

May 2016

KON PPS14/09/2012 (022844)

TTGmice

Asia-Pacific's intelligent business events resource

South Korea builds a legacy

Switzerland makes a strong pitch for Asian business

New Canberra CVB chief to lead city to MICE fame



Rolling on the river

Asian companies with sophisticated taste are starting to discover river cruises in their backyard and in destinations afar, prompting operators to invest in a stronger marketing presence here



innocentric



Where creative value-adds in a quality-centered and forward-thinking venue count towards making your events more multidimensional

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre
Kuala Lumpur City Centre
50088 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
T 603 2333 2888 F 603 2333 2800
E info@klccconventioncentre.com
www.klccconventioncentre.com



WHERE COMMERCE, CULTURE, COLOUR CONVERGE

EDITORIAL**Karen Yue**

Group Editor (karen.yue@ttgasia.com)

Xinyi Liang-PholsenaDeputy Editor, TTG Asia & TTG India
(liang.xinyi@ttgasia.com)**Dannon Har**Assistant Editor, TTG Asia Online
(dannon.har@ttgasia.com)**Paige Lee Pei Qi**Assistant Editor, Singapore
(lee.peiqi@ttgasia.com)**S Puvaneswary**Editor, Malaysia/Brunei
(puvanes@ttgasia.com)**Mimi Hudoyo**

Editor, Indonesia (jdmfasia@cbrn.net.id)

Rachel AJ Lee, Yixin NgSub Editors
(rachel.lee@ttgasia.com, ng.yixin@ttgasia.com)**Oliver Slow, Sid Dhartha**Myanmar
(oslow99@gmail.com, siddhartha.ttgasia@gmail.com)**Prudence Lui**Hong Kong/Greater China
(prului@yahoo.com)**Caroline Boey**China & Special Projects
(caroline.boey@ttgasia.com)**Julian Ryall**Japan
(jryall2@hotmail.com)**Rosa Ocampo**

The Philippines (rosa.ocampo@gmail.com)

Rohit KaulIndia
(rohitkaul23@gmail.com)**Feizal Samath**Sri Lanka/Maldives
(feizalsam@gmail.com)**Redmond Sia, Goh Meng Yong**

Creative Designers

Lina Tan

Editorial Assistant

SALES & MARKETING**Michael Chow**Group Publisher
(michael.chow@ttgasia.com)**Pierre Quek**Publisher, Online Section
(pierre.quek@ttgasia.com)**Stephanie So**Business Manager
(Hong Kong, stephanie.so@ttgasia.com)**Cheryl Tan**Corporate Marketing Manager
(cheryl.tan@ttgasia.com)**Cheryl Lim**Advertisement Administration
manager (cheryl.lim@ttgasia.com)**Carol Cheng**Asst Manager Administration
& Marketing (Hong Kong, carol.cheng@ttgasia.com)**PUBLISHING SERVICES****Tony Yeo**

Division Manager

Kristy Lim

Publishing Services Executive

Lynn Lim

Web Executive

Katherine Leong

Circulation Executive

OFFICES**Singapore**

TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, 1 Science Park Road,

#04-07 The Capricorn, Singapore Science

Park II, Singapore 117528

Tel: +65 6395 7575, fax: +65 6536 0896,

email: contact@ttgasia.com

Hong Kong

TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, 8/F, E168,

166-168 Des Voeux Road Central,

Sheung Wan, Hong Kong

Tel: +852 2237 7288, fax: +852 2237 7227

TTG ASIA MEDIA PTE LTD**Darren Ng**

Managing Director

Raini HamdiSenior Editor
(raini.hamdi@ttgasia.com)**Karen Yue**
Group Editor

Keeping the faith

I have a soft spot for Japan. Its big cities are energising, its towns peaceful and full of unique character, and its people polite and genuine.

I've become a fan ever since my first visit to the country in 2010 for Visit Japan Travel Mart, and I found myself being drawn back every year. I have been making personal trips that last at least two weeks each time to get acquainted with the ethereal beauty that is Japan.

I've trekked down an abandoned railway track along the impressive Mukogawa river valley in Hyogo. I've had my breath taken away by the Takeda Castle ruins at the peak of a 353m-high mountain in Asago on a misty morning. I've said hello to a feline station master. I've marvelled at the beautiful juxtaposition of many formidable ancient castles and their delicate gardens. I've paid my respects to deities at scenic shrines and tranquil temples. I've sat in meditative silence in beautiful public parks.

And I always go home thinking how these destinations, venues and attractions are perfect enhancements for any corporate event, but why aren't more of these used by event planners?

The good news is, Japan Convention Bureau is recognising the power of its unique venues and lesser-known destinations and is highlighting these to reel in more foreign business events. It will soon roll out a programme to make it easy for event planners to use unique venues.

The not so good news is, while things are finally being done to play up these worthy places for MICE, Japan has to grapple with the intense aftermath of a series of earthquakes that hit Kyushu island for days in April.

As of April 21, an excess of 680 aftershocks had hit Kyushu since April 14, and more than 89 of these measured a magnitude four or more on the Richter scale. And as I'm writing this, the Japanese TV newscaster is warning viewers in the affected region to brace for even more tremors and delayed assistance due to wet weather.

The impact so far on business events has been minimal, as the city that draws the bulk of business traffic and meetings – Fukuoka – is unscathed. Affected areas are in Kumamoto and Oita Prefecture.

Kyushu is vast, and the whole of Japan even more so. Yet, there will be anxious travellers who will give Japan, not just Kyushu, a wide berth in the coming months. Let us, as travel professionals, patiently steer them towards the fact that much of Japan is still open for business and its people are ready to welcome events.

Meanwhile, I will persist in my plans to make a second trip to Japan this year to discover even more reasons to love the destination.



TTGmice, endorsed by the Asian Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, is published by TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, and is mailed free-of-charge on written request to readers Asia-wide who meet a set of predetermined terms and conditions. Annual airmail subscription charges are US\$70 (Asia) and US\$90 (elsewhere). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission of the publisher.

MCI (P) 165/08/2013, KDN
PPS1140/09/2012(022844), ISSN 0218-849X
Printed by KHL Printing Co Pte Ltd, 57 Loyang Drive,
Singapore 508968.

Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TTGmice

Follow us at @TTGmice

Get your weekly news update at www.ttgsmice.com



COVER STORY

15 Rolling on the river

Asian companies with sophisticated taste are starting to discover river cruises in their backyard and in destinations afar, prompting operators to invest in a stronger marketing presence here. By Karen Yue, Paige Lee Pei Qi, S Puvaneswary, Mimi Hudoyo, Julian Ryall, Prudence Lui and Rosa Ocampo

COUNTRY REPORTS

22 Building a legacy

South Korea is determined to be a superb host for this month's Rotary congress, an event that will not only benefit the country's tourism sector, but also key industries. Rebecca Elliott reports

25 Airy alpine ambitions

The mountainous landlocked nation is trying to wiggle its way up the MICE destination list for Asians, confident it has what it takes. By Rosa Ocampo

28 All signs point to go

Improved accessibility and a weaker ringgit are making Malaysia more attractive for Chinese buyers. S Puvaneswary reports

TTGmice

www.ttgmicemice.com

DEPARTMENTS

- 1 To our readers
- 4 Marketplace
- 7 Talk of the trade
- 12 Client files
- 14 In focus
- 31 People
- 32 Case studies
- 34 Over coffee with...
- 35 How to
- 36 Gallery



oak in an experience like no other
at our new Inya Wing.



Imagine a place where unrivalled style meets unparalleled comfort. Where architectural design is infused with indulgent luxuries, so every moment is a journey out of the ordinary.

Bask in the warmth of Myanmar hospitality and explore the vibrant streets of Yangon or simply let your worries ease away with our unique spa treatments. There's always something to delight the senses at Sedona Hotel Yangon's new Inya Wing.

Now yours to discover.

Find out more at sedonahotels.com.sg

We love



ilLido ventures to Bali

ilLido, one of Singapore's iconic and long-standing Italian fine-dining destinations, has opened in trendy Seminyak, promising event planners 'the real thing' if they love Italian.

The cuisine features timeless favourites, with portions as big as the Italians' heart. The ambience is relaxed and welcoming, recreating the well-known former Kafe Warisan location into an enchanting summertime in Italy.

Service is warm and non-snobbish.

ilLido Bali comprises a restaurant and lounge with indoor and alfresco areas which can be adjusted to suit all occasions, from cocktail parties to sit-down dinners, for up to 300 guests.

To date, among events that have made their way there include The Yak Awards Night with DJ, fashion show and after-event

party for over 500 guests, and BSI Bank Singapore, which blocked the entire restaurant for an elegant after-golf dinner for 80 guests comprising a bespoke four-course menu and a digestivo session of cigar and whisky with an Italian cheese buffet. il Lido also does external catering services.

Tel: (62) 361 731175; email: info@illidobali.com; website: www.illidobali.com

Kowloon Shangri-La's cultural connection

As the first hotel to open in the reclaimed Tsim Sha Tsui East, it sounds just right that Kowloon Shangri-La, Hong Kong should be the pioneer of a cultural tour that introduces visitors to the soul of the district.

The three- to four-hour (a choice of morning or afternoon sessions) guided heritage excursion on foot will call at landmarks like Whitfield Barracks, Signal Hill, Rosary Church and Tak Sun School whose students included Bruce Lee, and regale participants in untold stories of Tsim Sha Tsui East.

The tour is part of the hotel's limited edition Cultural Heritage Room Package, which also features a commemorative booklet, accommodation for two persons in a Horizon Club Deluxe Room, Horizon Club benefits, among other perks. Prices start from HK\$3,800 (US\$488) and the offer is valid for stays from now till June 30, 2017. Terms apply.

Residential meeting groups can also include the tour in their programme for a separate fee. Although the regular tour accepts up to 10 participants each time, the hotel is able to make arrangements for larger corporate groups keen on this activity.

Email reservations.ksl@shangri-la.com.

St Andrew's Church



InterContinental Singapore enhances its local flavour

The elegant InterContinental Singapore now tantalises guests with a more pronounced local touch and brighter interiors following the completion of its major five-year renovation project.

A new concierge lounge in the lobby, furnished with plush couches and armchairs, a stately reception desk that resembles the study of a well-travelled individual and artefacts that reflect Singapore's diverse culture, provide a warm welcome. All 316 tower rooms and suites have been given soothing interiors in cream, gold and blue, elaborate Peranakan detailing, as well as beautiful statement furniture. Extensive work was also done to the lobby lounge, a popular spot for high teas and tête-à-tête, and all-day-dining restaurant Ash & Elm (formerly The Olive Tree).

Through a series of six showcases, the hotel has demonstrated how its refreshed spaces can be utilised for private business events. The renovated Presidential Suite – said to be the largest of its kind among Singapore hotels at 259m² – has been a popular choice for high-level, intimate corporate gatherings. – **Karen Yue**



The elegant Presidential Suite is perfect for high-level meetings

Suzhou gets new convention centre

After three years of construction, the 40,000m² Suzhou Jinji Lake International Convention Center officially opened on March 18, and its first event is the 2016 China (Suzhou) Convention and Exhibition Industry Fair.

This is the third facility to be built as part of the larger Suzhou International Expo Center. The convention centre offers 60 types of meeting and convention spaces. It also houses the 8,000m² pillarless banquet hall, said to be the largest of its kind in Asia.



Take a virtual site inspection of Adelaide Convention Centre



Adelaide Convention Centre

The entire interior of Adelaide Convention Centre is now available for virtual viewing on the Google Virtual Tour platform, a first for an Australian convention centre, done in an effort to give clients an additional tool when planning their events there.

It incorporates 316 panoramic photos, built from 3,792 separate images, and showcases all 15,000m² of the centre's three levels including

external views of North Terrace and the Riverbank precinct. Visitors can also tour around the perimeter of the centre and along North Terrace using Google Street View.

Commenting on the technology, Alec Gilbert, CEO, Adelaide Convention Centre, said: "The 360-degree navigation technology works just like Google Street View so viewers have complete control of their experience and are free to explore what most interests them."

"Google Maps and Street View are used all around the world so it makes it easy to access for anyone considering booking, visiting or generally interested in familiarising themselves with the centre," he added.

Google Virtual Tour forms part of Adelaide Convention Centre's digital strategy which includes social media, digital newsletters, video, a new interactive website and the iMap event planning application.

To explore this new feature, visit <https://www.adelaidecc.com.au/planning/google-virtual-tour/>.

Seek homely comfort in a fancy new executive lounge



Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel has completed refurbishments of its Executive Lounge, which now promises the highest levels of comfort, luxury and exclusivity for its guests across a larger space.

The refreshed experience begins at the expanded lift lobby to the Executive Lounge on the 27th floor, which opens up to translucent glass panels that offer a glimpse of the facilities within as well as of Orchard Road.

Inside, modern and elegant furnishings and bold hues of cream, green and brown greet guests. Formerly 197m², the Executive Lounge today spans across 268m² to cater to the growing number of well-heeled leisure and business travellers who prefer a premium experience. It can seat more than 90 guests.

