

November 2018

TTGmice

Asia-Pacific's intelligent business events resource

A new look at Taiwan

Yogyakarta puts forth tantalising experiences

How did Singapore FinTech Festival juggle 30,000 attendees?



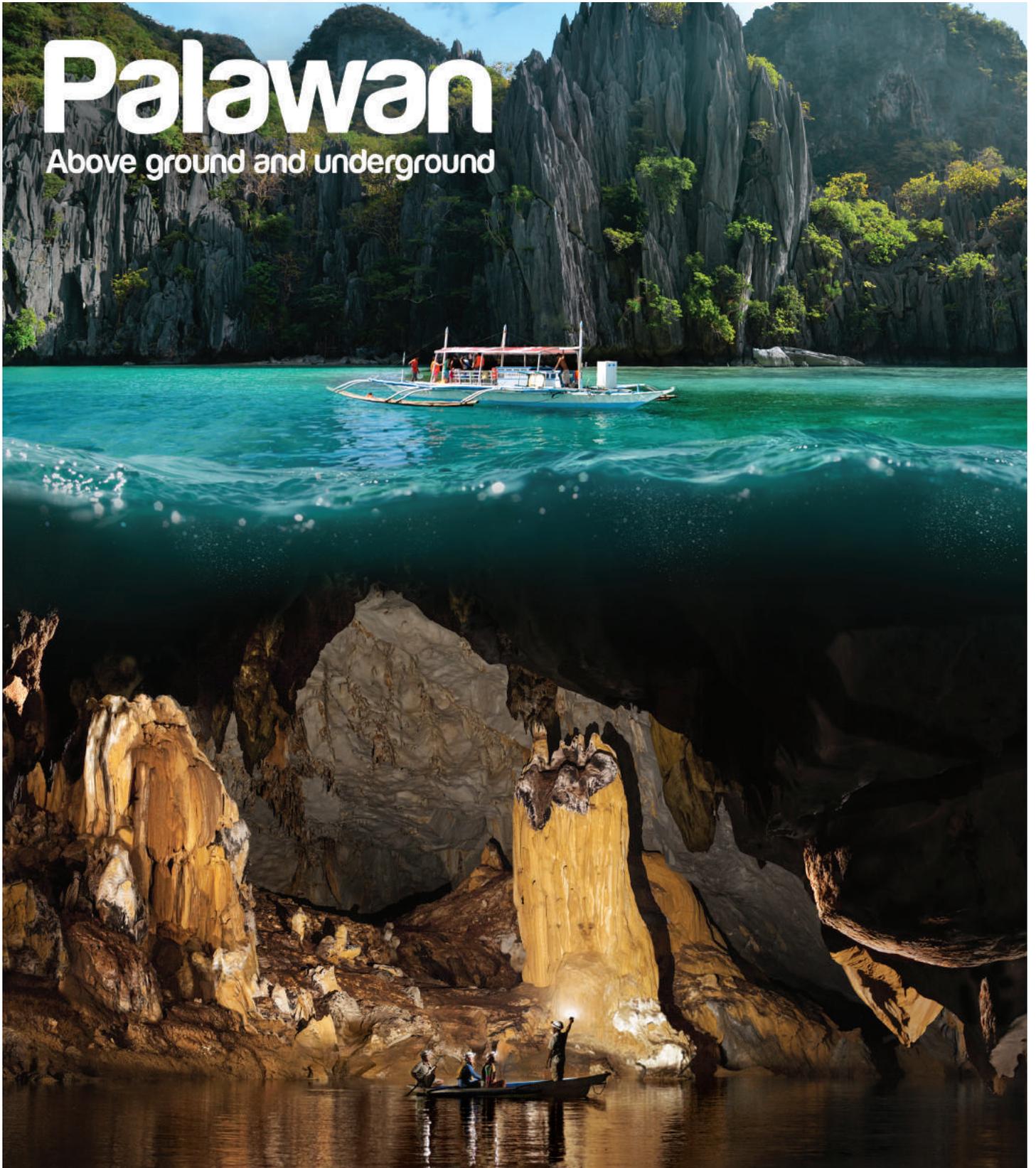
Hot
Tables

Unique dining venues make mealtimes part of a memorable event and destination experience. We sniff out some of Asia's hottest, most interesting tables that are great for corporate events

TTGmice
TRAVEL JOURNALISM
BUSINESS ARTICLE
2014, 2013, 2011 & 2009
PATA Gold Awards

Palawan

Above ground and underground



The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the world's New 7 Wonders of Nature. It is teeming with life – over 150 animal species and over 800 plant species, including 300 types of trees.



