central focus of business in the next three years.

Joining the non-commercial association is an efficient way of building business, opined Umberto Cada-muro, COO inbound of Pacto.

"We have gone through different options to grow this segment, including the possibility of appointing overseas representatives or joining different networks, and in the end we believe joining Euromic is the best opportunity."

Euromic has 38 DMC members worldwide and a comprehensive database that is accessible by members.

Umberto remarked: "The good thing about this association is that there is only one DMC member per country, and each of us is only interested in bringing



Umberto: best opportunity

business to our countries. One partner winning an event will be an opportunity for others to grab the next time."

The membership also allows Pacto to be part of Euromic's participation at tradeshows and sales missions, and the

DMC is collaborating with the Euromic Chicago office to reach out to the US market "now that the (international) image of Indonesia has improved", he said.

Umberto expects Pacto's MICE business to grow 15 per cent per year for the next three years.

"We experienced strong growth in incentive groups and high-end incentives last year,"

he said, pointing to events which occupied the whole of St Regis Bali and Kupu Kupu Barong Resort and Tree Spa as examples. "We have the capacity to grow our market (our products and services further)," he said.

Informa plans Cityscape encore

By S Puvaneswary

Pleased with the outcome of the first Cityscape Malaysia, organisers Informa Exhibitions is planning to stage the real estate show again next February at the same venue, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

Group director, Deep Marwaha, based in Dubai, said the show, the first international real estate event in Malaysia, generated about RM15.5 million (US\$4.35 million) in property sales.

According to Marwaha, of the 35 exhibitors which took up about 2,000m² of space this year, about 60 per cent were local real estate developers. He described the number of exhibitors as small when compared to Cityscape Global, held in Dubai annually since 2002 and which attracted more than 200 exhibitors last year.

However, he is confident that Cityscape

Malaysia will grow over time.

He said: "The exhibition provides a unique opportunity for investors and real estate professionals to meet and network with local, regional and international real estate developers who are showcasing their world-class projects."

"But this is much more than an exhibition. The three-day event boasts a wide range of networking events dedicated to industry professionals, including the Malaysia Real Estate Summit, the Islamic Property Finance Forum and an investor roundtable session, by invitation only."

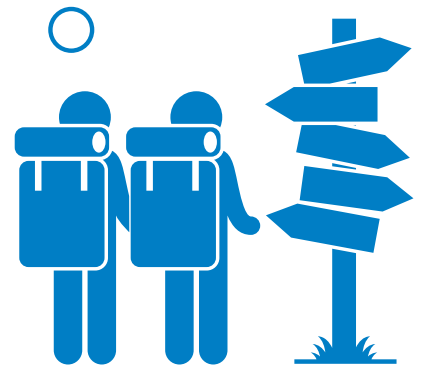
The show also tested the capabilities of local stand contractors to meet the needs of exhibitors in coming up with elaborate, high quality stands. Marwaha said: "The venue, stand contractors and ourselves as the organiser worked together, which resulted in smooth operations."

{ Talking numbers }



50

The percentage of respondents in a Decision to Attend Study* who said they combine meeting with a vacation



75

The percentage who said they 'get out and about' in the destination, with Gen Y leading the pack at 85%. 75% will consider returning for leisure

{ 2015 Calendar }

April 14-16
IT&CM China
Shanghai

April 14-16
CTW China
Shanghai

May 4-7
Arabian Travel Market
Dubai

May 19-21
IMEX
Frankfurt

** The Decision to Attend Study – Phase One is a collaboration among The International Association of Exhibitions and Events, Professional Convention Management Association and The Experience Institute. It polled online 7,171 respondents from current and future attendees*

Buffalo aims to be more creative in Singapore

By Raini Hamdi

Buffalo Tours, which has opened an office in Singapore, aims to compete with other DMCs which have established themselves in the small destination for far longer by being more innovative, said CEO and founder Tran Trong Kien.

"We compete by bringing the spirit of the company and our beliefs and values to the market. We don't mind investing and we're looking at six to eight new, authentic experiences in Singapore which are unique to Buffalo. It could be, for example, a seaplane experience, an over-night cruise, a cycling programme across the island – each will be an engaging experience," he said.

"We also have local experts, the right people on the ground who have the ability to connect with clients and who can create a total experience. Our GM in Singapore, Carol Tan (formerly with Pacific World), for example, is extremely experienced. Combined with our technology and distribution, we will do well."

The Singapore office is a JV between Kien's Thien Minh Group, which also owns Victoria Hotels & Resorts, seaplanes and cruises, and Flight Centre Travel Group. It is designed to operate and expand the existing Buffalo Tours businesses in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, which are expected to be for-

mally transferred into the venture late in 1H2015. These businesses are aligned to the larger Buffalo Tours business in Vietnam, which is not part of the new venture but will remain Flight's DMC partner in the country.

The partnership will also progressively launch new Buffalo Tours businesses in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, China and Japan, which will become Flight's DMC partner in all of the chosen markets.

Like Buffalo Tours Singapore, the new businesses will provide tours, excursions, transfers and other "at destination" services to not just Flight's businesses but third-party wholesalers.

When asked why the joint venture did not simply buy an existing regional DMC, Kien said it was easier to create a new one and train the people on the culture and spirit of Buffalo, compared with buying company X, "where we have to scrap their values, then retrain".



'We're smarter', says new China group

China's MICE industry is seeing the next wave, Generation 3.0, where players ditch labour-intensive ways for modern tools.

At the launch of China Smart MICE Group recently, CEO David Chen explained that the first generation of MICE in China came about before 2002, when professional MICE companies did not exist and MICE travel was regarded as high-end travel. Between 2002 and 2014 the second generation came, resulting in embryonic forms of MICE travel product, though the lack of service and product differentiation resulted in price wars.

Now, despite the absence of an effective

regulatory mechanism, Generation 3.0 sees a departure from labour-intensive and price-driven profit models and the use of high-tech tools – cloud computing, mobile technology and big data analytics – to understand consumers' needs and provide cost-effective, legally compliant and holistic solutions.

Supported by Phoenix Travel Group and Legend Capital, China Smart will target businesses in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu and neighbouring cities for its services which include MICE products, PR events, business customisation, auxiliary systems development and business network receptions.

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Heike Mahmoud, CMP, Director Conventions

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AIA gets street-smart with achievers

SINGAPORE AIA Singapore whisked off 1,200 qualifying agents to Istanbul, Turkey last year, ignoring the challenge such a large group would pose in its earnestness to give top performers a reward to remember.

The four-day/three-night incentive trip brought the winners to Kumkapı, a quarter in the Fatih district of Istanbul located along the northern shore of Marmara Sea.

Jenny Lim, head of agency

promotions, AIA Singapore, said: “We want the qualifiers to know that they are being recognised for their efforts, and that after a year of hard work, they are able to enjoy the fruits of their labour through these conventions.”

Michelle Seet, director of MICE Matters, who helped AIA Singapore execute the event, said it was initially a challenge to secure a unique venue that could hold 1,200 pax during the peak period

of September. But originality set in. Seet said they made arrangements with 19 seafood restaurants and blocked off the main streets in Kumkapı for an exclusive lunch setting. During lunch, performances were staged, including the popular Asuk Masuk show and folk dances with local drummers and musicians. Roving servers dished out local snacks such as Turkish delights, sherbet and playfully plated Turkish ice cream.

Applauding this one-of-a-kind setting, AIA's Lim said: “This exclusive street party event was special and memorable for all our agents – a first for Kumkapı and also a first for us.

“Everyone was fully immersed in the exclusivity of the venue and the local entertainment. They definitely felt (like winners) with the privilege of having a street to themselves.” – **Paige Lee Pei Qi**



Doing business in style

BEIJING Guests of China World Summit Wing, Beijing, located at the upper floor of China World Tower, the tallest building in the city, can do business in style. They can avail themselves of helicopter transportation from the helipad on top of the tower, which opened on January 6.

The first trial flight flew three VIP guests to Chaoyang Park, Bird's Nest and Water Cube, and back to China World Tower.

The hotel will partner China World Trade Center and Reignwood Star to launch exclusive services to hotel guests, such as helicopter transportation from Beijing International Airport, The Great Wall and, in future, a specially designed route for the Zhangjiakou Winter Olympics to the hotel. It is the first in Beijing to have the helicopter service for commercial use. Rates were being finalised at press time.

VIP guest, Wanying Jiang, (company name withheld) trials the helicopter service



Simply eye opening

HONG KONG

Members of the Association of Corporate Travel Executives including representatives from China International Capital Corporation (CICC), Ralph Polo Lauren, Hopewell Holdings and Tristar Worldwide

experienced Dialogue in the Dark recently, a popular CSR activity in the city.

The 22 participants were divided into three groups, each accompanied by a visually impaired escort, to a workshop in darkness. By losing their visual sense for 75 mins, they could only feel the world by smelling, touching and hearing. They experienced everyday activities such as crossing a road and listening to a concert in darkness. A 30-minute dialogue followed to understand the daily challenges faced by the visually impaired.

“This CSR event is an eye-opening event for all of us...The very first immediate feeling after finishing the 75 mins is (gratitude), that I am now back to a colourful life!” said a humbled John Zee, managing director, operations, CICC.





Orchestrating Taipei Fight Night

Grand Hyatt Taipei fights its way to ensure a successful first Taipei Fight Night that sees its Grand Ballroom transformed into a fiery ring, writes Paige Lee Pei Qi

Event Grand Hyatt Taipei
Date October 24, 2014
No. of participants 500
Objective To transform the hotel ballroom into a boxing arena to stage the inaugural Taipei Fight Night successfully
Challenges This was the first time the hotel was hosting such an event, and it faced limited turnaround time due to a previous event held in the ballroom
Solutions The flexibility of the Grand Ballroom, coupled with a dedicated team that worked round the clock, allowed for a quick turnaround

Hoteliers never want fights among guests on property. But last October, an exasperated Kai Speth, general manager, Grand Hyatt Taipei, said: “It was a night I will never forget. I had to deal with seven fights... Seven!”

However, this was a fight unlike any other. It was the inaugural Taipei Fight Night, a charity boxing event which saw 14 boxers engaged in seven fights taking place through the night in a professional boxing ring, staged in Grand Hyatt Taipei.

“Hotels constantly strive to put on events that attract enthusiastic guests, generate unforgettable memories and put their hotels at the centre of the conversation,” said Speth.