Simon Bell, hotel general manager, said the management team had worked closely with Tang Holdings and renowned designer Mark Ormsby Interiors to create a luxurious sanctuary that is functional and comfortable, yet exquisite.

Artemis Grill

Karen Yue discovers that organic, sustainable eats can be a fine affair at this restaurant high above the city



Hot spot

Opened in November, Artemis Grill adds to Singapore's growing and competitive dining scene but it isn't just one of the many forgettable newbies. Barely a year old, the Mediterranean restaurant already stands out from the crowd with its high quality food that uses organic ingredients from sustainable sources. As a bonus for its fans, Artemis delivers a memorable dining experience in an elegant setting that comes with a commanding view of the cityscape.

F&B concept

Artemis takes pride in serving the best of nature's harvest and leaving as little carbon footprint as possible in its sourcing. Diners can expect fish and seafood from sustainable sources, hormone-free meats, and organic vegetables from local farms. It is also one of three restaurants in Singapore to serve prized cuts from Mey Selection, an initiative by Prince Charles to support traditional cattle farmers in the North Highlands of Scotland.

The restaurant's commitment to sustainable living extends to its water service. As a member of the Whole World Water initiative, S\$1 (US\$0.74) from the sale of self-filtered water to each diner goes towards securing clean and safe water for over a billion people who currently lack it.

For my dinner, executive chef Fernando Arevalo put together a wine-pairing menu that comprised a refreshing starter of flash-blanching prawns with harissa and tomato water; a stellar trio of mains including a tasty beetroot tortellini, a tender fillet of tooth fish from the South Pole that came with a generous drizzle of the first pressing of olive oil from Arevalo's private stash, and a flavourful dry-aged grass-fed Black Angus tenderloin from Mey Selection; and finally, a delicate apricot and lavender soufflé for dessert.

The featured wines were all just as memorable.

Armed with an extensive collection of wine, Artemis is able to customise impressive wine-pairing menu for corporate dining events.

MICE application

Artemis offers two private dining rooms that can each accommodate 14 guests for sit-down banquets or 36 people when combined. These rooms are favoured for breakfast meetings, seminars and presentations.

The outdoor terrace, where a beautiful 200-year-old olive tree stands proudly as a centrepiece, makes an attractive space for networking cocktails, product launches and lively preludes to a sit-down banquet inside. Good for 100 guests, the terrace is open to full and partial hire.

The main dining hall, which seats 100 guests, is available for full venue hire and furniture can be rearranged to suit the client's objective. A minimum spend applies for full venue hire, and planners can pick from canape, cocktail and mocktail, free-flow beverage, and set meal packages.

Service

Cheerful and attentive staff make me feel right at home.

Contacts

Artemis Grill
Capitagreen, 138 Market Street, #40-01
Tel: (65) 6635 8677
Website: artemisgrill.com.sg

Opening hours

Monday to Friday, 11.30 to late
Saturday, 18.00 to late



HOT DEALS



Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts

The hotel group has launched *Events Collection*, a programme designed to enhance business meetings held in any of its properties through uniquely themed destination events, teambuilding activities and a new suite of benefits.

One of the perks available to planners is the 3% Instant Value – the ability to get back three per cent of total event spend to use on extra features such as complimentary guestroom upgrades or enhanced menu items.

Also new in the group's MICE promotion efforts is the Golden Circle Event Planner Rewards which allows planners to earn points that can be redeemed for personal Shangri-La experiences or offset up to five per cent of future event spend.

Visit www.shangri-la.com.

Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria

The hotel is offering meeting groups a series of service add-ons that grow along with the size of attendance.

Called *Meetings+*, the promotion offers complimentary upgrades, discounts on business center secretarial services, dining vouchers, free hosted board meetings and others for a minimum number of delegates guaranteed. Daily snacks ranging from nuts and chips to healthy alternatives are provided too.

Complementing *Meetings+* is the IHG Business Rewards programme.

Contact mnlcp@ihg.com for more information or for bookings.

Grand Hyatt Macau

The hotel is offering a residential meeting package priced from HK\$1,999 (US\$258) per person per night, which includes one-night accommodation in a Grand Deluxe room, full-day meeting package, breakfast, complimentary designated minibar refreshments per room per night, and free laundry and pressing services per room per night.

The package is available for bookings made by June 30, 2016 with arrival before December 31, 2016. Terms apply.

Email MACGH-Sales.and.Events@hyatt.com.

Cautious corporates shun sharing economy options

By Paige Lee Pei Qi

Even as sharing economy accommodation suppliers continue to thrive in the marketplace, corporate travel managers attending CTW China 2016 last month in Shanghai expressed a reluctance to take this option due to security challenges.

Winnie Liew, regional travel manager of Applied Materials Inc, Singapore, said her company “has said no to Airbnb” in the corporate travel policy last year.

Liew explained that the decision was made because her company was not able to track travellers who booked with Airbnb, compromising travellers’ safety and security.

She added: “Moreover, different countries have different regulations with regards to Airbnb. For example, in Singapore not all houses can be rented out so if the company does not know the (local) situation well, they will get into trouble.”

Unilever Industries is also “thinking twice” about this option, revealed Geetha Arekal, APAC regional travel head. “People are saying that this space is cheaper (by) up to 40 per cent so there is an opportunity to spend less. However, we may have to (spend time to screen) the rental place first for security. We are still thinking how we can do that,” she remarked.

Benson Tang, regional director of Association of Corporate Travel Executives, opined that small- and medium-sized en-

terprises might welcome such accommodation options “as their top priority could be to save on costs instead of (ensuring travellers’) security”.

Besides the risk posed to physical security, data privacy may also be compromised when sharing economy platforms are not secure.

A survey of 113 Chinese travel managers conducted by Carlson Wagonlit Travel in February and March found that data security was ranked a top concern by 76.1 per cent of respondents, followed by the management of big data and the impact of mobile technology on business travel.

Akshay Kapoor, head of CWT Solutions Group, Asia Pacific, told TTGmice in an interview: “The evolution of technology and the rapid adoption of smart technology has impacted the way we store and manage our data.”

Kapoor cited a 2015 study by the Ponemon Institute, which estimated that the average cost incurred for each lost or stolen record containing sensitive and confidential information is US\$154, and the average total cost of a data breach for the 350 companies participating in the study was estimated at US\$3.79 million.

“New, unknown threats are constantly emerging and this is what we see as one of the key drivers for data privacy and security risks being consistently ranked among the top concerns of travel managers and travelers,” he added.

{ Talking numbers }



Wagonlit Travel survey this year who intend to use mobile app to improve traveller efficiency on the go, up from 68 per cent in 2015



The percentage of respondents in the same survey who indicated that managing the hidden cost of travel-related stress will be a top priority for their company this year, up from 59 per cent last year

Japan wants to say konnichiwa to more incentive groups

Japan Convention Bureau is sharpening its pitch to incentive buyers this year, and has several new initiatives to achieve its goal of making Japan the destination of choice for rewarding top achievers.

China, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia and the US have been identified by the bureau as key incentive markets.

According to Tatsunori Naoi, a representative from the Destination Management Section with the Japan Convention Bureau, more is being done to promote unique venues in Japan to international buyers and a new subvention programme will encourage incentive planners to utilise such spaces.

A new incentive award is also being planned by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) to recognise incentive planners who have used Japanese



From left: Japan National Tourism Organization's Shinji Shiota and Tatsunori Naoi

venues in a creative way, encourage local incentive specialists to raise their standards, and introduce the concept of incentive travel to Japanese companies.

“The idea of incentive travel is still not widely accepted in the Japanese society, so we hope to educate local companies on the business benefits of such programmes,” Naoi explained.

More details on the award will be out after July.

The bureau is also determined to drive more business events traffic – not just incentives – deeper into Japan. The updated *Japan Convention Cities Guidebook* (available on www.japanmeetings.org) introduces the meeting facilities of 52 cities and regions across the country has been launched to achieve this.

“We may have identified 12 MICE cities in Japan, determined by their event facilities, accommodation options, unique venues and special culture, but there are far more destinations that can support business events,” he said. – Karen Yue

Terror fears dull European wanderlust

By Mimi Hudoyo, Paige Lee Pei Qi and S Puvaneswary

A spate of terror incidents in Europe has struck fear into the hearts of Europeans, causing many to hold off travel plans and denting business for some European business events specialists attending IT&CM China last month.

Lidia Ivanova, manager of Mega Travel based in Bulgaria, told *TTGmice* that her business had slipped by at least 60 per cent over the past few months.

She said: "The overall sentiment on travel is very negative. Many clients have decided to stop travelling altogether. There is a lot of fear with regards to taking flights now, made worse by the recent hijacking incident (on Egypt Air)."

Ivanova predicts business to fall farther for the rest of this year, saying: "Instead of flying, more clients may

start opting for road trips (to destinations) closer to home."

Although Ivo Van De Velde, travel planner with Advivos Belgium, has not seen weaker demand for incentive travel after the Paris and Brussels attacks, he noted that interest in destinations perceived unsafe has fallen.

He elaborated: "People are not going to Turkey, Morocco and the Middle East as these are perceived to be unsafe at the moment. Meanwhile, demand for destinations perceived to be safe has increased. These are Spain, Portugal, Italy and the UK, as well as Asian destinations, specifically China and those in South-east Asia."

However, even as these travellers have greater faith in destinations like Thailand, China, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan, Jean-Paul Bonomi, general manager of incentive agency Squirrelviaggi.net, said these places are "very expensive" and demand will not shift significantly from Europe to Asia especially when corporate event budgets are smaller now because of the European financial crisis.

"The (high) cost of longhaul airfares (to Asia) negates the savings made on (cheaper) ground arrangements," remarked Ivanova, who agrees that not all cautious European clients will be able to consider safer alternatives in this part of the world.



Van De Velde: Asia is safe for events

Dubai welcomes more association offices, events

Twenty-three international associations have established offices in Dubai since 2013, as a direct result of the support offered by the Dubai Association Centre (DAC), and are raising the number of meetings held in the emirate.

More than offering international associations keen on expanding across the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia a serviced office from which to conduct business, the DAC provides licensing and registration services, association management services through its partner MCI, and event planning services for meetings and conferences held in Dubai.

Layla Derraz, promotion and events representative from the DAC, shared that a further 50 applications are being processed now.



Jakobsen: more capacity coming up

"The DAC has drawn great interest from international associations, and those that have already established an office at the DAC include UITP (an international association for public transport authorities, operators, policy makers and other key stakeholders in the public transport field), GSMA (an international association for mobile operators and those in related industries) and MENAFA (Middle East & North Africa Franchise Association)," said Derraz.

Derraz said an expansion project is underway to add to the DAC's current capacity in the Sheikh Rashid Tower, part of the Dubai World Trade Centre.

Steen Jakobsen, director, Dubai Business Events, said: "There is a huge amount of development around the complex where DAC is, and multiple sites are in the pipeline. A second office will open next to the DubaiWorld Trade Centre and it will support new international associations that are coming into the region."

Jakobsen added that the DAC has contributed to Dubai Business Events' ultimate goal of achieving greater MICE business in the destination.

Although Jakobsen was unable to quantify the percentage increase in the number of association meetings since the establishment of the DAC, he shared that a "roundtable with several associations last week revealed that they are hosting more events – both regional and international congresses" since coming into Dubai. – **Karen Yue**

New faces to promote Tassie

Business Events Tasmania (BET) has overhauled its ambassador programme, adding nine new experts to its arsenal in a bid to secure more national and international conferences for the state.

Speaking to *TTGmice*, CEO of BET, Stuart Nettlefold, said while the original programme launched in 2010 was an exercise in profile raising, the reinvigorated programme was a more formalised and strategic approach to winning new business.

"What we've done in the *Tasmanian Ambassador Program* is really target people (who) have the networks, knowledge and expertise, and use that to bring in conferences in our key sectors such as Antarctic and Southern Ocean, food and agribusiness, information, communication and technology," Nettlefold said.

Among the new ambassadors are Paul Holper, director of Scientell; Neil Bose,

principal, Australian Maritime College; and Sean Tracey, senior research fellow, Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies.

"They are very keen to work with us to use conferences to showcase what they do to the world, to attract global talent back to Tasmania and really drive those beyond tourism benefits," Nettlefold said. "The patron is (Australian) Premier Will Hodgman, which means we've got buy-in at the highest level of government."

Nettlefold also said that while parallels could be drawn with programmes in other states, the key difference was in the ambassadors targeted to join the programme.

In 2015, 41,000 delegates visited Tasmania for business events, bringing the state A\$132 million (US\$99.8 million).

"The Tasmanian brand is hot at the moment and the destination appeal is high. That certainly helps (us get) conference and incentive groups." – **Rebecca Elliott**

Chinese incentive groups desire CSR activities, unique stays

By Prudence Lui

Organisers of incentive programmes for Chinese companies are increasingly looking to incorporate meaningful corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities as well as unique accommodation options with a sense of place through sharing economy services in their programmes.