Getting There:
Accessible via air from Manila, Cebu, Iloilo and Davao



More Things to Do:

- Go island hopping in Honda Bay.
- Try spelunking at Ugong Rock.
- Take a mangrove paddle boat tour in Sabang.
- Be enchanted by fireflies on the Iwahig River Cruise.
- Visit one of the country's last tribes at the Batak Cultural Village.

IT'S MORE FUN IN THE
PHILIPPINES
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INSPIRING INCENTIVES

Blue is the color of the Philippines' skies, hanging over rivers and landscapes. The Philippines is renowned for its nautical wonders, treasured by locals and visitors alike. With a myriad of UNESCO Heritage Sites, it's no wonder it garnered a reputation for beachside barbecues, storybook sunsets, and unbeatable experiences for event groups worldwide.

With a year-round tropical climate attracting visitors during any season, a vibrant culture infused with both native and global influences, and several UNESCO World Heritage sites, the Philippines offers memorable experiences for incentive travel.

The Philippines is diverse in the truest sense of the word. Be awed by diving into the waters teeming with wildlife in Palawan. Travel back in time when exploring the historic churches of Cebu and Bohol. Sit back, relax and enjoy the tropical sun on the powdery sand of Boracay. Experience the rush and enjoy the urban luxuries such as championship-calibre golf courses, lavish spas, sophisticated shopping malls, and spirited nightlife Manila has to offer.

With all kinds of attractions and activities located within or near five-star MICE facilities, the options are endless for incentives and team-building alike.

The country pairs its sights, sounds and vibes with the characteristic warmth and hospitality of its people. With an edge in skilled workforce behind its flourishing tourism, driven Filipino professionals find it second nature to blend the work and the fun to produce the so-called Filipino touch.

Find out how the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines can provide services to complement your next MICE event. Visit www.tpb.gov.ph.

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Let's feed 'em well

Asians are obsessed with food. Well, most of us. While we are savouring this meal, our little grey matter is already plotting that next meal and where we would go to get it.

Our love for good food is showing in the elevated dining standards in the region and the growing presence of restaurants led by international and local celebrity chefs. In April 2016, *TTGmice* looked at how even convention centres are under pressure to perfect their F&B operations to satisfy demanding dining requirements dictated by a growing number of event attendees who know exactly what they want in their belly.

Two years on and the trend is still holding strong.

All this is a boon for business event planners who are increasingly having to come up with attractive content throughout the programme, even for mealtimes. And for time-starved meeting groups that have little free time, off-site mealtimes might just be the only window foreign attendees have to seeing and experiencing the destination they are meeting in.

The plethora of quality dining venues in Asia makes planning a little easier.

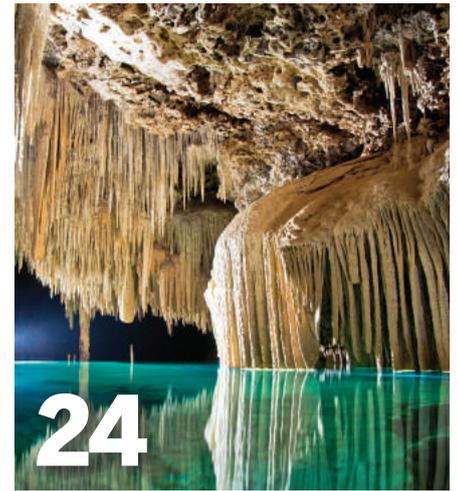
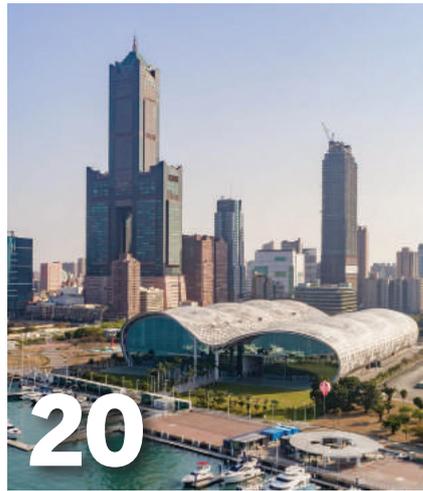
And since a memorable dining experience is no longer just limited to the quality and taste of food, planners can take their pick of restaurants in heritage or chic settings or those that allow guests to enjoy some of the most highly prized sights of the city.