“I have managed hotels where we have staged beauty pageants, live art auctions and cooking competitions. But I have never been involved in an event like Taipei Fight Night.”

The pillarless Grand Ballroom which spans across 1,000m² proved to be an ideal venue because it has the capacity to accommodate the key elements of the Taipei Fight Night, most importantly being the boxing ring, dining tables to accommodate 500 spectators and ample space to ensure everyone was able to view the fight in comfort.

Speth said: “The biggest challenge for the banquet and events team was the turnaround time. Prior to the boxing

event, there was a really big wedding in the Grand Ballroom. The guests did not clear out of the function room until almost 12:00am.

“For the boxing event, we really needed to start setting up at 12:00am, but we had to clean up after the wedding and weren’t able to get going on the boxing set-up until 06:00.”

They were desperately behind schedule by six hours, Speth said.

He said: “There was not much time as the team had to set up the boxing ring, the contestant flag posters, the lighting, AV, live broadcast, table decoration, reception table, tec.

“Many of our full-time staff stayed behind to work on this effort. We (even) contacted our vendors to come support and help out with the event.”

And the scramble continued.

Speth said: “The AV production team hired earlier by the organiser backed out two days prior to the event. The event vendor had to come to us for last-minute support.

“Our AV and events team immediately searched for a new production house vendor and was able to find a new AV production vendor that was willing to take on this last-minute challenge,” he said.

The night was not all fun and games, of course. The event saw the hotel raising NTD\$100,000 (US\$3,200) for the Chinese Children Home and Shelter Association, an organisation that helps orphans and underprivileged kids.

Speth said they were aware that there would be no bloodshed during this event, “only sweat” involved. “Nevertheless, we still needed to be cautious, not only with the fighters but with the guests who might have found the fight disturbing if it got too feisty. So we ensured that our in-house nurse was on standby all the way, in case of any injury,” he said.

“If there are going to be fights in my hotel (again), I want them all to look like these,” he added.



Pietro Delpechitra



Cyrille Mollé



Torsten van Dullemen



Michael Sengol

Australia

Pietro Delpechitra is now director of client services at **Darwin Convention Centre**, joining with a wealth of experience in event management, hospitality and F&B operations. He was most recently Auckland Live venue services and operations manager and previously Novotel & Ibis Rotorua F&B manager.

Rob Nelson is **Brisbane Convention Bureau's** new general manager for conventions and business events. He joins from an extensive career in major events, sport and general management consultancy.

China

Raffles Beijing has appointed **Cyrille Mollé** as executive chef of all on-site dining operations. He brings with him more than 18 years of global experience, having worked for Ashanti Dome and Shikumen Bistro in Shanghai, before moving on to become executive chef of Loft 98's outlets.

Nicholas Tse has been appointed general manager of **JW Marriott Hotel Shenzhen Bao'an**. He joins with hospitality experience spanning 22 years, working for Marriott across Asia. He was most recently general manager at JW Marriott Dongdaemun Square Seoul.

Hong Kong

The Landmark Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong now has a new general manager, **Torsten**

van Dullemen, who has been working with Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group since 2004. He was most recently general manager of the Mandarin Oriental, Manila, which closed in 2014.

Richard Simmons has been appointed as general manager at **Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Tsim Sha Tsui**, contributing over 20 years of experience in hospitality management. He was most recently general manager of Hyatt Regency Hotel and Casino Manila.

Indonesia

Bintan Lagoon Resort has appointed **Michael Sengol** and **Gerald A Hendrick** as interim managing director and vice president of business development and operations, respectively. Sengol was most recently CEO of Meritus Hotels & Resorts, while Hendrick joins from The St Regis Singapore.

Japan

Charles Jack has taken on the role of **The Westin Tokyo's** general manager, having recently relocated from Bangkok, where he had served as general manager of Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel and Towers and The Westin Grande Sukhumvit Bangkok.

Oman

Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre has announced a number of appointments, some of which include **Chanaka Fonseka** as F&B director, **Troy Reynolds** as head of event oper-

ations, **Sheikha Al Mugheiry** as international business development manager, and **Thomas Joseph** as business development manager for exhibitions.

Singapore

Tina Sim is now general manager of **Parkroyal on Pickering**. She has 30 years of operations and hotel management experience, and was most recently general manager, special projects at Shangri-La International Hotel Management. She replaces **Gino Tan**, who has been promoted to general manager of **Pan Pacific Singapore**.

Thailand

Ng Wai Meng is now executive chef of **Impact Exhibition and Convention Center**. He has over 30 years of culinary experience, having worked for many five-star hotels, prestige clubs, spas and airline catering departments.

Martin Raich has been named complex general manager for three Starwood Hotels & Resorts properties – **The Westin Grande Sukhumvit Bangkok, Sheraton Hua Hin Resort & Spa and Sheraton Hua Hin Pranburi Villas**. He has been with Starwood for 20 years at various properties in the UK, Netherlands, China, Germany and Fiji.

Vietnam

Former Diethelm Travel Group CEO, **John Watson**, is back in the industry as CEO of **Trails**



Charles Jack



Martin Raich



John Watson

of Indochina, replacing Matt Masson, who is relocating to Singapore. Watson is based in the agency's head office in Ho Chi Minh City.



Innovating the space

New convention centres across Asia-Pacific show they are greener, smarter and are made to cater to any event. *TTGmice* looks at how new convention centres are innovating the space

Reporting by *Paige Lee Pei Qi, Natasha Dragun, Mimi Hudoyo, S Puvaneswary, Rosa Ocampo and Caroline Boey*

The new darling of Sydney

International Convention Centre Sydney

The International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney), which will open in December 2016, will be Australia's premier business events precinct boasting many firsts.

A A\$1.1 billion (US\$867 million) world-class development, it is the centrepiece of the New South Wales government's A\$3 billion transformation of Darling Harbour.

Hailing it as "the latest model of business events venues", ICC Sydney CEO, Geoff Donaghy, said: "Attending business events in Sydney will never be the same again. ICC Sydney's ultramodern, integrated and highly flexible design is backed by high-end technology infrastructure and a world-class, waterfront city centre setting."

One of the highlights of ICC is its flexibility, allowing three fully separated, self-sufficient, concurrent events across a



Left: ICC Sydney; above: Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre

tiered 2,500-seat theatre, tiered 1,000-seat theatre and flat-floor, 800-seat theatre.

Donaghy said: "The ability to separate and quarantine events means we can run three self-sufficient conventions, each with their own pre-function area, kitchen for bespoke catering and meeting rooms for breakouts or preparation areas.

"The flexibility theme continues to the open-air realm with a 5,000m² event deck and integration with Tumbalong Park, which is being reconfigured to hold events of up to 27,000 people."

ICC Sydney will also boast high-band-width technology, venue-wide wireless connectivity, GPS way finding and interactive HD digital signage facilities. Donaghy said: "Starting the development from the ground up has also allowed for the implementation of the latest technology infrastructure that will form the backbone of our digital communications and event aids well into the future."

ICC Sydney will welcome Australia's largest ballroom which will host 2,000 pax for banquets and 3,500 pax for cocktails. Located on the top floor, this ballroom will have spectacular water and city views.

The exhibition halls in ICC Sydney

which link seamlessly with the rest of the venue boast another first: they stretch over two floors to provide an impressive total of 32,600m² of space, making it Australia's largest exhibition space.

Another key highlight in ICC Sydney is a red carpet theatre which has a seating capacity of 8,000 suitable for major convention plenary sessions and international entertainment acts, and is scalable for plenaries of 6,000, 5,000 and 3,500 pax.

Donaghy said: "This theatre features an innovative fan-shaped layout purposefully created to bring audiences closer to performers and hosts, and provide unobstructed views of the stage." – **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

Key points

- ICC Sydney will open in December 2016
- It will hold Australia's largest ballroom which can host 2,000 pax for banquets and 3,500 for cocktails
- Its convention facilities can host three separated, self-sufficient, concurrent events and an 8,000-seat plenary
- It has a total exhibition space of 35,000m²

● A premier tiered red carpet theatre with a capacity of 8,000 seats will be suitable for major convention plenary sessions and international entertainment acts

A glimpse into the future

Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre

When completed and fully open in 2017, the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre in Muscat will offer, besides 22,000m² in pillarless exhibition space, an all-rounded convention experience.

It is one of two major convention centres that AEG Ogden will open in the next two years, the other being ICC Sydney. Geoff Donaghy, AEG Ogden's group director convention and exhibition centres, said expectations for both centres are high.

"There are great advantages to being involved in these projects from the conceptual stage," he said. "Plus, we can consolidate all our knowledge for past

New convention centres

projects and other major developments that we've worked on."

Donaghy pointed out the many similarities between the two projects: "Both represent the future of convention centres; both are fully integrated in that they have a hotel and retail space as well. Oman is unique because we are building a whole new destination within the country."

The Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre will include three- to five-star hotels and a serviced residence, featuring 1,000 hotel rooms, and a conveniently located shopping centre.

Donaghy believes that it will stand out in the Gulf region for the fact that it is aiming to achieve the US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Excellence in Design Certification, like ICC Sydney.

The centre will also have state-of-the-art technology throughout, including Wi-Fi access. "The advent of Wi-Fi has really been the biggest change in technology in the industry recently," said Donaghy.

As management company, AEG Ogden provides all the major services in-house, including F&B outlets.

"Food is incredibly important at convention centres in this part of the world," said Donaghy.

"We were able to fly an F&B manager in from Darwin to Oman to oversee all developments, which means we can offer the highest levels of control over quality."

In terms of design, AEG Ogden wanted to design "something memorable".

"We want the centre to be a showcase

for Oman, and be a unique facility. But at the same time, it needs to clearly be part of the local environment and culture," added Donaghy.

Surrounded by parkland and overlooking a wadi, the centre is only a 10 minutes' drive from the new Muscat International Airport. – **Natasha Dragun**

Key points

- Opening in two stages, the centre's convention component will be launched in early-2016, with the exhibition space to be operational by early-2017
- In the first phase, it will debut 22,000m² of column-free exhibition space, divisible into five separate halls of 4,800m² each
- The second phase will include a 3,200 pax tiered lyric-style auditorium, 450-seat theatre and two luxurious ballrooms to cater for up to 2,300 people theatre-style
- In 2017, a further 13 meeting rooms and a VIP Pavilion will become operational
- AEG Ogden expects 200,000 people will visit the centre in its first year

Easy breezy access

Indonesia Convention and Exhibition

The largest convention and exhibition centre in the country, Indonesia Convention and Exhibition (ICE) in

Jakarta was designed to be flexible, functional and facilitate free-flowing traffic to accommodate all types of MICE events.