The observations were shared by Alicia Yao who sits on the SITE Global International board of directors and Joost De Meyer, trustee, Incentive Research Foundation during IT&CM China's Spotlight on Incentive forum discussion in April.

Commenting on the rising desire for CSR elements within incentive programmes, Yao said it is a win-win situation for both the destination and corporate companies.

"Corporate companies use events for

marketing and (for achieving) good public relations within and outside the organisation. For instance, there was a Guinness World Records' entry set by 6,400 participants of the Tien incentive group when they cleaned up a beach in Nice, France within two hours. It generated over 1,100 international media reports.

"There was also a Chinese healthcare firm whose young staff volunteered to cook a Chinese meal for some impoverished children in a local childcare centre in South Africa. The activity turned out to be the best experience the incentive delegates had on the trip," Yao said.

She opined that incentive programmes that are purely for fun are becoming "a thing of the past" as Chinese incentive organisers "get smarter". Besides looking

for ways to offer incentive delegates a better destination experience and to give back to the host destination, companies are also using incentive trips to identify new business avenues.

Citing an example, Yao said the Chinese healthcare firm that went to South Africa also took the chance to explore opportunities to supply their products to local hospitals.

Meanwhile, millennials in the workplace are pushing for shared economy services, specifically in the accommodation space.

De Meyer said: "Millennials are looking for unique experiences, such as stays in boutique accommodation. Hotel (investors) are (responding by) building more (of such properties) to make sure (this segment of travellers) feel at home."

HRS opens first Indian outpost

Corporate hotel booking platform HRS has opened an office in Mumbai, its first in India, with hopes to better support the Indian business community as well as its corporate customers there.

"We believe that having a local office will facilitate more focused work and we are investing in building a strong local team," said Santosh Kumar, director of corporate solutions for HRS in India.

GBTA expects the business travel market in India to grow at a rate of 11.5 per cent annually until 2019, and HRS is keen on better serving this growth segment by opening an office in Mumbai.

As part of its India expansion plans, HRS had also recently signed an exclusive partnership with India's Oberoi Group, a luxury hospitality provider.

HRS has an existing inventory base of over 4,000 international chain brands and independent hotels in India, part of its global stock of 300,000 properties across 190 countries.

New association to enhance Macau's appeal, raise MICE standards



Macau's professionals in the meetings, incentives and special events industry now have an association to call their own.

During its launch in March, Todd Cai, president of the Macau Meetings, Incentives and Special Events Association (MISE), said the association was a year in the making, "after the Macau government announced that MICE is a priority in its tourism strategy".

"It's timely to have an association with an international network to (promote) Macau as a destination (for business events)," Cai added.

He noted that while there were many associations in

Macau, most were focused on exhibitions and none covered the three segments of meetings, incentives and special events.

"What sets (MISE) apart is that we utilise an English platform compared to the majority of associations here which communicate in Mandarin. With more fascinating new venues coming online, it's vital to build awareness as international MICE buyers do not understand Macau's potential and capability well," he said.

MISE secretary, Bruno Simoes, told *TTGmice* that many special events in Macau are organised by the government and 90 per cent of production are

done by local professionals.

Simoes said: "While the tourism sector offers professional education (on areas like) F&B, we don't see much (being offered) on audiovisual production or stage setup. Therefore, we plan to bring international certification courses to Macau."

Other activities that MISE will get busy with include producing reports and sharing international case studies that will help Macau's meetings, incentives and special events players to perform on par with other excellent destinations, conduct destination marketing to attract events to Macau, and hold two to three business/networking events a year.

Simoes said: "Our white paper this year (will) explore transportation, MICE statistics and special venues for events."

MISE will also provide on-the-job training for young members of the Macau MICE industry. – **Prudence Lui**

Associations conduct more member events in age of Internet

By Karen Yue

A fierce fight to deliver new knowledge and trade data to members faster than they can access similar content online has resulted in associations holding more conferences and events to stay connected with their audience.

Nguyen Anh Tuan, business development manager with Kenes MP Asia, an association management company specialising in medical associations, said some of his clients are conducting more annual member events in order to remain relevant.

"Much of this change has been driven by American and European associations but we are seeing Asian-based associations starting to react. Clients are realising that it is no longer enough to hold their global congress once every four years, and are now considering hosting annual gatherings," shared Nguyen, adding that the demand for more frequent meetings is also driven by members' desire to network more often with peers.

While The Australian Veterinary Association has not increased the number of live member events held every year, it has conducted more frequent webinars over the recent years in order to reach out to more members.

"The Internet has made the production of webinars easier and more affordable than before, allowing us to



Catt: strong need for human interaction

take content to people who missed our live conferences," said CEO Graham Catt.

Nguyen shared the same observation, saying the wide Internet reach today benefits association chapters that are too small in terms of manpower and based in destinations lacking sufficient event facilities and hotels, allowing them to have a go at conducting global meetings too. Such meetings are often online masterclasses.

However, Catt was quick to add that webinars will not replace live congresses, as members will continue to expect networking opportunities and desire live interaction with global colleagues.

Meanwhile, advancing communications technology and wider Internet reach have also made it cheaper and easier for associations to create an online system to share pertinent information and knowledge with members, said Nguyen and Catt.

Although members can now easily search and obtain information online and bypass associations as a source of content, Abe Eshkenazi, CEO of APICS, a US-based professional association for supply chain management, said associations can battle that by leveraging on their not-for-profit status to demonstrate integrity and inform members that their data is reliable and impartial.

{ 2016 Calendar }

May 18-20
WTM Connect Asia
Penang, Malaysia

June 14-16
The Meetings Show
London, England

June 15-17
IBTM America 2016
Nashville, the US

June 16-17
ITE Hong Kong
Hong Kong

{ In brief }

2017 WTTC summit picks Bangkok

Bangkok has been chosen as the host destination for the 2017 WTTC Global Summit, slated to take place from April 26-27, 2017.

Explaining the decision, David Scowsill, president and CEO of WTTC, said Thailand's tourism sector grew by 18.4 per cent in 2015, contributing nearly 21 per cent to the country's GDP (US\$81.6 billion) and supported 5.9 million jobs, which is 15.4 per cent of the total employment, despite challenges.

Best Western muscles up in Thailand

Best Western Hotels & Resorts has signed its largest-ever multi-hotel agreement, which will lead to the opening of four hotels under its Best Western Plus brand totalling 4,150 keys.

The agreement with real estate developer AD Houses will result in three of the largest Best Western hotels globally – the 1,400-key Best Western Plus AD The Grand Jomtien Beach Pattaya, the 1,200-key Best Western Plus AD Bang Saray Lake and Resort, and the 1,050-key Best Western Plus AD Hua Hin Lake and Resort.

More codeshares on Emirates, MAS

Emirates and Malaysia Airlines (MAS) have unveiled new routes as part of their code-share agreement, providing passengers with more convenient connections and greater opportunities for miles accrual.

The new routes, jointly marketed under Emirates flight numbers, will cover 15 key Malaysian cities such as Langkawi, Penang, Johor Bahru, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

KLCC now a hospitality, MICE trainer

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) has been sanctioned to provide training to external participants after receiving the Certified Training Provider accreditation from the Malaysian Ministry of Human Resources' Human Resource Development Fund.

Training programmes that will be conducted include the Food Handlers training course endorsed by the Ministry of Health Malaysia, as well as programmes related to conventions and exhibitions.

French NTO makes SEA comeback

Atout France, France's tourism promotion agency, has returned to South-east Asia with a regional head office in Singapore and a bureau in Jakarta to better serve the increasingly important markets in the region.

Since the closure of its South-east Asian offices in 2011, Atout France has seen tourist arrivals from the region climb to over half a million in 2014, making up the third largest group of Asian arrivals after China and Japan.

"We came back to the region because we saw a big increase in arrivals from here and because of its potential," said Atout France's regional director – South-east Asia, Morad Tayebi, adding that visitors from Singapore are the region's top spenders.

To grow overall arrivals to France from 83.8 million in 2014 to the target of 100 million by 2020, 2.5 million euros (US\$2.85 million) has been set aside for the deployment of campaigns worldwide. Matthias Feckl, French minister of state for Foreign Trade, the Promotion of Tourism and French Nationals, said there is a focus on promoting a greater variety of secondary destinations in France. – Yixin Ng

More events expected as Chinese associations gain independence

By Prudence Lui

Chinese trade associations are expected to hold more events in the near future as a result of greater autonomy accorded to them by the government.

The government first started relaxing its control over the formation of trade associations three to four years ago, and took a step further in 2015 by announcing a trial programme to grant autonomy to 148 select associations. Associations that have benefitted from this cover a wide range of industries, from publishing to animal protection.

Zhang Te, deputy secretary-general of the MICE Committee of China Association of Travel Services, said the China Tourism Association, once under China National Tourism Administration, was the first to gain independence. Her association will follow suit later this year.



Yao: overseas trade missions will rise

“We will get more control over matters like approving our own events and the use of our funds,” she said, but was quick to point out that it would be hard to predict the full impact on Chinese associations since “it is still in a trial stage”.

“For now, we can assume that associations have the freedom to organise more events and these activities will attract more members and in turn grow the association and its operations,” said Zhang.

As of late 2014, out of 307,000 associations registered in China, 18,000 are managed or operated by the Chinese government. These associations held most of their meetings on homeground – 70 per cent of them took place in eastern, southern and northern China.

But this is set to change, thanks to the newfound freedom as well as China’s

pro-international trade *Belt and Road* initiative and the government’s public-private sector partnership programme which shares a certain percentage of capital investment for private enterprises.

IME Consulting, general manager, Alicia Yao, believes that the conditions are in place to encourage Chinese associations to meet outside of the country in search of new investment opportunities.

One of the Chinese associations to look beyond national borders for new business opportunities is the World Federation of Chinese Catering Industry (WFCCI), which will organise a forum and cooking competition in Shanghai this June, and again in Barcelona in September.

“These events help draw reputable Chinese chefs and food suppliers together, opening up a new channel for import and export of food items,” said WFCCI, Tourism and Hospitality Committee, chairman, Gao Fu.



A BRAND NEW EXPERIENCE ABOVE THE REST

Work. Relax. Live.



Standing majestically as the tallest hotel in Malacca, adjoining THE SHORE Shopping Gallery and a mere 15-minute walk from Jonker Street, the all-new Swiss-Garden Hotel & Residences Malacca offers you the perfect location for shopping and a rejuvenating stay.

**CALL +606-288 3131 OR
VISIT US AT WWW.SWISSGARDEN.COM**

T2-4, The Shore @ Melaka River, Jalan Persisiran Bunga Raya,
75300 Melaka Tengah, Melaka, Malaysia.



SWISS-GARDEN HOTEL & RESIDENCES
MALACCA • MALAYSIA

Managed by Swiss-Garden International Sdn. Bhd. (217032-M)



Nu Skin convention set to return to Hong Kong with record attendance

HONG KONG The biannual Nu Skin Greater China Regional Convention will return to Hong Kong this June, this time with an even larger attendance of 30,000 delegates, breaking its last record of 20,000 attendees in 2014.

According to Avis Chau, vice president of Nu Skin Greater China Success Inspirations and GM of Nu Skin Hong Kong & Macau, Hong Kong was again chosen as the host destination to allow the company to “commemorate its accomplishment of having opened its first overseas market in Hong Kong with great success”.

With such an enormous group, the venue is naturally the company’s prime concern, said Chau.

She told *TTGmice*: “AsiaWorld-Expo is our venue of choice because of its 10 ground-level, column-free exhibition halls and the purpose-built entertainment Arena. The event will be held

at (all the spaces) simultaneously to accommodate the large number of participants.”

Nu Skin started preparing for the 2016 gathering two years ago, roping in support from more than 500 staff in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It also enjoyed assistance from the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

To be held from June 15-17, the Nu Skin Greater China Regional Convention will feature seminars, workshops, and knowledge exchange sessions, among others. Attendees from China will form the bulk of the delegation, amounting to 80 per cent of total participants, while 10 per cent will be from Taiwan, five per cent from Hong Kong and the rest from beyond Greater China.

Chau said a 800-person crowd control team will be formed to manage event logistics, and some 500 shuttle buses will be deployed. – **Prudence Lui**

Japan scores 2019 IEEE conference with geoscience industry prowess

JAPAN The IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (GRSS) All Japan Chapter has secured the hosting rights to the 2019 IEEE International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium (IGARSS 2019), which will take place in Yokohama.

According to Akira Hirose, general chair of IGARSS 2019 and a professor with the University of Tokyo, Japan was chosen as the host country because of the launch of *Daichi#2*, a highly regarded advanced land observation satellite by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), in May 2014.

Hirose said the launch propelled Japan’s field of remote sensing into the global spotlight, adding that the programme was a result of the

strength of Japanese electronics and aerospace firms.

He added: “Yokohama was chosen because of the presence of many major electronics and aerospace firms such as Mitsubishi Corp, NEC, Toshiba, Mitsubishi Space Software Co, etc and also research institutes like JAXA-ISAS (Institute of Space and Astronautical Science) in the area.