Our reporters across Asia had fun sniffing out delicious and attractive dining venues in their market, and we found many – from stationary venues to mobile ones, and from laid-back locales to dramatic dining halls. We are happy to share them in our cover feature, *Hot tables* (pages 14-18).

I'm sure there are still plenty others that have escaped our pages, and our personal search for Asia's best and most attractive dining venues for tête-à-tête and private events will continue even after this issue is published.

And if you have your own favourite hot tables, don't keep them to yourself!

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COVER STORY

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Unique dining venues make mealtimes part of a memorable event and destination experience. *TTGmice* reporters sniff out some of Asia's hottest, most interesting tables that are great for corporate groups

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Yogyakarta's rich heritage, diverse ancient sites and unique venues are injecting more flavour into corporate programmes. By Mimi Hudoyo

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More incentives from Asia may soon be making their way westwards, as soon as connectivity improves and prices for trips become more competitive. By Rachel AJ Lee

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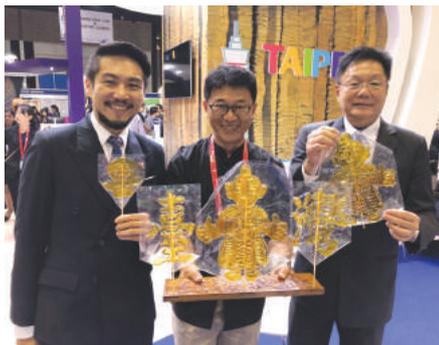
@ttgmice



Corporate and industry CXOs deliberate on the challenges and opportunities for Indian MNCs in creating global travel programmes at the GBTA Conference 2018 in New Delhi. September 24



And that's a wrap for IT&CMA, CTW Asia-Pacific and TTTG Travel Awards 2018! September 21



TTG's Pierre Quek and Darren Ng posing with their candies handmade by Taiwan's sugar artist who was flown in specially for IT&CM Asia. September 19



TTG's Darren Ng and the team pick up the trophy for TTTGmice, whose article on event technology won the PATA Gold Award 2018, Travel Journalism - Industry Business Article. September 14

INTELLIGENCE

Business travellers in Singapore have rated Tokyo and Bangkok as their top business and leisure travel destinations, in a study conducted by YouGov for luggage brand Samsonite

Bangkok



PERSPECTIVES

Marina Bay Sands' Wee Min Ong challenges the traditional concept of convention centres and underlines the need for these spaces to be more than just a venue



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What's happening



November 11-14
ICCA Congress,
Dubai, UAE



November 20
PAICE,
Auckland, New Zealand



November 27-29
IBTM World,
Barcelona, Spain



We love

A slice of Japan in the Lion City

Pan Pacific Singapore has introduced its newest event space, a newly-constructed Garden Pavilion sequestered in its fourth floor open-air space.

The Garden Pavilion sits serenely in the heart of a beautifully-sculpted Japanese garden, and is connected via a short walkway from Keyaki restaurant. The rectangular structure is clad in traditional Shoji-inspired screens, and opens up to a shimmering koi pond.

The Garden Pavilion itself can seat up to 40 people for a sit-down lunch or dinner. In standing cocktail-style, the rectangular space would be able to hold around 80 pax. Keyaki itself can seat up to 140 pax, and it has two private dining rooms. Only Japanese fare from Keyaki will be served at events utilising the pavilion, and

menus can be tailored and customised to any palate.

Kaiseki menus for private luncheons or dinners start at S\$220 (US\$162) per person, while cocktail receptions start at S\$80 per person with canapés. The minimum spend for the use of the pavilion is S\$6,000** for dinner and S\$5,000** for lunch.

A full-day meeting experience starts at S\$135 per person inclusive of a bento lunch and two coffee breaks, while a half-day meeting experience starts at S\$90 and includes a bento lunch and one coffee break.

The Garden Pavilion would certainly be a perfect place to unwind, partake in a delicious meal, and imbibe a glass of wine, after a long day of negotiations and discussions. Opening hours for lunch are 11.30 to 14.30, while dinners are from 18.30 to 22.30.