The centre, owned by Indonesia International Expo and Deutsche Messe, is scheduled to open in June but has started to host events, such as the Michael Bublé concert on January 29, which saw over 9,000 fans turn up.

The convention hall is divisible into four while the exhibition hall can be further split into 10 halls of 4,860m² each, enabling organisers to create various sizes of events without interfering with one another.

Mark Schloesser, president director of Deutsche Messe Venue Operations, said: "For the Michael Bublé Concert specifically, we co-operated with local partners to have sufficient parking space for over 4,000 cars."

Advance planning around the concept of a quick entry and quick exit meant that there were no traffic jams before and after the concert. "It only took 65 minutes until the 4,000 cars and more than 9,000 music-dazed visitors had left the ICE, (which was quite fast by Jakarta standards)," shared Schloesser.

Other features that make hall access easy include pre-function lobbies that can be reached through four drop-off zones throughout the front of the venue, and VVIP drop-off and parking zones.

Designed by Cox Australia, ICE has green features built into it for more sustainable events, including a well-shaded glazed façade, aerated concrete block



Indonesia Convention and Exhibition

with insulated walls and LED lightbulb energy-saving systems, among others.

The roof of each hall also has an elevated top section surrounded by glass. This brings in natural lighting, saving energy in the halls during set-up and dismantling.

The venue also comes with a fully equipped in-house catering service with a 2,000m² kitchen area, two large exhibition snack bars with 216 seats each, a 152-pax bistro located on the mezzanine level and a total of five pantries, one for every two halls.

“As such, we are able to (provide) catering services to host any number of events, from cocktail parties, meetings lunches, tea-and-coffee services to large-scale wedding receptions,” Schloesser said.

Each of the 10 exhibition halls has rigging points every nine metres, with a hanging load of maximum two tons, adjacent to smaller rigging points positioned every 4.5m and able to hold a load of 100kg. Floor load capacity is two tons/m², and halls are equipped with utility trenches to enable secure and quick access to electricity, compressed air and water supply, the first of its kind in Indonesia.

Each hall also has Internet access, telecommunication services, roofs up to 26m at the highest point and individual air-conditioning systems to allow temperature adjustments.

In addition to the halls, ICE has three VIP lounges and multiple praying rooms to accommodate to the needs of visitors. The centre’s existing 3,000-lot parking space will be doubled with the construction of another parking building and additional outdoor parking zones in future.

– Mimi Hudoyo

Key points

- ICE has a total building area of 220,000m² standing on 22ha of land, for a total capacity of 10,000 pax
- Total investment into ICE is US\$318 million
- The convention hall has an area of 4,000m², divisible into four rooms; there are a further 29 breakout rooms
- Total indoor exhibition space across 10 halls is 50,000m², while outdoor spaces cover 55,000m²
- Every hall has a 625m² pre-function lobby with two ticket booths and four meeting rooms



Green and growing

Setia City Convention Centre

Setia City Convention Centre in Shah Alam, Selangor, is the first convention facility in Malaysia to be certified by the Green Building Index, an achievement that has earned it more business from environment-conscious companies.

Francis Teo, head of Setia City Convention Centre, said that the centre’s green features have helped it secure business from international and regional companies that place emphasis on having meetings in a venue with sustainable practices.

“(Choosing a venue) is no longer just (about) price, location, size and menus. Realising this, many new convention centres in the world incorporate sustainability practices into their designs,” said Teo.

Setia City Convention Centre works actively to reduce waste generated at meetings. The facility has installed an energy management system to track electricity and water consumption and to minimise leakages and wastage, while auto light sensors control lighting in public areas.

The size of writing pads and the length of pencils were also reduced after it was found that meeting delegates tend to waste stationery provided. Half of the centre’s landscaping needs are met through rain harvesting.

Glass walls were incorporated into the facility’s design as much as possible to allow natural light in and for guests to look out to panoramic views of the township as well as the convention centre’s 14,000m² of manicured lawns.



“CHOOSING A VENUE IS NO LONGER JUST (ABOUT) PRICE, LOCATION, SIZE AND MENUS. REALISING THIS, MANY NEW CONVENTION CENTRES IN THE WORLD INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES INTO THEIR DESIGN.”

Francis Teo

Head, Setia City Convention Centre

||| New convention centres



“THE VENUE ITSELF IS THE SIZE OF A CONVENTION CENTRE BUT IN A FIVE-STAR LUXURY HOTEL ENVIRONMENT.”

Bruce Winton

General manager, Marriott Hotel
Manila, Philippines

Teo added: “Every room in the convention centre has air-conditioning that can be individually controlled according to the needs of the guests. Air-conditioning in public areas is kept between 22-24°C.”

The centre is also designed to be inclusive – wheelchair-friendly connections from the car park to the ground floor, a covered walkway between the centre to Setia City Mall and reserved parking bays for the disabled are some ways it caters to those with challenges getting around.

“Right from the initial design stage, we looked at the needs of the wheelchair-bound and made sure the building design met their needs. With older buildings, the needs of the disabled are often an afterthought with ramps, disabled-friendly toilets and other special adjustments constructed later,” Teo elaborated.

Besides that, Setia City Convention Centre has also dedicated 20 of its 3,700 parking bays to electric cars with free use of charging points. “We are prepared to meet the needs of the future, when we will see more electric cars on the road,” said Teo.

The centre has high-speed broadband for video streaming. The ballroom is furnished with LED chandeliers which change colours according to the theme of the event.

According to Teo, a favourite among organisers is to choose lighting ambience to match the company’s corporate colours.

The ballroom also has built-in projec-

tors on all four walls to provide guests good views of the projections, wherever they are seated. – **S Puvaneswary**

Key points

- Setia City Convention Centre opened in February 2013

- The convention centre has secured at least seven events for 2015, the biggest to-date was Megahome Fair from March 27-28 with an expected turnout of 22,000 people

- The centre’s grand ballroom is 2,250m² and can accommodate 3,000 pax theatre-style. It can also be used for exhibitions, with room for up to 148 booths measuring 3m by 3m, and an extra 20 booths in the foyer

- There are eight function rooms in the convention centre. Six measure 96m², while the remaining two are at 276m² and 300m²

- Palace@Setia City is the sole F&B outlet at the convention centre. The halal Chinese restaurant can seat 200 pax at one time

First-class in a second-tier city

ska Co Ex

As regional economies take off throughout Indonesia, second-tier cities are stepping up for a piece of the MICE pie and catching up with major destinations such as Jakarta and Bali.

One such city is Pekanbaru, the capital of Riau province, where there is an abundance of fuel and palm oil, and consequently, oil companies.

Emmanuel Guillard, Swiss-Belhotel International senior vice president, operations and development for Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam, said: “There is actually a big demand for meeting and exhibition space in relation to these businesses, and Pekanbaru has been losing the business to Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Jakarta.”

It is this need that ska Co Ex, developed by Citra Citi Pacific and Grand Citra Prima, and managed by Swiss-Belhotel International, aims to fill.

Said Guillard: “The convention centre was built to accommodate the needs of the destination (from) today up to five years ahead. We do not try to compete head-on with mature destinations like Jakarta or Bali.”

Instead, ska Co Ex aims to attract medium-sized conferences and exhibitions from Asia and western Indonesia.

The convention centre’s ballroom is double the size of the largest exist-



Marriott Grand Ballroom



ing venue in Pekanbaru, and can house congresses, events such as weddings and in-room concerts, and medium-sized exhibitions.

With a ceiling of 12m for a grand feeling, the ballroom is flexible and comes with breakout rooms for smaller meetings. There are six elevators, two of which are dedicated for VIPs and provide optimum privacy.

A giant portable screen, soundproof room partitions and other audiovisual equipment are also available. While considered basic standards for convention centres in major destinations, these are above expectation for venues in secondary cities. Broadband Internet connection is also available throughout the centre.

For F&B, ska Co Ex can serve international, Indonesian and Chinese cuisines, with a dedicated chef for each. Said Guillard: "We are expecting MICE from neighbouring countries and authentic Chinese food will be a unique selling point in our venue." – **Mimi Hudoyo**

Key points

- Opened in November 2014, ska Co Ex features a 2,119m² ballroom that can be divided into four
- Also on site are five breakout rooms able to accommodate anywhere from 60 to 210 pax theatre-style
- The convention centre is part of a mixed-use development that also comprises the city's largest retail centre Mall ska Pekanbaru, three hotels and a water park. The entire development will be completed in 2017
- Located in Pekanbaru's business district, ska Co Ex is close to a golf driving range and a hospital
- The airport is 10 minutes away

Hotel luxury meets convention functionality

Marriott Grand Ballroom

MICE venues are evolving from being generic and predictable into something original and inspired.

Or world-class, as Bruce Winton, general manager, Marriott Hotel Manila, likes to call the soon-to-open Marriott Grand Ballroom (MGB).

"When I say world-class, it is a perfect blend of space, luxury, technology, service and location...that is what every MICE client needs," he explained of MGB, which is owned by Travellers International.

With 8,000m² of dedicated meeting space for over 5,000 pax, MGB can pass for a convention centre but shuns being called such. Winton explained: "The venue itself is the size of a convention centre but in a five-star luxury hotel environment."

Including an existing 1,974m² MICE space at Marriott Manila Hotel, MGB will offer close to 10,000m² of indoor and outdoor space, making it Marriott International's biggest meeting and convention venue outside the US.

The venue comes with a 3,000m² column-free grand ballroom that has a 12m ceiling, compared to the average eight-metre. This means no more trusses or cables on the floor.

Multiple catwalks hidden on the ceiling offers a professional platform for light, sound and technical sets. Six multi-function VIP Skyboxes also offer a different view of the entire ballroom.

Key points

- MGB will hold its grand opening on May 18, 2015
- Also within the premises are two wedding chapels, bridal suites with private gardens, photo venues and private entrances for a grand entrance
- All MICE spaces at MGB are complemented by ergonomic furniture for client comfort
- MGB will be connected by a footbridge with a moving walkway to Marriott Hotel Manila and the upcoming, 228-suite West Wing
- The venue promotes sustainability by using LED lights throughout, recycling and reducing the use of plastic

Using the Sky Fold technology partition, the grand ballroom can be subdivided completely and partitions can be retracted into a ceiling cavity with a simple turnkey operation.