“With the groundwork set for a multitude of research partnerships in place, both Japan and the city of Yokohama have proven on the world stage that they are at the forefront of this science and technology and will continue to be so in the future.”

Hirose believes that Hakone, Mt Fuji and similar nearby natural formations

offer an excellent opportunity for geodetic and volcanic study and would be appealing to geoscience scholars.

IGARSS 2019 will bear the theme, Environment and Disasters, and tackle a range of topics including the use of remote sensing satellites to observe natural phenom-

ena, and the use of collected data to forecast disasters and reduce their impact, among others.

IGARSS was last held in Milan in 2015. Beijing will play host this year, while the next two editions will be in Fort Worth, Texas and Valencia in 2017 and 2018 respectively.



Yokohama city skyline

sean pavone / www.shutterstock.com



澳門 · 盛會之都

MACAO

Mega events city

▶ Macao has come of age as Asia's leading destination for large scale meetings and events, infrastructure, catering for the smallest to the very largest of business events.

▶ With over 180,000 m2 of meeting space, 32,000 hotel rooms all within a compact 30 km2 and convenient access to 2 international airports.

▶ Macao is a most convenient choice for your next meeting or event no matter what the size.

Scary hotel mammoths? Not quite

A robust corporate travel policy and a good spread of hotel partners to keep options flexible will help travel and event managers maintain a balanced relationship with the new mega hotel companies. By **Karen Yue**

As with all changes, the recent mergers of global hotel operators – AccorHotels with FRHI Holdings and Marriott International with Starwood Hotels & Resorts – were met with trepidation among travel and event managers.

Although it is still early days and the full impact of the hotel consolidation on corporate travel and events is still unknown, reduced competition resulting from so many brands now residing under two giants has emerged as a top concern among travel and event managers.

ACTE Global regional director, Asia, Benson Tang, remarked that hotels may now hold back discounts and value-adds such as free use of the executive lounge and airport transfers.

HRS managing director for Asia-Pacific, Todd Arthur, said travel managers and meeting planners need only to look at the airlines industry to see how things might fare for them in the near future.

Arthur said: “Every merger in recent history has resulted in reduced competition. When the 2008 financial crisis hit, airlines in the US pushed for consolidation to stay afloat. There are now four major airlines (in the region) that make up 80 per cent of content and they are able to get real tough on pricing. The same may occur in the hotel space.”

To understand the impact on corporate travel, ACTE will have a session on this topic during the ACTE Global Conference in Beijing this August.

No loss of negotiation power

But not all travel and event managers are panicky over what might come.

Scott Brennan, executive



vice president and head of Global Supplier Management with Carlson Wagonlit Travel, said travel managers and meeting planners can benefit from the broader footprint formed as a result of giant hotel operators coming together.

“(The mergers) should provide (the hotel companies) the ability to work on larger global contracts, which benefits travel management companies and travel managers of multinational companies. If done well, business travellers can expect and receive a more consistent service offering across a wider footprint of properties,” he elaborated.

Brennan does not think buyers will lose negotiation power at the table, as the consolidation is of brands managing the room supply and not of supply.

“Given the dynamics of the hotel industry, with the majority of properties owned by third parties, the brands will need to continue to deliver guests and events, or risk having their properties changed to other brands,” he reasoned.

Marina Krechetnikova, administration director with leading tobacco company JTI Russia, agrees, saying: “I foresee greater ability to negotiate better contracts for my company, as we can consolidate our large booking volumes under fewer hotel companies and demand better rates and perks. We can also earn more points faster under fewer loyalty programmes.”

HRS’ Arthur pointed out that “while (these companies) have a lot of rooms as a result of the mergers, they still represent a fraction of the content in the marketplace. In some Asia-Pacific markets, the big chains only make up single-digit marketshare”. As such, travel and event managers should still retain their bargaining power when dealing with the new hotel giants.

Unlikely impact on quality

Another common worry is the possibility of compromised product and service quality at the hotel level as mega parent companies trade precise ground control for the power

of volume and reach.

Unilever’s regional travel head for Asia-Pacific, Geetha Arekal, disagrees. In fact, she believes that the mergers will lead new parent companies to shake things up across properties of newly acquired brands to ensure all are operating on the same high level.

Focus on needs, compliance

Existing competition in the marketplace is expected to help keep in check mammoth chains’ ability to charge premium prices.

“I expect independent hotels to jump at this opportunity to better engage their corporate clients (to show that they are more flexible and agile in responding to clients’ needs),” opined Arthur.

Brennan advised travel managers and travel management companies “to work with competing brands and properties to maintain negotiating leverage”.

He also urged travel and event managers to “focus on what is uniquely required for their clients and business needs” and allow for flexibility in choices.

He said: “Looking at multiple brands is an option when contracting smaller meetings or travel programmes. Always having at least two or three hotels in the destination will ensure the offer remains competitive.”

Having a robust travel policy helps too, said Arthur.

“To know if mergers are costing companies more money (as a result of higher prices being commanded by hotel groups in power), travel managers must understand their spend through good data. Good data cannot be collected when bookings are fragmented and compliance with policy is absent.”

Rolling on the river

Asian companies with sophisticated taste are starting to discover river cruises in their backyard and in destinations afar, prompting operators to invest in a stronger marketing presence here.

By Karen Yue, Paige Lee Pei Qi, S Puvaneswary, Mimi Hudoyo, Julian Ryall, Prudence Lui and Rosa Ocampo

Major cruise companies have long touted the benefits of chartering a ship for corporate events – a captive audience that must remain onboard, myriad venues and entertainment options all under one roof to support all sort of events, from meetings and workshops to teambuilding activities and networking parties, and at an all-inclusive price.

But for some companies looking to engage a smaller number of delegates, chartering a massive cruise ship is not ideal and a partial hire loses that coveted touch of exclusivity.

This is where river cruises come in. Smaller in size, but still offering the same benefits of keeping all participants in one place where they can meet, bond and play while experiencing new sights along the way, river cruises are slowly but surely gaining the interest of event planners.

For three river cruise operators that spoke to *TTGmice* – Uniworld, Belmond and Pandaw, the more sophisticated business events markets of Europe and the US are taking the lead in corporate charters and the numbers are rising.

Belmond, a tourism company with

river cruises in Myanmar and France, has reported an increase in corporate charters from different industries in various geographical markets.

Pandaw, which operates a fleet of 16 ships that sail along remote but attractive rivers and coastlines, has also seen more corporate bookings.

And Asia is catching up.

Guy Young, president of luxury river cruise specialist Uniworld, has seen significant growth in incentive bookings out of Asia, especially from Singapore.

To court clients in Asia, Uniworld has committed more resources in key markets. It is teaming up with travel agents in the region to hold regular presentations for corporate clients and is conducting training for travel consultants to educate them in the river cruise product.

Robin Yap, president, Asia of The Travel Corporation, which Uniworld is a part of, said: “Incentive events is the fastest growing segment in our push for growth in Asia. Traditional incentive (ideas) are getting very common and companies here

Asia is relatively new to river cruising and it has certainly been identified as a great opportunity for Uniworld. We have already seen fantastic growth over the last couple of years, especially from Singapore where we have secured a number of groups and (corporate) charters along with general growth in the FIT market.

Guy Young
President, Uniworld



River cruises

are increasingly seeing the need to innovate in order to continue inspiring their top performers.”

With an equally keen eye on Asia, Gary Franklin, managing director, trains and cruises of Belmond, told *TTGmice* that a sales team has been established in Bangkok to work closely with DMCs in Myanmar where it sails as well as corporate clients in Hong Kong and Singapore. There is also a tours department in Yangon, which comprises a team of expert guides “who are always looking out for new and different tailor-made experiences (for) our corporate clients”.

A versatile product

For Gracie V Geikie, director/principle consultant of Planet Borneo Group of Companies, river cruises hold “a special appeal and class” and offers an environment that encourages interaction among delegates.

She said river cruises are suitable for strategic planning retreats, board meetings, brainstorm sessions, conferences, workshops and masterclasses that are combined with an incentive element.

Pandaw’s spokesperson, Sven Zika, found that river cruises appealed most to clients that have a strong desire for a holiday experience while conducting business.

Yap believes that river cruises are suitable for various purposes because full charters give clients the flexibility to create anything that suits their needs.

Uniworld offers highly customisable options and unique shore experiences. Coming up soon are two corporate charters – a beer themed cruise on the Danube for a US client this autumn, with special visits to breweries, and a three-ship hire to Cologne for 300 staff and guests of a South American company.

Yap said: “Uniworld is so successful with full charters because we have our own offices in Europe and we handle all aspects of cruise and shore operations ourselves, not through a third party.”

Belmond can also tailor a unique programme onboard and on shore, and leverages on its strong involvement in local community projects to bring a CSR angle to client’s river cruise experience.

Said Franklin: “We can arrange for companies to get involved in local community projects. Both our ships (in Asia – *Belmond Road to Mandalay* and *Belmond Orcaella*) have onboard doctors who are instrumental in planning these community projects, in particular, launching a clinic in 2010 for locals in Bagan to visit and be treated each time the ship is docked nearby.”

Pandaw is able to enhance itineraries by arranging “additional events on the sun deck, lower-deck meeting room, on the sandbanks and in temples”, said Zika.

While most corporate charters with

Pandaw are for its shorter one- to four-night sailings between Mandalay and Bagan on the Ayeyarwady River and between Phnom Penh and Ho Chi Minh City, Uniworld’s elaborate European sailings are being snapped up by corporate clients. Hot routes are seven-night sailings between Amsterdam and Basel, Passau and Budapest, and Avignon and Lyon, among others.

“These cruises offer exciting and active shore excursions (that are balanced with time onboard), and corporate groups have many choices for special entertainment off the ship, such as concerts and visits to wineries and castles,” said Yap.

Day cruises work well for corporate events too. Geikie had a multi-level marketing client that held a product presentation and networking session for 80 people onboard a cruise down the Sarawak River. The four-hour event included dinner, entertainment and sight-seeing tour.

“It broke the monotony of the three-day meeting and was a nice way to end the programme for the group,” she said.

K L Tan, general manager of Borneo Trails Tours & Travel, who has had requests from Asian and European clients for day cruises on the Klias River and Kinabatangan River in Sabah, said the activity allows delegates to see and learn about the native wildlife and local communities that live along river banks, and bring added value to a complete business itinerary.

Ryan Santos, meetings consultant with Rajah Travel Corp. in the Philippines, is presently promoting river cruises that last several hours and are part of a main itinerary. “These include dinner cruises down Bangkok’s Chao Phraya River and down Tokyo’s Sumida River. We recently sent a group of 50 lawyers on a day cruise down Seine in Paris,” he said.

River cruises down Singapore River are hotting up too, said Linda Low, manager, strategic partnership and product marketing with Pacific World Singapore.

“The Singapore River has a significant history and it bears witness to the progress of Singapore from a fishing village to a successful financial district. Our clients like to draw parallels between that story and the progress of their own business,” she said.

A tough sell for some

However, some event planners have found river cruises challenging to sell.

BCD Travel’s head of meetings and incentives, Karen Cheng, said security concerns have put corporate clients off river cruises. “Many companies have a policy that requires staff to travel in different groups,” she explained.

Some clients are also not biting, as they think there isn’t much to do onboard river cruises.

“River cruises are not that popular in the Philippines because clients think (the ships) offer limited activities (and F&B) and sail down only a river in one destination unlike the big ocean liners,” shared Pinky Restrivera, assistant general manager of Adam’s Express Travel Corp, who added that the product is expensive too.

“Filipinos still prefer the experience in big ships over river cruises. But give it time and river cruises will be the choice for clients that have already experienced (an ocean cruise),” opined Jennifer Alivio, general manager of Sun and Moon Travel & Tours.

Rudiana, director of sales and marketing with WITA Tour Indonesia, said river cruises appeal to a “very niche market which isn’t growing” for her company and clients aren’t keen as “Indonesians get bored easily”.

MICE agents also pointed out that the lengthy duration of river cruises poses another obstacle in pushing the product to time-sensitive corporate groups, especially when the operator is unable to customise shorter sailings for private charters.

Andrew Koh, director of event management, Events Architects, who has done numerous events on river cruises, most of which were for 30 to 100 C-level executives, said river cruises today must also vie for corporate attention with “many other options that provide equally fun and engaging ways to explore the city”.



As a form of incentive, river cruises provide delegates with an opportunity to bond and forge fellowship.”

John Chan
Business development director,
Kris International Traveltours



Belmond Road to Mandalay moored at Shwe Keyt Yet, Myanmar

Corporate support:

Belmond is able to tailor the itinerary and experience for every corporate hire, and clients are supported by Belmond's tours department which comprises a team of expert guides based in Yangon. Belmond's close connection with the local people has also enabled the company to help its clients get involved in community projects.