Kempinski arrives in Singapore

First five-star hotel opens in Komodo



Located in the downtown Civic and Cultural District stands the The Capitol Kempinski Hotel Singapore, part of Capitol Singapore which comprises a 39-unit residential tower, a retail mall, and the Capitol Theatre.

The hotel offers 157 guestrooms and suites, spanning almost 50 unique configurations across eight room categories. Guests can expect regular mod-cons such as a Sonos audio system, complimentary Wi-Fi, complimentary non-alcoholic beverages, and a generous desk. For suite guests, a stay includes complimentary daily breakfast.

The only five-star hotel in Komodo, Indonesia – on Labuan Bajo's Waecicu Beach – has opened with 192 guestrooms and 13 suites, each offering ocean views.

Facilities on the 1.4-hectare Ayana Komodo Resort, Waecicu Beach includes six F&B venues, a spa with five treatment rooms, gym, two swimming pools, a children's pool, and a kids' club. There is also a grand ballroom that can hold up to 220 pax reception-style, as well as several meeting rooms.

In addition to the new resort, the resort will also launch a 54m-long and 11m-wide, nine-bedroom phinisi ship named *Ayana Lako di'a*. The ship will take guests around the island for short explorations of approximately two to three nights.



Oakwood expands in Asia-Pacific

Oakwood has recently opened two serviced apartments in Surabaya, Indonesia and Yizheng, China.

Oakwood Hotel & Residence Surabaya offers 144 keys, a mixture of hotel rooms and fully-furnished serviced apartments. All rooms offer a Bluetooth home theatre system, a smart TV with cable, while the apartments come with a fully-equipped kitchen. Guests enjoy concierge services as well as facilities such as a semi-indoor swimming pool, fitness centre and two F&B outlets.

Oakwood Apartments Yangzhou also offers 144 keys in the 17-storey building. Categories range from studios to three-bedroom apartments, all of which boast fully-equipped kitchens. Guests enjoy a host of facilities such as a fitness centre, resident's lounge, an F&B outlet, meeting rooms, and bilingual concierge support.



A Somerset serviced residence has joined the Thai capital's skyline



CapitaLand's wholly-owned serviced residence business unit, The Ascott Limited has opened the Somerset Maison Asoke Bangkok in the Thai capital.

The property features 125 keys comprising studio and one-bedroom serviced apartments. On-site facilities include a fully-equipped gym, a heated swimming pool, sky garden, and a restaurant.

The property is located in Asoke, the heart of Sukhumvit's central business district with the Asoke BTS skytrain and Sukhumvit MRT stations just steps away, and shopping malls like Terminal 21 nearby.

In the pipeline



Holiday Inn & Suites Saigon Hi-Tech Park

Slated to open in 2021, the new-build will offer 300 guestrooms, including 50 long-term stay suites, as part of a mixed-use development. There will be three dining outlets, while facilities include outdoor pool, gym, spa and e-gaming facility. For functions, event planners can choose from five meeting rooms, including a banquet-style room that can accommodate up to 600 guests.



Centara Hotels & Resorts

Thai hospitality group Centara has inked an MoU with Asia Investment, Development & Construction Sole to manage three hotels in Laos with a combined total of 214 keys. The Vientiane property will be a Cosi, while Luang Prabang will get two – a Centara Grand, and a Centra by Centara. All properties are slated to open in 2020.



Radisson Hotel Group

Radisson Hotel Group has expanded its China portfolio with three new signings. The 48-storey Radisson Blu Haikou is scheduled to open in 2Q2020 with 301 keys, and facilities such as three restaurants, a lounge, pool, gym, and meeting spaces. Radisson Blu Wuhan ETD Zone will open in 1Q2020, and the eight-storey lakeside hotel will have 355 rooms, an indoor swimming pool, spa, nine meeting rooms and a 1,600m² grand ballroom. Radisson Wuhan Optics Valley is scheduled for a June 2024 opening, and will have 220 rooms, an all-day restaurant, business centre, function rooms and a ballroom.

Hot deals

Dorsett Kuala Lumpur

Dorsett Kuala Lumpur has recently renovated its function facilities, and is offering a new Meet, Eat & Sleep @ Dorsett package.

The package is available from now until March 31, 2019, and is priced at RM140 nett (US\$34) per person per day. If inclusive of accommodation, prices start from RM295 nett per room per night.