Besides MGB, the West Wing currently under construction will be launched towards the end of 2016 with 228 suites, bigger and more luxurious than the existing 342 rooms at Marriott Hotel Manila, to add a high-class touch to MGB's meeting experience.

At the same time, MGB is turning to technology to make MICE more social and mobile. The Meeting Services App will allow planners to manage an event without leaving the meeting room, with real-time requests for coffee refills, room temperature changes or more chairs a click away.

Marriott's Pinterest-inspired Meeting-sImagined.com also shares expert tips, the latest meeting trends and hundreds of images to spark creativity. Custom-

ers can also use the site to design tailored experiences, view signature experiences featured and share images on social media sites.

Winton said Marriott is known for its quality service and MGB has a team of culinary experts.

"We have an award-winning team that does catering here and we already have audiovisual equipment and dramatic lighting in place. We have everything," he added.

MGB is located across Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, within the Resorts World Manila complex where Travellers International is also planning to build Sheraton and Hilton hotels over the next few years. – **Rosa Ocampo**

Heavy-duty event spaces

National Exhibition and Convention Center

Billed as the world's largest single building with 1.5 million m² of space, the National Exhibition and Convention Center, Shanghai (NECC) sets itself apart from the competition for its ability to cater to exhibitions featuring heavy industrial products.

The shamrock-shaped complex comprises four buildings and a central commercial centre, and also three office buildings and a five-star hotel, all linked via an eight-metre high pedestrian walkway.

NECC's four large and one small exhibition halls in the North Building have been built for heavy-duty use with ground load capacity of five tons/m². One of the large halls has a double-decker structure and the other four halls offer a single-floor and column-free space 32m high.

The South Building houses four large double-decker halls, each with a ground load capacity 3.5 tons/m² and ceilings 11m high, while the second floor has five large halls and two smaller ones, each with a ground load capacity of 1.5 tons/m², and 16m high.

Other features include ample on-site parking, two waiting areas for large freight carriers, three transfer parking areas and separate traffic channels for cars, pedestrians and trucks.

Another strength of the NECC lies in its range of facilities that cater to any group size. Meeting planners have more than 60 meeting rooms to choose from, ranging from small meeting rooms between 100-200m² to medium-sized rooms from 300-500m².

There is a large 1,000m² banquet hall and a grand 10,000m² multi-function hall with moveable partitions called West Hall, which can accommodate up to 3,000 people.

The 100,000m² North Square event space outside the gate of the North Hall is suitable for open-air concerts, outdoor sports events, etc.

Another open-air stage is Central Square, encircled by Commercial Plaza, which can take more than 2,000 people for large commercial launch parties, square performances and brand promotion events. Shops and dining outlets can also be found at the Commercial Plaza.

The two eight-metre high Exhibition Boulevards that connect Commercial Plaza with other venues are also ideal for cultural exhibitions, fashion shows and interactive parades, supported by excellent light and sound systems.

As for the three Class-A office towers, each carries the three-star green building certification, the best green building label in China, and comes with two 500m² rooftop gardens.

Another unique feature of NECC is the one-stop service centre of government

agencies on-site, located at the office towers.

NECC was jointly built by the Ministry of Commerce of China and the Shanghai Municipal Government, and is operated by Shanghai Exhibition, which is also an investor.

The North Hall was first put to use in September 2014, and the rest of the complex is scheduled to open officially in June 2015.

According to James Zheng, vice director, Shanghai International Conference Management Organization, which acts as the CVB for the Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration, NECC is primarily attracting exhibitions followed by events – fashion shows, product launches, concerts, sports events and theme parties. – **Caroline Boey**

Key points

- Also known as China Expo Complex, NECC has been hailed the world's largest single building with 1.5 million m² of building space

- NECC event spaces comprise 400,000m² of indoor and 100,000m² of outdoor exhibition space, 200,000 m² of usable exhibition auxiliary facilities and another 300,000 m² of supporting facilities

- Indoor exhibition space includes 13 large halls of 28,800m² each and three small 10,000m² halls. All are directly accessible by freight carriers

- There are over 60 meeting rooms of varying sizes for groups ranging from under 100 people to 3,000

- Facilities at NECC are linked by an eight-metre high elevated pedestrian walkway



National Exhibition and Convention Center, Shanghai



Frankfurt
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1. How many people from the international meetings industry attended last year's IMEX?

- A) Just under 5,000
- B) Just under 10,000
- C) Just under 15,000

2. Which of the following subjects will be included in IMEX 2015's 10-track education programme?

- A) Marketing
- B) Technology
- C) Wellbeing

3. How big is the company behind the show?

- A) Under 60 people
- B) 60–120 people
- C) 120+ people

4. Which benefits do Hosted Buyers receive at IMEX?

- A) Free travel and accommodation
- B) An exclusive lounge with free wifi
- C) A friendly concierge service

5. Which destination held a screaming contest on their stand last year?

- A) Mexico
- B) Norway
- C) Japan

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Answers: 1. C 2. A,B&C 3. A 4. A,B&C 5. B
(They're not as shy as we thought, obviously.)

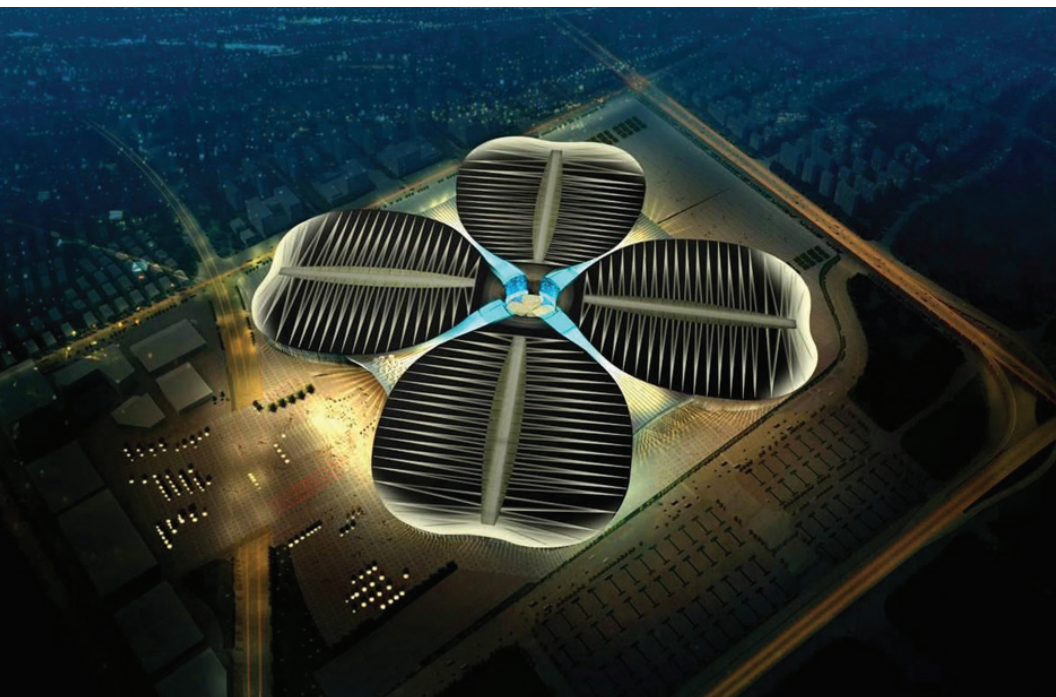
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The National Exhibition & Convention Center is among Shanghai's new plus factors

Good times for Shanghai

Latest available ICCA data show meetings are growing in Shanghai and prospects are good in 2015 and beyond. **Caroline Boey** reports

Shanghai's performance improved 12.5 per cent in 2013 over the previous year, latest available ICCA International Association Meetings Market Rankings for Cities and Countries shows.

Ranked second in China after Beijing, Shanghai hosted 72 meetings in 2013 compared with 64 the previous year.

In contrast, Beijing's performance fell – 105 events in 2013 compared to 109 in 2012.

The injection of new infrastructure this year and in 2016 is adding to Shanghai's growing appeal as a world MICE destination and, according to James Zheng, vice director, Shanghai International Conference Management Organization (SICMO), the outlook for 2015 is "bright and positive" with 2016 forecast to be even better.

SICMO is Shanghai's tourism and convention promotion centre under

the Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration (SMTA) and Zheng said the city has been receiving more RFPs than ever before since the beginning of 2013.

The mega National Exhibition & Convention Center (NECC) in Hongqiao – soft opened in September 2014 and scheduled to officially open in June – is creating a lot of buzz in the city.

The targeted year-end or early-2016 opening of the Disneyland Resort in Pudong is the other plus factor.

Zheng added: "The complete opening of NECC will have a huge impact on Shanghai's MICE industry. There will be an even bigger impact when the Shanghai Disneyland Resort opens."

Enhanced air accessibility also helped. In 2013, Shanghai was served by 93 airlines comprising 70 international and regional carriers,

and 23 domestic.

There are air links to 114 international and regional cities and 125 in China.

Patrick Chen, deputy director, SMTA international tourism promotion department, said: "It's not only international association meetings that come to Shanghai. The biggest and strongest segment is corporate meetings, and Shanghai will become even more vibrant because of the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free-Trade Zone, and more investments coming into the city."

According to SICMO, some 80 international conferences are taking place in Shanghai this year, including the 9th IATA World Cargo Symposium and a large number of medical events.

Further down the road, the 2020 Global Endometriosis Conference has picked Shanghai.

Meanwhile, a large number of exhibitions spanning a wide spectrum of industries – food ingredients, die casting, textiles, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment – are booked at NECC. More than 30 events are taking place this year, according to SICMO.

The city's hoteliers agree NECC will have a huge impact on the city.

Rene Teuscher, general manager, Grand Millennium Shanghai Hongqiao, said: "All hotels in the Hongqiao area will benefit from the 23 exhibitions already announced at NECC, including Auto Shanghai 2015 and medical equipment fair CMEF 2015.

"As we are one of the nearest hotels to NECC, some of the organisers have already signed contracts with us, and some exhibiting companies have also signed contracts with us directly (for accommodation) during the auto show period."