Recent corporate hires:

A client from the healthcare industry chartered both *Belmond Road to Mandalay* and *Belmond Orcaella* to travel together along the Ayeyarwady river, from Bagan to Mandalay on a four-night cruise. In addition to the standard four-night itinerary, Belmond arranged a full-day tour in Bagan, a visit to the village of Mingun in the pagoda-topped hills of Sagaing, and a tour of Mandalay.



Belmond Orcaella

BELMOND



Belmond Management has a global collection of 46 iconic hotels, trains and river cruises in 22 countries.

Its river cruise business covers France and Myanmar.

In France, the *Belmond Afloat in France* barge takes passengers through the country's canals and rivers, exploring areas such as Avignon, Lyon, Béziers and Gissy-sur-Ouche. Journeys last seven days/six nights.

In Asia, Belmond is said to be the pioneer of luxury river cruises to Myanmar, through the launch of *Belmond Road to Mandalay* in 1996. The ship is equipped with a pool on the observation deck, the alfresco Bar & Grill Restaurant, The Bar, a

spa and a boutique, as well as cabins and a suite.

Over the last 20 years, the company has explored the Ayeyarwady River and successfully developed a strong local presence with the local communities along the watercourse.

In 2013, it launched *Belmond Orcaella*, a vessel with a slimmer draft that enables it to reach lesser explored parts of Myanmar. *Belmond Orcaella* runs some longer and more immersive cruises along the Chindwin River to the foothills of the Himalayas. The ship offers cabins and suites for accommodation, a sun-deck area, lounge bar and swimming pool on the observation deck, a restaurant, a spa, a library and a boutique.

The cruise experience may be enhanced with a stay at the Belmond Governor's Residence, a colonial building set in lush tropical gardens.

SARAWAK RIVER CRUISE



SR Equatorial owns and manages the *MV Equatorial* which cruises along the Sarawak River. Built in 1990, the 36m by 6m ship can take up to 140 passengers and its

facilities include an air-conditioned dining lounge in the lower deck.

A daily 90-minute sunset cruise leaves the Kuching Waterfront Pier at 17.30. Light refreshments are served onboard while a staff provides a commentary in English about the river and the historical buildings along the banks. Local dancers entertain guests with traditional performances unique to the state of Sarawak. The ship returns to pier at around 18.30, as the setting sun begins to slip behind Mount Serapi.

Corporate support:

MV Equatorial is available for private charters along the Sarawak River. On request, SR Equatorial provides catering packages featuring local and western cuisine for high tea and dinner.

Recent corporate hires:

The Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia hosted a two-hour meeting and dinner onboard *MV Equatorial* for 70 people, while The Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia chartered the ship for 90 minutes, putting up a dinner cruise for 40 guests.



MV Equatorial

River cruises

ALILA PURNAMA



A product of Alila Hotels and Resorts, the 46m-long *Alila Purnama* is a luxurious handcrafted Phinisi ship with five suites to accommodate up to 10 guests, a library, a lounge, a bar, an indoor dining area and plenty of outdoor spaces to unwind and enjoy the views. It even has its own fully-licensed PADI dive centre onboard. *Alila Purnama* is supported by a 16-man crew and a spa therapist.

Its expeditions are concentrated around two regions within Indonesia – Komodo National Park and Raja Ampat islands – and last seven days/six nights.

Corporate support:

Year-round private charters are available for jaunts lasting at least four days, and the itinerary can be tailored to client's



Exquisite suites offer memorable stays onboard *Alila Purnama*

needs. The ship is equipped with Wi-Fi and the facilities onboard can support business gatherings. The indoor lounge, for instance, can host meetings.

Recent corporate hires:

Alila Purnama hosted a 10-pax executive

meeting over a five-day/four-night sailing in Komodo National Park. For recreation, the group took part in unlimited water activities and dives, shore excursions and enjoyed a group dinner under the stars on one of the many enchanting islands.

PANDAW



A company with roots dating back to 1865, Pandaw specialises in river cruises that explore remote and often difficult-to-navigate rivers and coastlines.

It has a fleet of 16 luxurious ships, all boasting the highest passenger-to-deck space ratio of any cruise ships. Built by traditional craftsmen and finished

in brass and teak, the ships exude a strong colonial character and feature facilities such as a spacious promenade deck where passengers can socialise and enjoy the sights, beautiful staterooms, an air-conditioned dining room that is supported by a local master chef and an experienced culinary team and a library, among others. Beneath its elegant exterior, Pandaw's ships are hardy and capable of travelling to remote areas that are usually unreachable by other vessels.

Corporate support:

Private charters are available and Pandaw

can customise an itinerary for the client, working in group activities onboard and on shore. Pandaw's largest ship can take 60 guests for overnight cruises. Charter prices are subject to route, season and size of the ship.

Recent corporate hires:

Pandaw had corporate groups chartering its ships for two-night sailings from Mandalay to Bagan, with programmes including lectures in the meeting room, presentations on the sundeck, cocktails on the sand bank and private dinners on temple grounds.

From left: Friendly service onboard all Pandaw ships; River Kwai in Thailand



YAKATABUNE FUNASEI



Operated through The J Team DMC, Yakatabune Funasei has a fleet of seven traditional *yakatabune* boats which are low, flat-roofed vessels. They ply the Sumida River and the waterways around Tokyo Bay.

The largest vessel in the fleet can seat 120 people on tatami-mat floors for meals and entertainment, while the smallest is suitable for 20 guests.

Corporate support:

The J Team DMC believes that exclusivity is key and is able to work with the client to produce a customised entertainment and dining menu. It can also help to secure boats in the busiest times of the year, such as during the cherry blossom



See Tokyo's modern architecture on yakatabune boats

season in spring and the fireworks festival in summer. A typical private hire will last around three hours and see the boat passing beneath low bridges that span the Sumida River before reaching the Asakusa district of Tokyo, famous for the Senso-ji Temple and the eye-catching headquarters of Asahi Beer.

Finally, the boat will anchor off Daiba, the waterfront district of Tokyo Bay, for guests to enjoy a meal and entertainment which can include performances by gei-

shas or illusionists, enka singing, and the ever-popular karaoke.

Recent corporate hires:

An evening event for 70 sales employees of a global pharmaceutical company onboard the *Kagoya Hime*, the largest vessel in Yakatabune Funasei's fleet. Entertainment included table-side performances by a Japanese illusionist and karaoke.

UNIWORLD



Operating for over four decades, Uniworld offers a wide selection of river cruises that covers some of the most spectacular destinations in

Europe, the Middle East and Asia onboard beautiful ships that have been hailed by fans as being attractions in their own right.

Uniworld's scheduled sailings can run from seven nights to 26 days in Europe and 11 to 18 days in Asia, while its Egypt course lasts 12 days.

Its extensive fleet of ships include *SS Catherine*, the company's first Super Ship which features 64 lavish staterooms, nine suites, sun deck, spa, well-equipped fitness centre, restaurant, lounge with full-service bar and other facilities; and the *SS Maria Theresa*, a regal vessel with an opulent 18th-century décor, 63 staterooms, 11 suites, restaurant, lounge, well-equipped wellness facilities and more. These two ships are said to be especially popular with corporate charters, as their facilities provide varied options for private gatherings.

Corporate support:

Uniworld ships can all be privately hired and itineraries can be customised. Besides offering an exquisite environment for business events, Uniworld boasts the highest staff-to-guest ratio, an immaculate service reputation and award-winning din-

ing experiences. Corporate event planners will also appreciate Uniworld's all-inclusive arrangement, which means drinks, including premium brands of spirits, beers and wines, as well as gratuities to ship's staff, local guides and drivers are included in the fee throughout the trip.

Uniworld is also able to arrange special land programmes and themed events onboard for clients.

Recent corporate hires:

The most recent corporate hire was by a financial company based in South America. It chartered three ships to accommodate more than 300 employees and guests who will arrive in Cologne on the same day for an important event. To make all passengers feel at home, Uniworld arranged for Spanish-speaking cruise managers and local guides onboard the three ships, and provided communication materials, daily programme sheets and menus in Spanish.

From top: The Douro Valley in Portugal; the sleek *SS Catherine*



IPIM Set to Elevate Macao's Mega Events City

Macao's diversification into non-gaming industries in recent years has borne fruit well, particularly in the meetings, conventions and exhibitions sector. This sector is experiencing unprecedented growth as a result of its expanding range of product offerings and capacity for hosting large-scale events.



IPIM STEERING THE SHIP

The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) now helms the sector, striving to enhance its professionalism and expertise, develop Macao's MICE brand, and carry out a strong worldwide promotional plan for pushing Macao as the ideal destination.

The MICE agency also takes charge of a series of MICE support programmes, including the *MICE Tradeshows Reward Programme* previously run by MGTO – the Macao Government Tourist Office; the *Convention and Exhibition Stimulation Programme* and the *International Meeting and Trade Fair Support Programme* previously run by Macao Economic Services (see Intervention through Subvention below).

IPIM will also be taking over MGTO's role in organising Macao's presence at

international MICE tradeshows, allowing MGTO to focus on the incentive travel segment.

ROOM APLENTY FOR MEGA EVENTS

According to the latest International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Market Report 2014, Macao was positioned 20th in 2014, up 16 places from 36th in 2011. Additionally, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) released a report in 2015 indicating that Macao was the top performing trade market in 2014, with trade fair exhibition space growing by 38%. Macao's trade fair market was also Asia's top performer over the past five years, growing 108% as net space rose from approximately 94,000m² to more than 197,000m².

The above affirmations, however, are not the only reason that Macao is enjoying a growing reputation as Asia's Mega Events City. The city's ever-increasing

number of hotel inventory and MICE hardware also plays a significant role. As at Q1 2016, Macao saw 18 hotel projects under construction and 25 hotel projects pending government approval, which could add about 25,600 new hotel rooms to the city in the near future.

A new hotel that opened in 2015 is Studio City, which offers 1,600 rooms and suites, more than 4,000m² of indoor event space and a 5,000-seat multi-purpose entertainment centre for live concerts, theatrical and sporting events. Another four openings last year include St. Regis Macao (400 rooms), JW Marriott Hotel Macau (over 1,000 rooms), The Ritz-Carlton, Macau (over 250 rooms) and Broadway Hotel (320 rooms).

Hotels that are set to open soon include Wynn Palace, The 13, Parisian Macao, City of Dreams Hotel Tower, and MGM Cotai. Together, they will contribute a wide selection of MICE venues, adding to the rich resources already available to event planners.



澳門貿易投資促進局

INSTITUTO DE PROMOÇÃO DO COMÉRCIO E DO INVESTIMENTO DE MACAU
MACAO TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION INSTITUTE

INTERVENTION THROUGH SUBVENTION

As new owner of the MICE support programmes, IPIM has revised and updated the terms and conditions of the *Convention and Exhibition Stimulation Programme* and the *International Meeting and Trade Fair Support Programme* to be more accommodating of the industry's needs. Changes include optimising the flow of subsidies granted to eligible buyers, relaxation of restrictions on service providers, and adjustments to

some criteria and subsidy terms and conditions.

Both programmes cover a wide range of eligible expenses for events:

- Accommodation
- Food & beverage/meeting package
- Keynote speaker/head of delegation
- Promotion & marketing
- Interpretation & translation
- Opening ceremony
- Venue rental for exhibition
- Hardware support for exhibition
- Qualified buyer for exhibition

The Convention and Exhibition Stimulation Programme requires a minimum of 100 pax for a meeting or conference to be

held in Macao for three consecutive full days, or two consecutive full days plus a half-day activity. A minimum of 1,000m² of actual paid rental is required for exhibitions, also to span at least three consecutive days.

Designed for larger-scale events, the *International Meeting and Trade Fair Support Programme* is slightly different in requirements: minimum 200 meeting attendees; the events must have rotated in at least three countries with attendees hailing from at least five countries and no less than 10 attendees from each country; and minimum 3,000m² of actual paid rental for exhibitions.



Grand Opening Event of Studio City, with the presence of four Hollywood A-listers in 2015



Venetian Macau Open Gala Dinner at Venetian Ballroom in 2014



The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, Ballage National de Macau Annual Induction Gala Dinner at Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel in 2014



More than 1,000 delegates attend the IBM Analytics Sales Academy event at Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel in 2015

INA BID FOR MORE EVENTS

IPIM has also strengthened its support to local entities bidding for international events to Macao, such as lending them membership fee support for joining their affiliated regional or international association. This, together with the subvention programmes, has helped Macao welcome countless events of all sizes. The table below shows the events that the city hosted recently and will be hosting up to 2017 (as at press time).