Daniel Aylmer, general manager, Le Royal Méridien Shanghai and area managing director, East China, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, added: "Shanghai is already an international MICE destination. With the opening of NECC, the city will get more worldwide attention and become a more sophisticated MICE destination.

"NECC will help to promote Shanghai and China's economic restructuring, expedite the transformation of economic growth patterns, and contribute to the stable and healthy development of China's economy and society.

"NECC, said to be the world's largest single building and a leading

global exhibition complex, is set to be a major driver for Shanghai's growth into an international trade centre."

Babita Kanwar, director of sales and marketing, Shanghai Marriott Hotel City Centre, said: "Whenever a city makes infrastructure improvements, there is an inevitable ripple effect to complementary businesses."

"In our case, we're looking forward to more large-scale conventions being attracted to the city, which will of course in turn have a positive effect on our MICE business."

"Meeting planners that were choosing a domestic MICE destination will definitely give Shanghai greater consideration because of the facility, and having NECC on the table may be the factor that tips the

scale in Shanghai's favour for many international meeting planners selecting Asia or China as a destination."

SICMO's Zheng said as a result of Shanghai hosting the 52nd ICCA Annual Congress in November 2013, many foreign international conference organisers and meetings service suppliers are now looking at Shanghai for their future events.

"The fact that these conferences and meetings are to be held in Shanghai shows the positive effect of the Shanghai ICCA Annual Congress in promoting and publicising Shanghai, expanding Shanghai's appeal in the international conference market, and attracting more international conferences to Shanghai," Zheng noted.

"Shanghai is already an international MICE destination. With the opening of NECC, the city will get more worldwide attention and become a more sophisticated MICE destination."

Daniel Aylmer

General manager, Le Royal Méridien Shanghai and area managing director, East China, Starwood Hotels and Resorts



Ideas Six-day cultural encounter in Shanghai for incentive groups



Humble Administrator's Garden, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Day1 Arrival and welcome reception at Wharf 1846's Sigma Film Club.

Day2 Visit Shanghai Museum to learn about the long history and rich collection of Chinese paintings, bronzeware, porcelain and furniture.

Enjoy a Shanghai dim sum lunch at Lybolang Restaurant, then spend the afternoon visiting Yu Garden and Shanghai Old Street.

In the evening, enjoy the best acrobatic show at Shanghai Circus World.

Day3 In the morning, visit

Humble Administrator's Garden, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, followed by Suzhou Museum designed by Pritzker Prize winner, world-famous Chinese-American architect I M Pei.

After lunch at Song He Lou – a time-honoured restaurant in Suzhou, visit a silk mill to learn the process of silk spinning.

Dinner is back in Shanghai at Table No.1 Restaurant located in a boutique hotel, the Waterhouse at South Bund at the Cool Docks.

Day4 Go on a one-day excursion to Hangzhou, famous for its picturesque West Lake.

In the morning, visit a tea plantation, where the most famous Chinese green tea – *longjin* (dragon well) – originates.

Lunch is at Lou Wai Lou Restaurant, noted for its authentic Hangzhou cuisine dishes. Thereafter, cruise on West Lake.

Return to Shanghai and enjoy a themed dinner at a villa-house restaurant.

Day5 Morning tai-chi at Zhongshan Park, Jing'an Park or People's Park followed by a bicycle tour of the former French concession from Fuxing Park (former French Park) to Middle Fuxing Road, Hengshan Road, West Jianguo Road and Tianzifang.

Lunch at Xiao San Tang, a fusion restaurant, and in the afternoon, discover and experience Tianzifang with its special architecture of old Shanghai. The area is now filled with bars, cafés, studios, galleries, boutiques and local designer craftshops.

Attend a farewell dinner at the European Hall of the Shanghai International Convention Center and enjoy a breathtaking view of the Bund at night.

Day6 Rest and prepare for an evening departure by Maglev train to Pudong International Airport and head home.

Itinerary by Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration

Need to know

Pudong International Airport Terminal 2



New airport bus route

The routing of the No. 5 shuttle bus that runs between Shanghai Railway Station and Pudong International Airport has changed.

The service will no longer stop at Yanggao Road, Yan'an Road, Chengdu Road, and Fangdian Road Metro stations.

It will go instead to Yan'an Road E, Zhejiang Road and Longyang Road Metro stations.

Hotel openings in 2016

A number of new five-star luxury hotels will be added to Shanghai's room inventory next year.

They include the 120-room Bvlgari Hotel, 600-room W Hotel-The Bund, 270-room Le Méridien Shanghai, Jiading and 380-room InterContinental Shimao Shanghai Wonderland.

Meanwhile, the 338-room Sheraton Shanghai Jiading Hotel and two Disney-themed hotels – the 800-room Toy Story Hotel and 420-room Shanghai Disneyland Hotel – are opening this year.



Bvlgari Hotel

Shanghai sets PCO standards

Thirteen companies have become the first to attain Shanghai's Conference Organizers in Compliance with Management & Service Standards of the Meetings Industry.

They were approved by the Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration in January and have obtained the Shanghai Conference Service Standard Organization certificate issued by the MICE Service Standards Technical Committee of the Shanghai Tourism Standards Technical Committee.

The 13 companies are: MCI Group (Shanghai), Healife PCO, Shanghai Fumed Convention & Exhibition Management, Shanghai China Travel International, East Star Event Management, China CYTS MICE (Shanghai) Service, Grand China MICE (Shanghai), Shanghai United Event, Oppland Corporation, Duxes Business Consulting, Shanghai Topstar International Exhibition & Event Services, Skyway International Business Travel Service and Shanghai Business International Travel.



Hyatt expands in Shanghai

In the pipeline are five new properties under two new Hyatt brands.

They are Hyatt Place Shanghai New Hongqiao, Hyatt Place Shanghai Hongqiao CBD, Hyatt House Shanghai Hongqiao CBD, Hyatt House Shanghai New Hongqiao, and Hyatt House Shanghai Jiading.

Meanwhile, hotels in the pipeline close to the Shanghai Disney Resort include an InterContinental, two Howard Johnsons, a Pullman and a Hualuxe.

In addition, an InterContinental is being planned in the Hongqiao Transportation Hub area.

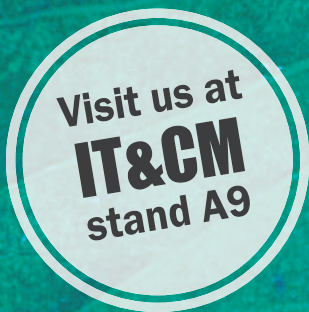
Terminal building becomes shopping mall

The Shanghai Airport City Terminal Building on Nanjing Road W, built in 2002 to facilitate check-in for flights at either Hongqiao or Pudong international airports, has been renovated and turned into a shopping mall.

A Shanghai Airport Authority official said travellers will still be able to buy air tickets and check flight information at the location.

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Grand Mosque
in Medan

Austerity drive bites

Indonesia's new policy for fewer government meetings to be held at hotels is hurting the sector deeply. **Mimi Hudoyo** analyses the impact

The domestic corporate and meeting market is the mainstay of majority of hotels in Indonesia, except those in Bali and Jakarta, so it is little wonder that the country's hotel industry was in shock last November over the Ministry of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform's circular restricting government officials from organising meetings outside their office premises. The budget for official travel was also cut significantly, as part of the new Joko Widodo administration's attempt to 'ration' the state budget.

Since regional autonomy started in Indonesia over a decade ago, regional businesses had grown, prompting investors to inject funds into hotel development with meeting facilities. Many of these facilities had been the venues for government and state-owned companies' meetings and training programmes.

Government meetings formed 40 to 50 per cent of the MICE market of the Indonesia Hotels and Restaurants Association (IHRA) members, according to the association. Following the imposition of the new policy, hotels in Bandung, Jogjakarta and Lombok reported massive cancellations last November and December, typically the busiest government meeting months. Some hotels in Bali and Jakarta also reported cancellations.

Erny Kusmastuti, general manager of Eastparc Hotel Jogjakarta, said: "A recent Jogjakarta tourism stakeholders' meeting revealed that last November and December the city lost 70 billion rupiah (US\$5.6 million) worth of (government) meetings."

She added the policy is also affecting state-owned financial institutions and telecommunication companies, which organise many conferences, seminars and training programmes.

"Even state-owned Gadjah Mada

University is acting cautious, holding back bookings for this year," she revealed.

Hera Adiwikarta, vice president sales and marketing, Aerowisata Hotels & Resorts, said: "Our resort hotels in Bali and Lombok are not affected, but the city hotels in Bandung and Jakarta are, as the government segment is quite significant for them."

Similarly, Vivi Herlambang, director of sales, marketing and business development, Sahid International Hotel Management & Consultant, said: "Government meetings comprised about 30 per cent of our group business, so the impact is quite significant." The group has hotels in Jakarta, Manado and Solo, among others.

Yanti Sukamdani, chairman, IHRA, warned: "Some of our members have started reducing their staff strength and if we do not do some-

thing soon, I'm afraid the hotels will collapse. We all know hotels have been mushrooming everywhere in the last few years, and many are relying on MICE."

IHRA is lobbying the government to review the policy and come up with the criteria for meetings to be restricted to government premises. "We agree that the government should reduce the number of meetings, but this should not be applied across the board," she said.

Eastparc's Erny said: "(Hoteliers) are still fighting for the policy to be revoked, but (meanwhile) we have staff and family to feed, so we have to change our strategy."

The hotel is now turning to the corporate and leisure markets from Singapore and Malaysia, which in the last couple of years have sent a growing number of travellers due to improved accessibility from both countries.

"We are now trying to attract corporate meetings from both countries," she shared.

Sahid's Vivi said the company is also wooing corporates and TMCs while at the same time improving the facilities and services of its hotels. "We realise that apart from pricing, companies also take into consideration product and service quality. We are in the midst of upgrading some of our properties."

Additionally, the company is developing its e-commerce platform to reach out to broader market segments overseas, she revealed, adding: "We will participate in international trade-

shows, such as PATA Travel Mart and ITB Asia, something which the company has not done for many years." She hopes this will reintroduce Sahid brands to the international market, before specifically tapping MICE from overseas.

Aerowisata's Hera said the group is in the middle of upgrading and rebranding its properties, and it too has chosen to expand to other geographic markets and segments, including corporate travel, meetings and leisure.

Some players in the Indonesian MICE industry view the new policy as a wake-up call for players to diversify and create new markets.

Christina Rudatin, advisor at the MICE Centre, an Indonesian MICE research and development body, said: "I hope that not only the hotels but the whole industry will go out of their comfort zone and promote not only their properties and businesses but the destination as well. The industry has been relying on the huge domestic market and very few go out to bid for international events."

She has also gathered information from the Indonesian police, which issues permits for events, that shows

the presence of a huge number of corporate events in Indonesia. Events requiring police permits are usually large, with at least a few hundred participants.

"There is still opportunity for hotels to grab this market, but they probably need to upgrade their facilities and services to win it," she said.

The new policy has also afforded Jakarta Convention and Exhibition Bureau the chance to bring in more overseas corporate meetings, according to its executive director, Indra Sukirno.

Rizki Handayani, director of MICE and special interest tourism promotion, Ministry of Tourism, said: "We are encouraging destinations to develop an international network and introduce themselves overseas. We already have 16 (destinations) to focus on, but not all of them are ready to host international events yet."

"Places like Medan and Surabaya should start marketing themselves internationally as accessibility and MICE facilities are already available – one way is for them to participate in overseas MICE tradeshows with us. Bandung and Jogjakarta however, should go regional."

"A recent Jogjakarta tourism stakeholders' meeting revealed that last November and December the city lost 70 billion rupiah (US\$5.6 million) worth of (government) meetings."

Erny Kusmastuti

General manager of Eastparc Hotel Jogjakarta



Ideas One-day treasure hunt at the old city

morning Participants gather at Bank Mandiri Museum, one of the many heritage cum museum buildings in Kota Tua (old city), Jakarta. They get a briefing on the game and are divided into four groups. They then get their first clue card, telling them to find specific items in the museum, take photographs of them and show these photographs to the Dutch Master.

The Dutch Master gives out the second clue card, which indicates that the next item to find is located in another museum. The groups need to do an Internet search to know that the next location is the

Puppet Museum, which is a five-minute walk away.

afternoon At the Puppet Museum, another clue card is given. Groups need to take the bike to go to the next stop, Toko Merah, the former house of Batavia governor general Gustaaf Willem Baron van Inhoff built in 1730. On the way, they must photograph the surroundings and upload them on social media. Lunch is served.

After lunch and, bringing a small box of tea from Toko Merah, groups mount the bike again to the Fine Art & Ceramic Museum, about 10

minutes' ride away. They need to find the Dutch Master's quarter there to hand over the tea box and get the final task, which requires them to have their members' photograph taken in front of the Jakarta History Museum.

evening The game ends with refreshment at Café Batavia, the décor and atmosphere of which are reminiscent of the Dutch colonial period.

– Itinerary by Museum Ceria, a museum community of the University of Indonesia

Need to know



D for delicious

Jakarta saw the entry of a new restaurant, Letter D Cuisine and Bar, in January. Located in the Gandaria area, south Jakarta, it serves authentic Indonesian, European and Asian cuisines.

Owned by Indonesia's celebrity chef and recent judge of the Master Chef Indonesia competition, Degan Saptoadji, Letter D's menu has been meticulously crafted to reflect the owner's varied experience working in various hotels and restaurants in Indonesia and overseas. Find the recreated *ayam bakar* (grilled chicken) of his childhood, the bold flavours of European favourite osso buco and the charm of Thailand's communal *som tum* salad.

The two-storey restaurant seats 150 pax comfortably and features an outdoor seating area for 30 guests. It is divided into four sections; private group gatherings may occupy one whole floor (combining the two sections on each floor) or take up a smaller section for 25-40 people.

New upper-upscale hotels for Jakarta

Jakarta welcomes 2015 with at least two new luxury properties.

Fairmont Jakarta opened its doors in January with 380 rooms and suites in the Senayan area, close to the Indonesia Stock Exchange and Jakarta Convention Center. It is directly linked to Plaza Senayan shopping mall and office towers.

The hotel has five F&B outlets and 3,500m² meeting and function space, including a 1,200m² ballroom and eight meeting rooms.

Sister property, Raffles Jakarta, opened in February with 173 rooms and suites. The hotel features three restaurants and three bars, while its meeting facilities include a ballroom with a capacity for up to 3,500 people, three breakout rooms and one boardroom.



Party in a bus

A new luxury party bus, the Royale VIP Bus, has been launched in Jakarta for private charter, offering a new way for groups to enjoy Jakarta's nightlife amid the city's traffic.

The custom-made bus seats up to 20 people. It is fitted with a surround sound system, disco lights and a karaoke system. There is also a bar fridge and a toilet.

The service includes a chauffeur, an assistant and a butler, with supplies including the bus fuel, ice cubes, plastic cups and mineral water. Prices start from three million rupiah (US\$238) per bus. Additional charges apply if including travel to Jakarta's neighbouring areas.

Have a history lesson at the cultural park

Taman Nusa in Gianyar Bali is a 15ha cultural park housing museums and a village showcasing over 60 traditional houses from around Indonesia, some of which are hundreds of years old.

Visitors will be taken through the history of Indonesia, from as far back as pre-historic times. They will also obtain comprehensive information on the culture and customs of various ethnic groups in Indonesia in an interactive way.

The restaurant, cafeteria, theatre and lush gardens can be used for events.

House of Minangkabau



Say hello to Kitty

Ancol Dream Land, Jakarta has recently added a new attraction, the Hello Kitty Time Travel, the first Hello Kitty attraction in Indonesia.

Covering an area of 1,150 m² with a total capacity of 1,000 visitors per hour, the Hello Kitty Adventure offers 14 interactive games such as Mechanical Toggle, Wheel Bubble Up and Hole View. The Magic Apple time capsule takes visitors 'around the world', including Jakarta and Bali in Indonesia, Japan, the US, the UK, Egypt, the North Pole and Greece.

Earlier last year the Jakarta theme park added Ice Age Arctic Adventure in co-operation with the Ice Age filmmaker, 20th Century Fox. Sid's Arctic Tour, an eight-minute dark ride, takes visitors through the jungle, mountain and the melting iceberg depicted in the four films.



Kempinski Hotel
Nay Pyi Taw

MYANMAR

FUSION

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With gorgeous aerial performances and fire twirlers sending millions of sparks through the night sky, every moment was a highlight. ATF 2015 delegates had a wonderful evening by Kempinski's expansive poolside as they were treated to live music, a

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Discover Holidays (Asia)'s Rodney Yew with the party's co-hosts, TTG Travel Trade Publishing's Michael Chow and Kempinski Nay Pyi Taw's Franck Droin.



Sweet Memory Group's Myo Thwin, Myanmar Restaurant Association's Khin Aung Htun, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Myanmar's Aung Zaw Win and All Asia Exclusive's Phyo Wai Yar Zar.



Selfies are mandatory to commemorate moments like this — proof that our delegates were truly excited to party with their industry friends.



Thumbs-up and all smiles as our delegates found themselves enjoying the canapes, drinks, performances and most importantly, the company of their fun-loving peers in the cool outdoors.



Spinning beats that got everyone on their feet, the party's DJ certainly knew how to bring the party to the next level.



One of the wow moments where millions of flying fire sparks lit up the night sky.



Not solely Seoul



pratikhr/238f.com

Expo Bridge in lesser-known Daejeon, which is being promoted by the Korea MICE Bureau

Niche industries and booming infrastructure are giving South Korean destinations a chance to welcome MICE business, discovers **Hannah Koh**

Young, vibrant and heart-breakingly sleek, South Korea's industries, much like its popstars, are going from strength to strength. The country has been quick to leverage this, along with a boom in infrastructure, to promote MICE beyond the regular destinations.

South Korea hosted 635 international conventions and meetings in 2013, according to UIA. ICCA also found the country to have welcomed 260 meetings in 2013, the 12th largest number in a single country that year. Pointing out these data, Minhong Min, executive director of the Korea MICE Bureau, said: "By any report, we are jumping."

He said the "number one" factor setting South Korea apart from other meeting destinations is the Korean pop culture wave sweeping across Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

He continued: "Second, we have many newly developed infrastructure. Ten years ago we only had four convention centres. Now we have 14. Regional cities compete

with each other to host international events, resulting in a higher level of service. We spent US\$20 million in the MICE industry last year.

"All our industries are seeing upward growth, especially the medical sectors and medical association congresses. There's been a big increase in incentives from China and Asia.

"Our policy is to focus (on promoting destinations) outside Seoul, so we provide incentives for other destinations. Seoul is an Asian hub, but to extend stays in (South) Korea, we are promoting other destinations like Jeju and Busan, both also popular for MICE."

The bureau also thrust lesser-known destinations Daejeon, Gunsan, and Incheon's Songdo City in the spotlight during a recent media fam trip. All three destinations are beneficiaries of a determination to add more space, facilities and hotels for MICE, each with its own niche industry.

Daejeon for one, besides being a major transport hub for its location in the heart of South Korea, is a kind of brain bank for the country with the

host of research institutions, high-tech companies and universities that have found a home there.

The major focus of the Daejeon Convention Center (DCC), opened in 2008, is thus on conferences. Angeline Park, manager, convention marketing team, Convention & Visitors Bureau Daejeon, Daejeon International Marketing Enterprise, which runs the convention centre, said over 600 conferences and exhibitions are held at the venue a year, including domestic events.

Some events scheduled for 2015 include Pacific and Asian Society of Minimally Invasive Spinal Surgery, and International Comic Artist Conference.

"We are building an entertainment and F&B complex, to be opened in 2018/2019," revealed Park. The complex will replace the existing DIME Exhibition Hall adjacent to DCC.

More conferences could also come from neighbouring Sejong, a new town that was constructed to be South Korea's other administrative capital. From Daejeon, the mega government complex in the new town is only 20 minutes away, said Park.

On the other hand, Gunsan in North Jeolla was a big port city 50-60 years ago, and now has the largest industrial complexes in South Korea, with car production and sustainable energy being two key industries.

The Gunsan Saemangeum Convention Center (GSCO) was launched in July 2014, and has since hosted tradeshow and fairs related mostly to heavy machinery and cars. It is the latest addition to the exhibition hall – large enough for 160 booths – that opened in 2004, and an annex building that began operations in 2007. Renovations of the annex building will start in August to add nine rooms for up to 250 pax each.