2015

(NO.OF PAX)

- The Global Tourism Economy Forum (3,000)
- Joymain Annual Conference (9,000)

2017

(NO.OF PAX)

- China Expo Forum for International Cooperation (600)
- 39th Asia Pacific Dental Congress (3,000)

2016

(NO.OF PAX)

- | | | | |
|------------|---|------------|--|
| FEB | Mary Kay China - Lucky 13 (1,000) | SEP | NU Skin Star Academy Meeting (7,000) |
| APR | Herbalife China Extraordinary Meeting (7,000) | OCT | 28 th East Asian Insurance Congress (2,500) |
| JUN | Jeunesse Global Greater China Meeting (10,000) | DEC | SIGGRAPH Asia (7,000) |
| JUL | Asia Pacific Conference on Giftedness 2016 (600) | DEC | Jeunesse Global Greater China Conference (10,000) |
| AUG | 11 th Worldwide Chinese Life Insurance Congress 2016 & International Dragon Awards (6,000) | | |



Destination: South Korea

National and city-level authorities are all pitching in to ensure the Rotary International Convention is a success; Bongeumsa temple in Gangnam, Seoul pictured

Building a legacy

South Korea is determined to be a superb host for this month's Rotary congress, an event that will not only benefit the country's tourism sector, but also key industries. **Rebecca Elliott** reports

Later this month more than 55,000 delegates from over 200 nations will descend upon Seoul for the 107th Rotary International Convention.

Held over five days on an annual basis, the convention brings to-

gether Rotary members from across the globe to exchange knowledge through an integrated programme of speaker presentations, breakout sessions and an extensive social programme.

Scheduled for May 28 to June 1,

the event will be held in the country's largest convention centre, KINTEX, and will be the second edition hosted in the South Korean capital. Seoul played host for the first time in 1989, and that event drew 38,878 delegates.

came from Gyeonggi Province and Goyang City where the main venue, KINTEX, is located.

Securing the event in 2008 was just the beginning of years of preparation for the convention. Moreover, with the significant level of support provided by the various parties comes an equally significant level of pressure to ensure the event is a roaring success.

"Each city government and convention bureau has now assembled a task force to prepare for this event professionally," said Ma.

The KTO's task force is led by the executive director of the Korea MICE Bureau, Keehun Kim, and is comprised of five teams to fulfil the various requirements including public relations, accommodation and tourist information.

The KTO also conducted an extensive delegate boosting programme in 2015 and is expecting at least half of the delegation to come from abroad.

"We've supported several Rotary International congresses all over the world including those held in Tokyo, Sao Paulo, Hawaii, Manila, Jaipur, Taiwan, Melbourne and London," said Ma.

Hosting the 107th Rotary International Convention will do far more than benefit Seoul's tourism and business events sector. According to the convention's official website, the gathering will "fully reflect (South) Korea's recent success and growth as a G20 nation within the international communities as a highly developed IT industrial nation with cultural and historical abundance".

A focus on industries such as technology, medicine and pharmaceutical has been a key strategy for the country in securing international association conferences. In 2014, the Union of International Associations ranked South Korea fourth in the world for hosting 636 global association events.

"Many are interested in industrial tourism so we try and make the pre- and post-programme (activities) related to their industry. It's quite attractive for a lot of conferences," opined Ma.

"We are trying to win larger conferences so we can attract (the attention of) delegates from the US and Europe."

And there's little doubt that all eyes in the global MICE industry will be on South Korea come end May.

{ Talking numbers }



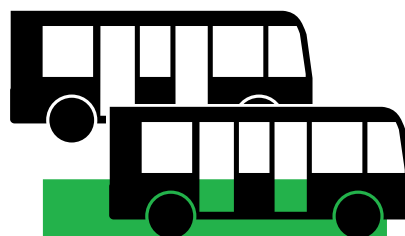
3,600

The number of attendees at the 21st Cardiovascular Summit, one of the major event wins by South Korea this year



183

The number of cities worldwide that are served by flights to South Korea



630

The minimum number of buses that will be required to transport Rotary International delegates from their hotels to KINTEX

According to research conducted by the Korea Institute of Conventions & Exhibition Management in 2012, the 2016 edition is expected to generate in excess of US\$300 million for the South Korean economy.

When asked how South Korea managed to score the massive event, Haesook Ma, assistant manager of the convention team at the Korean Tourism Organization (KTO), told *TTGmice* that it was a combination of active and "enthusiastic" Rotarians in the country and the support provided by the MICE bureau and city governments.

Ma revealed that the KTO provided monetary and marketing support during the bidding process, while further financial assistance also

{ Insider }

Daehong Kim, president of Holiday Planners, recommends three experiences around the city

Appreciate Seoul's beauty after sunset

Walk 10 minutes from the Seoul Central Post Office to the Cable Car station for a ride to the top of Namsan Mountain. From the station, another three-minute walk will bring you to N Seoul Tower where you will find a fantastic night view of Seoul at the cafeteria or restaurant.

Go hiking

A 15-minute taxi ride from Seoul's City Hall will take you to one of the several entrances of the mountain trail of the Bukhansan National Park. If you hike up to the peak, a breathtaking view of the city awaits.

Get a taste of local experiences

Experience Korean culture at the Korean Folk Village in Yongin, 50km south of Seoul. A traditional wedding ceremony show is put up every day. Have lunch at its open-air market place – try *jeon* (Korean pancake) and *makgeolli* (Korean rice wine). A free shuttle bus runs between the village and Suwon Station.



CJ Nattana / www.shutterstock.com



{ Spotlight }

Modern meeting venue where ancient chiefs once gathered

Gyeongju, approximately 50km north of Busan, used to be where Silla Kingdom's leaders used to meet 1,500 years ago.

Today, it is home to South Korea's newest convention centre, the Gyeongju Hwabaek International Convention Center, or HICO as it is most commonly referred to.

In close proximity to many UNESCO World Heritage sites such as the Bulguksa Temple and Yangdong Village,

HICO debuted with the hosting of the 7th World Water Forum in April 2015. The event drew approximately 40,000 participants from 170 countries.

Occupying close to 43,000m² of land, HICO houses a convention hall for 3,500 delegates, an exhibition hall and 12 meeting rooms over five storeys.

Kyla Yeonwoo Joo of HICO said the centre had contributed significantly to the growth of the city's MICE industry in the past year, hosting over 180 meetings and conventions.

"Gyeongju Convention & Visitors Bureau and HICO (are working together) to attract many more visitors to hold their meetings and events in Gyeongju," she added.

Joo said attracting conferences from the water and nuclear power fields will be a focus of the bureau's strategy moving forward. Destination marketing will also leverage on Gyeongju's rich heritage and its host city status for the World Congress of Organization of World Heritage Cities in 2017.





Destination: Switzerland

Airy alpine ambitions

The mountainous landlocked nation is trying to wiggle its way up the MICE destination list for Asians, confident it has what it takes. By **Rosa Ocampo**

The destination is replete with stunning landscapes that appeal; Chillon Castle on the banks of Lake Geneva pictured

Destination: Switzerland

Exotic is how Urs Eberhard, Switzerland Tourism's head of markets, described Switzerland's appeal to Asians.

"It's a year-round destination for Asians," said Ian Evasco, retail team leader – travel products, Adventure International Tour.

What makes Switzerland exotic are its stunning landscapes, unspoiled environment, and gastronomic delights. Not to forget, the Alps. Experiencing the Alps is one of the main attractions for both those who have seen and haven't seen snow.

And the Swiss know how to make the most of such attractions.

For instance, when Zermatt hosted the Switzerland Travel Mart in September last year, instead of the usual indoor venue, organisers chose to highlight the Matterhorn by taking delegates to a unique outdoor venue replete with charming chalets. Where else but in Switzerland can you find a 360-degree view of the Alps and its snow-capped peaks linked by suspension bridges?

Eberhard also noted that Switzerland is easy to travel to, thanks to its efficient transport. The country is safe and secure, the air and water clean. Switzerland is also where the world's best hoteliers are trained, and its hotels and resorts are noted for their high quality facilities and service.

In a nutshell, Switzerland offers a premium experience in terms of na-



"We believe that people are looking for unique experiences and (Switzerland) can cater for those needs."

Urs Eberhard

Executive vice president-markets & meetings, Switzerland Tourism

ture, accommodation and hospitality.

"We believe that people are looking for unique experiences and we can cater for those needs," said Eberhard.

As a result, Switzerland is constantly enhancing the destination and developing new products and services.

Moreover, the country pulls no punches in marketing itself as a coveted premium destination for MICE, especially for incentive trips.

There's prestige attached to Switzerland, said Ivan Breiter, Switzerland Tourism's director, South-east Asia. This partly explains why in Asia, South-east Asia is the biggest producer of incentive trips to the country.

"Employers and employees perceive Switzerland as very valuable," Breiter explained.

Breiter also said MICE groups

from Asia are getting larger and they are staying longer in Switzerland, which is currently being promoted mostly as a mono-destination. In 2015, Switzerland welcomed 2,200 pax from Amway Bangkok and more than 900 pax from AIA in Singapore.

The NTO has also doubled its MICE budget in Asia to complement the creation of the Switzerland Convention and Incentive Bureau (SCIB) two years ago.

SCIB in-charge Dominique Oi, who is based in Singapore, said Switzerland is "full of tradition and must-see destinations that can be revisited in innovative ways to create unique incentive programmes and allow participants to have an unforgettable experience".

"There is always something new going on and worth a visit, like the newly-opened FIFA World Football Museum in Zurich and Chaplin's World museum near Montreux, which opened on April 14," said Oi.

Meanwhile, the Asia Trophy, Switzerland's most important programme for MICE buyers from Asia, is going strong in its destination promotion efforts. It has raised awareness among Asian buyers of not just popular destinations like Davos, St Moritz, Gstaad, Jungfrau, Zurich, Geneva and Lucerne, but also of lesser-known ones like Ticino, St Gallen and Montreux.

Yen Thing, tours consultant of Kuala Lumpur-based Boustead Travel Services, opined that the demand for Switzerland is ever-green precisely because there are still many places yet to be explored by Asians.

At a time when clients are becoming more travel savvy and discerning, Switzerland has boundless potential for MICE, opined Feliz Gracielle Axalan, marketing executive of Manila-based Tradewings Tours and Travel.

Switzerland's Alps are a main draw for visitors



{ Insider }

Sara Rosso, president, Planhotel Hospitality Group suggests a few must-dos in the southernmost canton of Switzerland

Cruise down Lake Lugano

Enjoy the tranquility and sunshine while cruising on Lake Lugano. Be sure to visit quaint romantic villages along the lakeshore, and take walks along some of its scenic paths. For an amazing view over Ticino, take a funicular ride up Monte San Salvatore or Monte Brè.

Taste Ticino's wine

Ticino is known internationally for its excellent merlot wines. Visit a variety of famous cellars and enjoy guided wine tastings at its source location. To enjoy the wine better, pair it with a delicious meal in a typical Swiss grotto (rustic Ticino-style inn or restaurant).

Stroll around the town of Lugano

The town of Lugano is a must visit, thanks to its diverse architecture, delicious food, ancient churches and stunning alpine panoramas. Also check out the Lugano Art and Culture Centre, a new centre dedicated to the visual, music and performing arts.

Lake Lugano



{ Spotlight }

A sunny slice of Mediterranean in Switzerland

Ticino ramps up its marketing efforts in Asia, confident that its varied MICE offerings will attract the small yet very promising oriental source markets.

While domestic MICE groups account for 90 per cent of the total meetings in Ticino, "we are also paying close attention to the foreign markets – including Asia – that are showing an increased interest in Switzerland," said Elia Frapolli, director of Ticino Turismo.

"We believe in Asia's growth potential", said Frapolli.

Leisure arrivals and overnights from Asia to Ticino have been increasing. In 2015, arrivals rose 17.8 per cent while overnights increased by 13.8 per cent from a year ago. At the end of 2015, overnights generated by Asian markets

were 50,037, representing 2.3 per cent of total overnights in Ticino.

Recently, Ticino Turismo collaborated with the Switzerland Convention and Incentive Bureau (SCIB) to host foreign meeting planners and journalists. The 60 meeting planners from all over Asia also competed in a race across Switzerland for an Asian Meeting Trophy.

"Through games and challenges, not only did they have fun, they also learnt more about Switzerland and the diverse meeting destinations available. We guided them for two days through the different venues and allowed them to experience Ticino," said Frapolli.

"It was a good opportunity to meet the meeting planners in person and understand their needs and requirements in order to adapt our offerings to the

market," he added.

Home to Lugano, the third largest financial centre in the country, Ticino offers modern business and MICE facilities juxtaposed with breathtaking landscapes and scenery.

Ticino's Italian heritage is fodder for unique gastronomy-based incentive ideas. Some examples include touring the raw ham maturation cellar of Alp Piora, baking various types of panettone, and visiting vineyards for wine tastings.

Other unique MICE venues include the Swiss Bunkers, Splash e Spa Tamaro waterpark and centuries-old castles. Technical visits to TV - Studios RSI, Swiss Air-Rescue Rega, METEOSwiss Weather Forecast Centre, and Institute for Research in Biomedicine can also be arranged.

Ticino is confident that it can lure more Asian MICE groups; Ticino Verzasca Valley pictured





The increase in flights to Malaysian destinations like Langkawi (above) will help raise the country's profile as a MICE hub

All signs point to go

Improved accessibility and a weaker ringgit are making Malaysia more attractive for Chinese buyers. **S Puvaneswary** reports

China was the darling for Malaysia's incentive travel stakeholders in 2015, contributing 22 groups with a total of 17,409 delegates to the country's tourism arrivals.