Rental rates for exhibition hall and meeting rooms are 30 and 50 per cent lower than other cities, respectively, said Trudy Baek, MICE business team assistant manager, GSCO.

Asked what prompted the decision to build the facility, Baek said: "Gunsan has a good logistics system, and industrial tradeshow would be the next 'food' for the local economy. All regional governments (in South Korea) are very interested in MICE."

The city also saw the 181-room Best Western Gunsan open last year.

Meanwhile, a bright spark on Incheon's horizon is 'smart city' Songdo, home to some 450 MNCs, and the G-Tower where the UN has housed a good number of its offices.

Maureen Kim, director of Incheon Convention Visitors Bureau, said: "Songdo is good for international businesses and organisations as it is close to both Japan and China, and we have set up a team to host such events. Our plan is to attract organisations to set up (HQ) in the city and then have them extend invitations to counterparts to hold meetings here."

"Since 2008, we have targeted getting more UN meetings. By end-2013, we had hosted the Green Climate Fund organisation HQ meeting, the Association of World Election Bodies, and World Bank events."

Kim said having dealt with such large-scale events is an advantage when attracting association business, and the presence of UN organisations and meetings in Incheon is a key differentiation point.

Songdo's main large-scale venue is Songdo Convensia Convention Center, opened in 2008. Plans are underway to double the space at the centre within the next three years. Some events confirmed in 2015 are the UN Development Cooperation Forum and World Education Forum.

Songdo was also one of the venues that hosted the 2014 Asian Games that took place in Incheon. Sheraton Incheon Hotel and Oakwood Premier Incheon were fully booked out during the event.

Min opined: "Meetings on their own are not attractive anymore and we need to offer something new and different. For instance, during the 95th Lions International Convention in Busan in 2012, (South) Korea provided health checkups, and over 300 delegates signed up even though they had to pay for it. We combined Industry A and Industry B to provide a different service."

"Corporate meetings tend to be small, with less than 100 pax. With the development of South Korean industries, there will be a bigger need for corporate meetings."

Sheraton Incheon Hotel general manager, Richard Suter, suggested: "South Korea could develop the kaizen idea from Japan (for more MICE business), where there are tours to see how companies work. But obviously that depends on how open the local companies are."

Checking in

Premium business hotel, 312 rooms
33, Expo-ro 123beon-gil, Yuseong-gu,
Daejeon, South Korea
Tel: (82) 2-759-7592
www.lottehotel.com/city/daejeon/en

Lotte City Hotel Daejeon



Opened in March 2014, Lotte City Hotel Daejeon is one of two hotels in the immediate vicinity of Daejeon Convention Center. Daejeon is the fifth largest city in South Korea and a major hub for R&D and education events in the North-east Asian region. The country's second administrative capital after Seoul, Sejong City, is located 40 minutes away.

Meeting facilities The hotel boasts two main function areas – the 436.4m² Crystal Ballroom and 138.8m² Ruby Room. The ballroom features 5.5m high ceilings and space for 250 in classroom style, while the Ruby Room takes up to 80 in theatre style. A conference room on the first floor provides space for board meetings.

F&B Dining is a straightforward affair at the buffet restaurant on the 18th floor, with clear views of the surrounding area through floor-to-ceiling windows that flood the room with natural light in the morning. The restaurant is furnished with simple, clean lines and the breakfast spread was simple and satisfying.

Rooms The entry-level category here is the 27.7m² Superior Room which was roomy for one person. Pastel browns dominated the palette of the room, anchored by an ebony-coloured desk. Clean, functional and fuss free, the business traveller is right at home here.

For families, there is the Deluxe Family Twin room. Despite also being 27.7m², the room accommodates up to three persons.

The Suite Rooms on the top floors on

the building command stellar views of Gapcheon and Expo Bridge, and range from 41.9 to 57.1m². They come with separate living and sleeping areas and provide Molton Brown amenities.

Other facilities The health-conscious can keep up with their physical regimens at the fitness centre on the second floor. Right beside that is the coin laundry room. But for all that has been said about business travellers preferring a no-frills or fuss-free stay, some service is still needed, especially if the hotel is a good business hotel. So it's a bit of a dampener to be told you need to use the second floor vending machines for more water when you've finished your two free bottles of water and are in your pyjamas at 22:00 pm.

FACT FILE

Maximum pax for meetings

400 in the Crystal Ballroom, theatre-style

Maximum pax for banquets

240 in the Crystal Ballroom, banquet-style

VERDICT



Hannah Koh

Lotte City Hotel Daejeon hits the three C's – cleanliness, comfort and convenience – but for a "five-star" business hotel a bit more service wouldn't go amiss.

Ideas 2D1N history tour in Incheon

Day 1 Begin at Donghwa Village and its brightly painted streets depicting popular fairy tales. Photo opportunities abound here.

Then head to Chinatown for the array of food sold along the street. Try the most famous Chinese-Korean dish, *jjajangmyeon*, after which the history of the black noodles can be learned at Jjajangmyeon Museum.

Next, unwind at South Korea's first Western-style park, Jayu Park, watched over by a statue of US general Douglas MacArthur, before dropping by Incheon Open Port Museum, a former Japanese bank building, for a deeper understanding of the city's history. Next is Incheon Art Platform, comprising 13 buildings from

the 1930-40s now used as art and design studios, archive centres, and education and performance halls.

End the day at Sinpo market, which dates back to the late 19th-century. Sample its most famous *dakgangjeong*, a Korean dish of crispy fried chicken coated in a sweet and spicy sauce.

Day 2 Start off at Wolmido Amusement Park offering various rides and an indoor children's playground.

Next, head to Wolmi Culture Centre for a taste of traditional Korean life and then to Wolmi Park, once a military base and site of the Incheon

Landing Operation during the Korean War. Wolmi Observatory provides scenic views of the area while Korea Emigration History Museum offers insights into the eponymous subject.

Then move on to Yeonan Pier, the starting point for all coastal passenger ships bound for numerous islands in the western sea, and the nearby Incheon Fish Market.

Finally, at Jung-gu District Culture Hall, enjoy nonverbal show *Bibap*, a mix of beatboxing, a capella, acrobatics and martial arts as two sous chefs clash in a bibimbab cook-off.

Itinerary by Incheon Metropolitan City Department of Tourist Promotion



Need to know

Dongdaemun Design Plaza

Dongdaemun Design Plaza is an otherworldly monolith that rises up sleek and silver in the heart of Seoul's commercial shopping district. It is the world's largest 3D asymmetrical architectural structure and conceptualised as Seoul's epicentre for the design and arts industries. Launched on March 21, 2014 with the 28th Seoul Fashion Week, the plaza is open 24 hours a day. Event spaces include the 4,852m² Art Hall comprising Art Hall 1 and 2, and the International Conference Hall; the 7,928.5m² Learning Center; and 8,206.1m² Design Lab. There is also the Dongdaemun History and Culture Park, and the Design Market public space.

Songdo Central Park Hotel

Songdo Central Park Hotel, Incheon is a five-star hotel that opened last September across the street from Songdo Central Park. It offers 300 rooms, free Wi-Fi throughout the hotel, a swimming pool and a fitness centre. Event spaces include the Ruby Hall and Emerald Hall for combined capacity of 300 pax, and the Sapphire and Diamond Halls to seat a total of 730 guests. The hotel is 15 minutes' drive from Songdo Convensia and 35 minutes' from Incheon International Airport. Email: bqr@cphotel.co.kr

Geumgang Migratory Bird Observatory

The first of its kind in South Korea, the Geumgang Migratory Bird Observatory in Gunsan rotates 360° to provide visitors with views of the Geumgang Estuary, where migratory birds rest in winter. There is also a bird park, museum and incubation experience centre. It is also one of the venues of the annual autumn Gunsan International Migratory Bird Festival, which offers a popular birdwatching tour until end-February. Call (82) 63-1330 (Korean, English, Japanese, Chinese).

Incheon City Pass

Launched in September last year, the Incheon City Pass is a stored value card that can be used not just in Incheon but also Seoul, Gyeonggi-do, and Busan. Besides offering discounts on dining, attractions, concerts, accommodation and shopping, the card can be used to pay transport fares. Cash refunds for remaining value can be obtained before leaving South Korea. For more information on the pass, visit www.k-pass.co.kr or email kpas@tothepp.com

Gyeong Won Jae Ambassador Hotel

Situated in Songdo Central Park, Gyeong Won Jae Ambassador Hotel, Incheon is a Korean-style traditional hotel that will allow guests to enjoy the tranquility of its surroundings while contemplating the beauty of ancient Korea. The hotel takes its name, Gyeong Won Jae, from Incheon's former name during the Goryeo Dynasty. Opening this May, it will offer two Presidential Suites, 12 Deluxe Suites, 16 Standard Rooms and a Gyeong Won Roo banquet hall for up to 250 pax.





Support up for events Down Under

Australian business event players expect better outcomes from event bids now that the national government has committed to stronger support for the sector, writes **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

Destinations across Australia, like Sydney pictured here, will benefit from stronger government support during event bids

Australia is now empowered to better pitch and bid for events on the global stage following a new government initiative which was launched late-2014 to assist the business events sector in this aspect.

The new framework – Attracting Business Events to Australia: Role of Government Agencies – is a strategic collaboration between the Federal Government, through Austrade and Tourism Australia, and Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACVB) as well as the the business events sector.

Through this arrangement, Austrade will coordinate ministerial support for an event and organises on-shore and offshore

promotion while Tourism Australia will partner with industry players to provide marketing and promotional materials.

Andrew Hiebl, executive director of AACVB, said: “The government has recognised the economic and strategic importance of international business events and the direct benefit they provide to the Australian economy.

“With this new initiative, (government) support will be provided where there are clear economic benefits linked to the international business event that align with Australia’s trade, education and investment priority sectors.

“For example Austrade can coordinate a ministerial letter of support for inclusion in the event bid pack (and) advocate on behalf of an event bid in markets where a trade

commissioner is co-located with the event organising committee.”

This initiative also indicates that the AACVB will now serve as the first point of contact for event organisers – and the broader business events sector – who are seeking Austrade and Tourism Australia support.

AACVB president, Lyn Lewis-Smith, commented: “Government support as part of a compelling business case can sometimes make or break a bid. Increasingly, clients are looking for what we call “whole-of-city” engagement. This means support from business, government and community.