The strong performance has only served to whet the appetite of the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) and inbound travel agents. Several initiatives were recently launched to promote the country as well as make its secondary cities more accessible to Chinese groups. Among the efforts is MyCEB's move to establish an account on WeChat, a popular social media app among Chinese users.

Zulkifli Sharif, MyCEB CEO, said: "This initiative allows MyCEB to reach out and engage with industry partners who are frequent users of WeChat. To date, we have more than 600 followers with 95 per cent stemming from travel/MICE agents."

MyCEB also had success with

roadshows aimed at driving more business events from China to Malaysia, scoring seven wins and nine potential leads from trade activities in Guangzhou, Chengdu, Shanghai and Beijing.

Supplementing the bureau's destination promotions is a stronger effort to improve air connectivity to take more Chinese deeper into Malaysia.

China Southern Airlines introduced thrice-weekly flights from Guangzhou to Kota Kinabalu on December 1, 2015. This was followed soon after by AirAsia which commenced a new daily service between Kota Kinabalu and Wuhan on January 22 and between Guangzhou and Langkawi two days later.

On the back of these new air links, business events stakeholders in Langkawi and Kota Kinabalu have stepped up destination promotions in secondary Chinese cities.

Director of Langkawi International Convention Centre, Ramizan Ka-

man Shah, said a joint fam trip was organised late last year with MyCEB to invite media agencies from all over China to Langkawi.

Ramizan said: "Langkawi is a new destination for China. Its UNESCO Geopark status, golf courses, good beaches, as well as water and jungle activities make it an ideal destination for meetings and incentives."

He pointed out that efforts are made to target Chinese MICE buyers from all over China, not just from Guangzhou, "as there are also good linkages from Kuala Lumpur to Langkawi" which enable Chinese MICE travellers to visit the island via Malaysia's main gateway.

As well, Sabah Tourism Board and Malaysian Association of Tour & Travel Agents Sabah Chapter have co-organised a sales mission to Wuhan in March to engage outbound Chinese agents. According to Ebony Leong, marketing manager at Sabah Tourism Board, the bureau is ready to provide non-financial support, such as welcome cultural performances, to Chinese planners.

While some of the new services are operated by low-cost carriers, John Chan, business development director at Kris International Traveltours, opined that improved accessibility is more important than the extent of services provided by the airline.

The new air links support Chan's plans to tap secondary Chinese cities, such as Wuhan, Chongqing and Xi'an, for incentive business. He said companies in these cities are increasingly rewarding top sales staff with travel opportunities.

Meanwhile, China is expected to keep contributing strong numbers towards Malaysia's MICE arrival targets this year. It welcomed a 12,000-pax Perfect China incentive group in March, brought in by Sunflower Holidays. The group, said to be Sunflower's largest incentive movement this year, visited Kuala Lumpur, Malacca and Penang in batches between March 2 and 10.

Mint Leong, Sunflower's managing director, expects 2016 "to be a better year than 2015".

This sentiment is shared by Winnie Ng, deputy general manager, Pearl Holiday Travel & Tour. She said: "There is more interest in the destination and the devaluation of the ringgit certainly helps. We have a confirmed booking of 3,300 people from a multilevel marketing company from China and another group of 700 people."

{ Insider }

Iskandar Zulkarnain, director of sales at The Andaman, recommends three activities that can be done on Langkawi island

Cruise down a mangrove river

Kilim Nature Park features a mix of well-protected green mangrove forests, isolated beaches and blue lagoons. A guided boat tour along the winding river will show delegates the flora and fauna that depend on the mangrove, as well as unique rock formations that are millions of years old. Visitors may also spot wildlife such as macaques and eagles.

Take a cable car to the mountaintop

The Langkawi SkyCab goes to the peak of Mount Mat Cincang, which offers fantastic panoramic views of the Andaman Sea and its surrounds. There are also walking trails and viewing platforms at the middle and top stations. With a length of 919.5m, Langkawi SkyCab is recognised as the longest free span single rope cable car in the Malaysia Book of Records.

Tee off on the greens

Langkawi has excellent, professionally-designed golf courses. Els Club Teluk Datai was designed by Ernie Els and it offers a memorable golfing experience amid a centuries-old lush rainforest with the Mat Cincang mountain range as a backdrop. The 18-hole Mount Raya Golf Resort was designed by Max Wexler and its location at the foothills of Mount Raya offers scenic views.



Langkawi
SkyCab

{ Talking numbers }

153

The number of business events MyCEB and its partners secured in 2015. These are expected to bring 97,078 delegates to Malaysia



18.8 billion

The amount in ringgit (US\$4.8 billion) that was generated for Malaysia's economy in 2015 from an estimated 1.37 million international business arrivals



The Andaman's
Coral Nursery
provides
environmental
education and
teambuilding
opportunities for
corporate groups

{ Spotlight }

Corralling underwater support

The Andaman in Langkawi uses its unique location in Datai Bay to offer meeting planners and incentive houses a unique teambuilding programme.

At the heart of the programme is the luxurious resort's Coral Nursery, a purpose-built facility near the beach. There, guests can learn more about the reef from Gerry Goeden, the head of marine environment at The Andaman.

Delegates can also snorkel, look at corals and learn how they sit within the underwater ecosystem. Teambuilding exercises include coral transplanting and building artificial reefs, invaluable activities that help encourage the reproduction of marine life and, in turn, create a more sustainable local fishing industry.

The programme to rebuild the reef was conceived in light of the 2004 tsunami, when the 8,000-year-old Andaman reef was adversely affected due to the destruction of thousands of coral colonies.

The Andaman's general manager, Christian Metzner, said: "Multinational companies with headquarters in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore are increasingly looking for CSR (corporate social responsibility) programmes involving meaningful projects which can be incorporated into meetings and incentives. During the bidding process, this programme gives us an edge as it is unique to Langkawi and, I believe, is the only one of its kind."

The Andaman also has a Marine Life Laboratory, a multipurpose indoor space at the lobby. The lab's main function is to serve as a research area for marine science and biology students in order to increase their understanding of coral reef ecosystems and how to manage artificial reefs effectively.

Checking in

Five-star, 365 guestrooms
168 Jalan Imbi
Kuala Lumpur, 55100 Malaysia
Tel: (60) 3 2142 8000
www.ritzcarlton.com

The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur



FACT FILE

Maximum pax for meetings

350 pax, classroom-style in Banquet Hall

Recent events handled

1. International Indian Film Awards, June 3 to 6, 2015, 370 people
2. 4floor Plan for Moët Hennessy, January 13-14, 2016, 220 people
3. Samsung Asian Continental Meeting, January 21 to February 6, 2016, 360 people
4. Valiram Group regional meeting, January 24 to February 2, 2016, 200 people

VERDICT



An unforgettable experience. It has lost none of its warmth and personal charm in its latest incarnation.

S Puvaneswary

The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is impressive. It has been around for a while now and had just completed its renovations, but the property feels and smells brand new.

Its location is perfect for both leisure and business travellers, being a short walk from shopping and entertainment central, Bukit Bintang Road, and connected via a link bridge to the adjoining luxury shopping mall, Starhill Gallery. Above the mall sits the JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur, which is also owned by YTL Hotels & Properties. Both hotels are supported by a centralised sales and marketing team which makes it convenient for meeting planners and incentive houses with large groups on hand. Between the two properties, there is a total of 925 rooms and 49 meeting spaces.

Meeting facilities The conference centre holds all the meeting facilities. Planners have the option of having a separate group check-in area in the lobby. Across the two floors, there are a total of 13 meeting rooms and a Banquet Hall which can accommodate 350 people classroom-style. The ballroom, with its large chandeliers, bright yellow walls and clever use of mirrors, makes an impressive venue.

Rooms There are 220 rooms, of which 144 are suites with one- to three-bedroom options, and all come with full butler service which is perfect for time-strapped business travellers.

Malcolm Sing, my butler, made sure I was able to attend my meetings looking dapper in well-ironed outfits, set up my mobile Wi-Fi and arranged for a two-hour itinerary that involved shopping and dining around the city.

My one-bedroom suite is a haven of comfort. I enjoyed the 60-inch HD TV which came with all the prime global news channels such as CNN and Bloomberg as well as National Geographic and Disney to satisfy a varied entertainment interest. I also enjoyed the amount of space I was given. The living room is large, accommodating a dining area, a study table and a cosy corner with chairs and a sofa bed where I could receive guests should I have any.

It is worth noting that guests across all room categories are able to purchase supplement access to the club lounge which is open all day.

F&B While my room was a delight, I discovered an even greater joy outside – the hotel offers five F&B outlets, including the Lobby Lounge which is loved by many for its afternoon tea. After having a go at the three-layer trays decked with sandwiches, cakes and pastries, all paired with freshly brewed tea, I've become a fan too. It was an enjoyable experience, heightened by musicians who played in the background.

I am also now a huge fan of Li Yen, the hotel's Chinese restaurant. It is just one of two hotel restaurants in Kuala Lumpur that serve pork dishes.

And if one's still hungry after sampling all five outlets, there are more options to be found in Starhill Gallery.

Other facilities The hotel offers complimentary Wi-Fi throughout – well done!

For relaxation, there's an in-house Spa Village which can position therapists at the conference rooms to put tense delegates at ease, upon request. Spouse and post-conference programmes such as cooking classes can also be arranged at Starhill Gallery's Culinary Studio.

{ Hot moves }



Juni Rahardja

Brandon Chan
Chan will lead The Appointment Group's newly formed Singapore office. He has vast experience in the hospitality, travel and events industry, and was previously director of sales and marketing with Design Hotels, Asia-Pacific.

Heidi Kleine-Moeller
Kleine-Moeller, formerly the hotel manager at Millennium Hilton Bangkok, has been promoted to general manager.

Juni Rahardja
Rahardja is now regional director of sales, Singa-



Louise Lithgow

pore with Marco Polo Hotels. She has over 30 years of experience in Singapore's hospitality industry and has worked with several reputable international hotels.

Kitty Liu
Marco Polo Hotels has appointed Liu as regional director of sales, Shanghai for the hotel group. She joins from Park Hotel Group where she was assistant director of sales – regional sales office.

Louise Lithgow
Lithgow is now group



Oliver May

sales director of Diethelm Travel Group. She will manage the entire sales team and activities across the 12 countries Diethelm operates in. She has 14 years of experience in the trade and has worked with various hospitality groups, such as Millennium Hotels and Resorts.

Mark Stanford
Stanford is now general manager of Nanuku Auberge Resort Fiji. He was most recently the pre-opening general



Premala Danapakiam

manager at the Royal Purnama in Bali.

Premala Danapakiam
The role of ICCA Malaysia deputy chair is now undertaken by Danapakiam, director of sales and marketing with the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching.

Rick Gonzalez
Six Senses Qing Cheng Mountain, China has appointed Gonzalez as its executive chef. He joins from Six Senses Zil Pasyon in the Seychelles, which will



Rick Gonzalez

open in summer 2016. Gonzalez has sharpened his knives at Maurice Restaurant with three-Michelin-star chef Marc Haeberlin, The Peninsula Hotel New York, and Four Seasons Resort in Palm Beach.

Oliver May
HRS Group has picked May for the global lead MICE/strategy position. Previously, he held the role of executive vice president at Meetago. In his new role, May is responsible for raising the company's MICE business to a global scale.

{ Career inspiration }

Raymond Tan

Director of events, Grand Hyatt Singapore

How did you find your way into the events industry?

It was an easy progression and natural course for me. I wanted to be part of this industry at an early stage.

In school, I studied tourism and since then, I have always been in the events, attractions, tourism and hospitality sector. All I can say is that the passion runs through me.

What do you love most about your job?

Meeting and working with people (both internal and external clients), and being an integral part of an event. The MICE scene is ever evolving and there is never a dull moment.

What is your one most memorable job-related incident?

That would always be the conclusion of a successful event, particularly so if it is a major event that I have seen from planning to fruition.

For example, I did a large-scale week-long IT conference/exhibition in my previous role. It took place across almost 30 event spaces with more than 1,000 room nights across multiple hotels. It involved massive planning and required me to team up with three other colleagues. There were challenges in the set-up and ever-changing requests involving various parties. There were sleepless nights.

Imagine the sense of achievement we had on the last day.

What advice would you give to someone looking to join the event sector?

One needs to be open-minded and adaptable to the ever-changing environment. You must have the passion, enjoy being in the service line, and muster the gumption for when things turn out the opposite way. It is a very dynamic environment with long hours at certain points in time.



Creating the perfect blend

Even when faced with space and time constraints, an ambitious idea can be realised when organisers have a crystal-clear overview of the event. By **Prudence Lui**



Event brief

Last August, WRG Creative Communication (Asia) Ltd was invited to manage the House of Chivas – The Icon Launch.

WRG handled the entire project from start to finish, which encompassed the initial conceptualisation, design, build, production and event management. The end product was a four-day experience which culminated in a night of fun and celebration at the Chivas party. It was the first-ever Chivas house in Hong Kong that reached multiple audience groups.

Challenges

It was an ambitious event, as there were 15 initiatives conducted over the span of four days, with four events taking place each day. Events included a trade lunch, media-blending session, corporate lunch, VIP dinner and numerous parties.

WRG staff had to use their time efficiently, as well as work with the space and design of the venue. As each event focused on a different line of products within the brand, multiple changeovers were required over the four days.

The venue was about 370m² with a standing capacity of 200. It was limited in the sense

Event

House of Chivas – The Icon Launch

Organiser

WRG Creative Communication (Asia)

Venue

Foxglove

Date

November 30 - December 3, 2015

Number of participants

More than 700 guests

that the layout was fixed. Space constraint was a challenge that WRG faced both during the design of the area and the actual event itself.

Solutions

To ensure smooth delivery and first class service in this new venue, the WRG team worked very closely with venue staff.

From designing the menu to physically serving guests, WRG made sure everyone brought their A-game and was well informed of the event happenings.

Working with such a small space, WRG devised solutions where private rooms could also be utilised. The hallways were also sculpted to be part of the experience, helping guests transition from one space to another smoothly.

To bring out the heritage of Chivas, the space was decorated with fresh misting moss and riverbed pebble ornaments, the sight and smell helping guests think of the brand's Scottish origins.

Key takeaways

An ambitious goal can be achieved when extreme attention to detail is given. WRG was dedicated from the start, during the actual event, and to the dismantling. This contributed to the smooth running of an event that resonated well with its audience.

In reality, there will always be possibilities of the unexpected happening, regardless of whether they are good or bad. That is why pre-event planning, experience, and the ability to think on one's feet is crucial to a successful event.

“We have already received much positive feedback on the House of Chivas. What started as a brief for a single event morphed into a four-day production with 15 events. WRG’s enthusiasm, professionalism and constant attention to every development allowed us to create a memorable moment for those who visited, and bring Chivas to life in a new way in Hong Kong.”

Luxury director – marketing, Pernod Ricard Asia

Cruising into a gala event

It is RCI's first dinner on land and it has to be delivered in a strange kitchen, but the culinary team of the cruise company pulls it off with finesse. By **Prudence Lui**



Event brief

The Hong Kong Trade Development Council approached Royal Caribbean International (RCI) with a request for a royal cruise themed gala dinner during its Hong Kong International Jewellery Show on March 3 this year. The event was for 250 guests and aimed to provide industry professionals a networking opportunity.

Challenges

The gala event proved to be a series of firsts for RCI's culinary team. It was the first time that the team had to plan and execute a dining event on terra firma. Instead of a familiar kitchen, chef Michael Gilligan and his team had to adapt to an onsite facility with slightly different equipment, while partnering with Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre's in-house catering and culinary teams to create jewel themed dishes.

It was also the first RCI dining event that did not run over a long time, lasting only from 19.00 to 20.30, unlike the usual lengthy fine-dining affairs on board the company's cruise ships. Although Gilligan had proposed an eight-course menu for the gathering, the idea was found unfeasible due to timeline and budget.

Solutions

After reviewing the wine-pairing menu, the dinner was reduced to four courses. Still, that arrangement required precise use of time.

Simon Blacoe, RCI director of F&B operations for Asia-Pacific, explained that there were in fact seven courses that must be served in 50 minutes, as

Event
Hong Kong International Jewellery Show Gala Dinner

Organiser
Hong Kong Trade Development Council

Venue
Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

Date
March 3, 2016

Number of participants
250 guests

the first three courses comprised two dishes each.

"That's not something we would experience on a ship or in the US," said Blacoe.

Two rounds of tastings were held before the menu was agreed upon. To deliver this, Gilligan flew to Hong Kong in December 2015 to meet with the event organiser and the culinary and catering team serving onboard *Quantum of the Seas*. The meeting ensured all parties involved to be on the same page with regards to issues such as cooking arrangements and presentation. The local team also shared observations on how Hong Kong dinner events were often brisk and diners tended to eat less. As a result, smaller portions were planned.

The second round of tasting was held three weeks before the big day.

These dress rehearsals enabled Gilligan to adjust procedures along the way. For instance, after realising that the salad dressing must be prepared in a specific way to maintain consistency, he went back and forth several times with the culinary team to establish the right recipe.

Key takeaways

The F&B collaboration allowed RCI to show off its culinary prowess and learn how to execute such co-branded exercises. RCI believes that similar partnerships with local companies or restaurants are likely in the near future, since the company is focusing on F&B this year to attract the Hong Kong cruise market. Moreover, RCI benefitted from being able to showcase to potential clients the wide range of quality food available on Royal Caribbean cruises.



Michael Matthews

Rebecca Elliott speaks with the new CEO of the Canberra Convention Bureau, Michael Matthews, who has returned to Australia after 15 years in Canada to take on the role

From Canada to Canberra – why the move back?

Canada is an amazing destination with a really strong tourism brand. I loved living there and certain aspects of it, but the idea of coming home has always been strong. I thought after 15 years there I could bring some of the ideas from North America that I've learnt back to Australia.

What's your vision for the MICE market in Canberra?

The national associations market is a competitive space that we want to continue to maintain our presence in.

But the recognition now is that we have very strong leisure products when considering food and wine and also since we've got nature on our doorstep. A lot of those elements are very complementary to the incentive and associations market. So as we look to Asia, we can package these products and sell to markets in the nation and overseas.

And now, with direct international flights into Canberra, we have more credibility to go into international markets.

The next step is building product awareness. As the nation's capital, we can leverage that and communicate how we add to the travel experience with our cultural institutions and by being a serious player in this part of the world.

We want to change the conversation and highlight our CBR brand, which is about being Confident, Bold and Ready, a vibrant idea of what it means to visit Canberra. It's not about what Canberra once was. As soon as we can get people here, it changes their perception and they become an advocate for our destination.

What can you draw from your experience in Canada to assist you in your new role?

Canada, particularly where I came from, is very seasonal. Although this isn't much of an issue in Canberra, we have some significant periods where



"There's more to our brand than leisure. We need to focus on the business events side and our knowledge community – what we're good at."

we need to fill some gaps. That's what they do really well in America – they've got year-round business despite much greater seasonality extremes.

The other thing we worked on there was product development. Here, we are looking to fine-tune some of our products and repackage them to grow our destination offerings.

How do you think the Australian MICE market is faring compared to the rest of the world?

Australia has such a strong leisure brand and that's very much an aspirational product. But there's more to our brand than leisure. We need to focus on the business events side and our knowl-

edge community – what we're good at.

What we have going in Canberra is our smart community. Our *Think Canberra* strategy ties together cultural and learning institutions, and Australia can likewise focus on centres of excellence. These would add much more value to the conference experience, a reason to host in Australia.

What are some of the opportunities and challenges moving forward?

When you look at the nation's capital just getting international flights, that's a fantastic opportunity and something that we need to continue to grow.

Visas are a challenge for sure and the rest of the destinations are super competitive. They've acknowledged growth opportunities and are working to promote their brands. As for us, we are an aspirational brand, so we really need to tell the story about business events adding new dollars to the economy and through that, gain support to grow our business events infrastructure.

How's the global economy affecting MICE in Australia and Canberra in particular?

Many are rubbing their hands excited about the Australian dollar being strong compared to their dollar and they see that as an opportunity.

It's a shortsighted view as these movements are cyclical. There are immediate opportunities but it's not something we can rely on. I think we need to focus on value for money here irrespective of where the dollar is.

What can industry players do to remain buoyant?

I think we need to continue to reinvest in product and people, as well as focus on the level of professionalism that our service providers are able to deliver, while keeping our authenticity for genuine Australian hospitality.

We are already on the radar as an aspirational destination but we really have to have a destination-first approach. You look at competitive destinations and they tend to be single-city destinations or smaller countries. Our strength is the diversity we have to offer, but we need to make sure we are out in the market and focus on collaborating. Where it (the conference) goes in Australia is less important.



Enhance the corporate travel experience

Against a backdrop of new technologies, expectations of today's hyper-connected traveller are changing and the future of corporate travel is evolving. **Keng Chong Teo** explains how travel managers can stay ahead

Today we're entering a period of vast technological transformation; the scale, scope, and complexity of which has the capacity to disrupt almost every industry and fundamentally alter the way we live, work – and travel. Below are my top tips for leveraging this transformation to enhance the future corporate travel experience.

1. Make it personal

Greater personalisation is certainly something we'll start to see more of at all points in the travel ecosystem. From shopping, including new ancillary options, and booking to mid- and post-trip, services will be tailored to a traveller's unique preferences. The key to better personalisation is having deeper knowledge of the individual traveller. What do they like to read, eat, watch

and shop on the way and once they arrive, and what else might they want to do or see beyond the meeting room?

2. Put data first

Better understanding of what the traveller really wants will come from the more effective use of data. Today we all live and breathe data, which can be disruptive, drive innovation and – if we unlock its value to gain actionable insights – it can shape and enhance the whole travel experience.

Through more sophisticated data and analytics tools, travel companies can personalise each individual journey – driving up customer satisfaction, and profits.

3. Go further with mobile

Mobile underscores most of what we

do today, and through it we're already making travel planning and booking more efficient. Old news. However, for corporate travel, one of the real opportunities in mobile is using advancements in technology to improve and simplify the whole travel experience, making it completely seamless. Keeping employees more connected and informed throughout their journey is the next stage, with real-time travel programme management on-the-go.

Sophisticated itinerary management apps can do everything from issuing confirmation emails and branded travel documents to allowing travellers to change their trip itineraries on the go, track delays, file expenses or even link to the local Uber service on arrival – creating a stress-free yet on-policy experience, door to door.



Keng Chong Teo is Sabre Travel Network Asia Pacific's director of traveller experience, responsible for bringing new technologies to Sabre's customers in Asia-

Pacific. A leading technology provider to the global travel and tourism industry, Sabre processes more than US\$120 billion of estimated travel spend annually through the Sabre Travel Network – which connects travel suppliers and buyers in more than 160 countries.



Full steam ahead after a good night's celebration

TTG Asia Media's Darren Ng and key partners at **IT&CM China | CTW China 2016** raise their glasses to a successful show on the opening night. In the daytime, buyers and sellers mingle about the exhibition floor, forging new partnerships and courting new business



TTGmice
Asia Pacific's leading meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions magazine

What's next?

In the June issue of *TTGmice*, we check out what hotels in Asia are doing to help meeting clients achieve their sustainability goals. Also, join us in Australia, Taiwan, Thailand and Macau and gain an insight into how these destinations are faring in the MICE space

Sabre's fancy sports day

Technology provider **Sabre** hosts Asia-Pacific's travel managers and industry partners to a VIP party, cheering on rugby players at the Hong Kong Sevens



A salute to new collaborations

MISE, a newly-formed association for professionals in Macau's meetings, incentives and special events industry, was inaugurated at St Regis Macao, Cotai Central on March 8



TTG TRAVEL AWARDS 2016



Cast Your Vote Now!

You Decide Who Receives The Industry's Highest Honour!

TTG Travel Awards, Asia-Pacific travel trade's most celebrated event, is back for its 27th year to honor the industry's crème de la crème. Tell us which company has made exemplary achievements and contributions that have raised the bar of excellence and taken the industry to greater heights.

Vote now and help your favorite travel suppliers and agencies bring home the title of being the best in the travel industry.

www.ttgasia.com/ttg-awards

Voting Closes 15 July 2016

An event by:

TTG

Publishing
Travel Trade

TTG Travel Trade Publishing is a business group of TTG Asia Media

Organised by:

TTG

Supported by:

TTG 旅业报

TTG

TTGmice

TTG^{BT}mice

Business Travel & MICE

TTGassociations

TTG ASIA
[LUXURY]

The highest of product service and luxury awards

Indulge in cultural luxury IN GEORGETOWN EXPLORE LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Centuries-old Craftsmanship
Experience a UNESCO World Heritage Site | Gastronomic Adventures
Designed exclusively to enrich your high achievers.

Uncover other **exciting**
experiences:

**SAIL BEYOND
THE HORIZON**
LANGKAWI
PARTY LIKE NEVER BEFORE

**EXPLORE THE
URBAN JUNGLE**
in Kuala Lumpur
SHOP LIKE NEVER BEFORE

**ROAR IN THE
Mighty
Jungle**
IN KUCHING
UNWIND LIKE NEVER BEFORE

**FEEL THE PULSE
OF NATURE**
IN Kota Kinabalu
Escape Like Never Before

Grab awesome deals & get extra rewards with **Malaysia Twin Deal X**

 MyCEB

 @MyCEB

 MyCEB

 MyCEB

For enquiries, please contact:

**Malaysia Convention
& Exhibition Bureau** (868264-K)

Suite 22.3, Level 22, Menara IMC
8 Jalan Sultan Ismail
50250 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

T +603 2034 2090
F +603 2034 2091
mycebci@myceb.com.my
www.myceb.com.my