“Working with the Australian government to continue this approach is a natural progression, and it sends a very clear message to the industry that we are serious about business events and we want to create meaningful outcomes for our clients and our country.”

Highlighting how Sydney has been working with the New South Wales government for the past few years, Lewis-Smith who is also CEO of Business Events Sydney (BeSydney), said: “We are seeing the suc-

“Government support as part of a compelling business case can sometimes make or break a bid.”

Lyn Lewis-Smith
President, AACVB



Destination: Australia



"Any assistance from government departments and agencies lends credibility to the bidding and event delivery process in Australia. It also conveys the message to our international partners that Australia is serious about bringing business events to the country and that all parties are involved in helping to bring the programmes to Australia."

Illana Den

Director, CC: Your Australian DMC

cess of this strategy. The professional services sector is one of the state's priority sectors, and we can see a clear alignment with this sector in the upcoming secured events."

Lewis-Smith added that in 2017 and 2018, Sydney will welcome the world's largest finance event, Sibos, as well as the World Congress of Accountants, International Bar Association, AIPPI World Intellectual Property Congress, International Association of Restructuring Insolvency Bankruptcy Professionals (INSOL) World Quadrennial Congress and the International Council of Commercial Arbitration Congress.

The new framework has been met with much enthusiasm from the ground.

Sarah Corcoran, head of marketing with event specialist MCI Australia, told *TTGmice*: "This seamless access to state and federal ministerial support can only strengthen the opportunity to win the already competitive bid (in Australia). This has been the missing piece of the puzzle... and now our chances of winning international bids are magnified greatly."

She added: "Government financial support and access to ministerial support (in Australia) have been limited and (inconsistent). This initiative definitely strengthens the business case for attracting key opinion leaders to commit to bidding for international events. (It also) places Australia in a competitive position with other countries where

government support has been a key component of the decision-making process."

According to Arpita Bose, senior account manager at Kenes Asia, the new framework brings another important benefit to the table: it will help to address clients' perception of Australia being a pricey destination.

"Australia is perceived as expensive... (and it is also) more expensive than many other countries in Asia. (With the additional support), it will become much easier (for organisers like us) when choosing a location, as we can see what incentives are on offer across the country," said Bose, who has organised events in Melbourne and Brisbane in recent years.

The hills, they are a-calling!



See the charming Dandenong Ranges onboard the Puffing Billy

Just an hour's drive from the Melbourne city centre lie the Dandenong Ranges, a destination much loved for its extensive hilly landscape, beautiful verdant forests and many scenic view points.

It is easy to see why corporate clients who are seeking a tranquil extension to a meeting in Melbourne have been lured to this serene retreat.

Despite its quiet charms, the Dandenong Ranges offers plenty of recreation facilities as well as unique venues and accommodation that can satisfy the needs of corporate groups.

The iconic Puffing Billy steam train is an example of a must-see attraction in the destination. The ancient vehicle which started rolling in the 1900s, offers visitors a chance to explore the area's most scenic locations. A customisable three-hour train journey will take guests through quaint towns and majestic forests.

Event planners can also arrange for an exclusive excursion and charter dining trains for up to 250 and 80 passengers respectively.

Another option that will allow delegates to take in beautiful views is the SkyHigh Mount Dandenong. Located at the summit of Mount Dandenong, the versatile event centre can accommodate 250 guests for a cocktail event, or 10 for a board meeting. Thanks to floor-to-ceiling windows, delegates can enjoy panoramic views of the city's landscape.

The CountryPlace, one of the largest accommodation option in the destination, is perfect for corporate groups. It features 62 rooms and an event space with five conference rooms and 10 breakout rooms, all sur-

rounded by towering gum trees and ferns. Meetings can be paired with fun teambuilding activities on high and low ropes courses on site.

Explaining the appeal of the Dandenong Ranges, the CountryPlace's sales manager, Sue Sedelies, said: "We are just so close to the city yet it feels like a different world when you come here."

While the CountryPlace does not have sufficient rooms for large corporate groups looking to spend the night in the Dandenong Ranges, Sedelies said the property often works with neighbouring accommodation providers to manage guest overflow and provide shuttle bus services.

Event planners can also consider the 34-room Ferntree Gully Hotel which offers spaces for a 120-pax cocktail function and a meeting room for 70 delegates.

Other stay options include boutique hotels and self-contained hilltop cottages.

For more destination information, visit www.experiencethedandenongs.com.au.

Ideas A day in the Blue Mountains



The Three Sisters From Echo Point, Blue Mountains National Park

morning Start your journey over the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge and down the Bradfield Highway towards the Blue Mountains.

Entering the National Park and winding your way along Cliff Drive, take in spectacular views of Megalong Valley before arriving at Echo Point, which has views stretching across to the Three Sisters, a trio of rocky pinnacles. Hear about the Aboriginal dreamtime legend of the Three Sisters.

Soon after, at the Waradah Aboriginal Centre, experience a traditional dance, take part in an interactive didgeridoo performance, examine authentic artworks and take home genuine Aboriginal souvenirs. Learn about Australia's living Aboriginal culture from the local Darug and Gundungurra tribes through informal cultural discussions and lectures.

afternoon At Scenic World enjoy 360-degree views of the Jamison Valley and take a ride on the famous Scenic Railway, Cableway and Skyway. Next stop, the picturesque town of Leura. There's time to grab a bite at one of the many restaurants and cafés. This beautiful town takes visitors back in time and is famous for its antique shops and a candy store with more than 1,000 unusual sweets from all over the world.

evening Spend time at Featherdale Wildlife Park, and hand-feed kangaroos, wallabies and emus or enjoy a close encounter with one of the friendly koalas. End the day with a relaxing cruise down the Parramatta River and disembark at Circular Quay, Sydney Harbour.

Itinerary provided by AAT Kings

Need to know



Hunt down a new venue

The new Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley Conference and Events Centre has swung open its doors to present the largest conference and exhibition facilities in the Hunter Valley region.

It houses 2,000m² of pre-function, meeting and exhibition spaces, with two conference rooms that can be combined to accommodate 1,600 guests, and eight meeting and event rooms.

Unique to this centre is its location on vast green fields, which can help event planners deliver an outdoor festival experience.

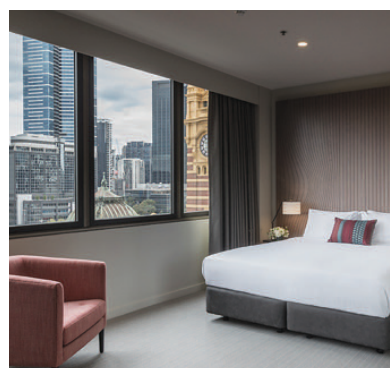
Harvest Hunter, the signature events package, brings interactive live cooking stations, live entertainment, locally recognised chefs, award winning wines, and local producers sharing fresh breads, cheeses and chocolates together in an authentic Hunter Valley experience.

DoubleTree by Hilton rises in Melbourne

The first DoubleTree by Hilton property in Melbourne made its debut last December.

Sitting opposite the iconic Flinders Street Station, the 180-key hotel has undergone a comprehensive multi-million dollar refurbishment. Facilities include two meeting rooms for up to 140 people, a fitness centre, a business centre, a lobby bar and a restaurant.

It is within walking distance of Federation Square, Melbourne's famous laneways, and many restaurants, bars and shops.



Take your event to the Maritime Museum

Warships Pavilion at the Australian National Maritime Museum is the latest waterfront attraction on Darling Harbour, Sydney.

Three exclusive function spaces are on offer: one for a 200-pax standing reception, an outdoor rooftop for a 100-pax cocktail party, and a theatre for 50 guests. All three venues can be utilised together for a truly immersive harbour experience.

Due for completion in September 2015, the pavilion is now open for early bird bookings.

Visit www.anmm.gov.au/venues for more information.



The PCEC app promises an interactive experience

Event attendees at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC) can now look forward to a more interactive experience with a new event app.

The PCEC app integrates social media tools, gamification, surveys and live polls with up-to-date event information to ensure events at the centre are accessible and relevant for attendees.

Event planners can use the app to provide updated event information and send targeted push notifications to attendees in real-time.

The app can be used online and offline, and is accessible across iOS, Android and HTML5.

New waterfront venue splashes into Perth

Perth's Old Port Waterfront has recently welcomed Aqua Bar, a multipurpose venue that houses a lounge, an upper deck and a terrace that overlooks the Swan River and Perth skyline. Aqua Bar presents a tapas-style menu and a wide array of cocktails, high end wines and spirits, making it perfect for dining and cocktail events. It can accommodate up to 250 guests.

Watch how lunch is cooked from ballroom

Singapore's newest hotel, **One Farrer Hotel & Spa**, hosts 270 corporate clients and trade partners at its Grand Ballroom, showing off one of its innovations – an audio and visual live feed of the chef making the auspicious dish, Pen Cai, from the hotel's cooking studio, **Origins of Food**



Gilbert Madhavan, general manager of One Farrer Hotel & Spa (middle), hosts guests including (from right) Samuel Tan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Josephine Lim of Preferred Hotel Group and Carol Tay from Monetary Authority of Singapore



An auspicious start for One Farrer with a rousing lion dance performance at its conference centre foyer

Opening speech by Richard Helfer, chairman of One Farrer Hotel & Spa



From left, One Farrer Hotel & Spa's Abel Sng with Theresa Ho and Linda Teo from The Traveller DMC



I-Asia Travel Management out in full force at the lunch



The Grand Ballroom

What's next?

Next month, get ideas on **Unique Venues** throughout Asia which can accommodate large incentives or meetings. Find out how **France** plans to woo the Asian MICE market in our longhaul report. Read also in the May issue how **Macau** is becoming even more dependent on the meetings market as gambling revenues dip and new hotels open. Don't miss it.

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国际协会会议在中国的全球化合作
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协会会议驱动更大收益

“There was a **good mix of buyers** attending the show, so that definitely helped us in **achieving our business objectives.**”

Achini Dandunage
Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, Sri Lanka

“通过在IT&CM China与参展商们的交流，我对在东南亚目的地举办会议有了更加深入的了解。这些信息对于我们来说非常有用，因为我们希望在这区域举办一些会议。其次教育主题论坛也非常专业。”

Li Jianmin
China Conference Business Alliance
(CCBA), 中国

“IT&CM China will enable us to be more competitive in the Polish incentive market.”

Agata Goscinska
Viventum, Poland

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