The package includes complimentary Wi-Fi, meeting equipment such as one LCD projector, screen and flipchart/whiteboard, and lapel/wireless microphone.

Bookings of 15 to 30 guestrooms will earn the group two free perks, while bookings of 31 rooms and more will get three.

Terms and conditions apply.

Email events.kualalumpur@dorsetthotels.com

Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong

New at this luxury hotel is the Peak Suite Meeting Package, which is perfect for planners seeking a non-traditional meeting venue.

The package grants usage of the Peak



Dorsett Kuala Lumpur's Camelia Room

Suite as a meeting venue, access to the exclusive Executive Club Lounge where a continental breakfast and a healthy Well Feeling lunch is served to delegates, and an East-meets-West coffee break.

The package is priced at HK\$3,000 (US\$383) plus 10 per cent service charge per person for 20 to 24 guests.

Terms and conditions apply.

Email cateringhk@fourseasons.com

New plan for Thai cities with MICE potential

By Karen Yue

Come 2019, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) will launch a new masterplan for several MICE cities in the country to focus more on their designation management, marketing and development.

The city profiles of Chiang Rai, Udon Thani, Phitsanulok, Songkhla, Surat Thani, Phetchaburi-Hua Hin-Cha-am and Nakhon Ratchasima have already been studied, according to Supawan Teerarat, senior vice president, strategic business development & innovation with TCEB.

The bureau will be “setting up a meeting and public hearing with private and public stakeholders in each of these cities” to assist them in the upgrading to become MICE-ready, Supawan revealed.

The strategy to increase the number of MICE-designated cities will be based on their level of readiness. There will be three classifications: International MICE

City, Regional MICE City and Domestic MICE City.

Said Supawan: “Our goal is to groom them all to become International MICE Cities.”

When asked for an update on the five designated MICE cities, Supawan shared: “We are proud to say that after more than five years of engaging with these cities, they now understand how the MICE sector generates revenue to the destination, and some cities – Chiang Mai and Phuket – have included MICE activities in their strategic plan.

“For instance, Chiang Mai has allocated a budget to run MICE activities every year, and we are hoping other cities follow suit as this will confirm their long-term commitment to the MICE industry and TCEB.”

Last year, Chiang Mai welcomed 50,881 business events visitors, which generated a revenue of 4.7 billion baht (US\$144



Chiang Mai, one of Thailand's successful MICE cities

million). Meanwhile, the domestic market brought in 2.1 million visitors and generated 4.9 billion baht in revenue.

As Thailand is gifted with diverse destinations offering myriad attractions and strengths, TCEB hopes to designate more cities for business events. Aside from the aforementioned cities, others being assessed include Rayong and Prachuab Khiri Khan.

“Three more cities will be looked at next year – Ubon Ratchani, Nakorn Srithammarat and Kanchanaburi,” added Supawan. – *additional reporting by Rachel AJ Lee*

Lifting the lid on meetings at sea

To attract more business events from the corporate sector, cruise industry leaders are speaking out to dispel common myths and misperceptions about bringing conferences and meetings onboard cruise ships.

One common misconception is that business events have to book out a whole cruise ship in order to enjoy its facilities, shared Princess Cruises' South-east Asia director Farriek Tawfik.

In reality, corporate groups as small as a meeting of 10 pax can enjoy the privacy of venues not used in the day, such as lounges and discotheques, Farriek revealed. He added that usage of these

venues is free of charge, and corporates need only pay for add-ons like canapés and drinks.

Michael Goh, senior vice president – international sales, Genting Cruise Lines, chimed in: “There are different formats for different event groups, such as full charter, partial charter and a group block arrangement. Groups can run from 50 to 4,000 pax and have different programmes. No two MICE cruises are the same.”

Although cruises have become known for fun incentives and teambuilding programmes thanks to onboard entertainment, serious conferences and training sessions can also be conducted on a ship with the right facilities, alongside light-hearted elements in shore excursions.

“The best is for travel agents to match their passenger demographics and needs to the correct ship,” said Farriek.

Arrangements for events on board are typically taken care of by one planner from the cruise company, advised Goh.

“These misperceptions persist because of a lack of brand and product awareness. There is a lot of training and product education needed, and more MICE-optimised facilities, entertainment, meeting rooms and shore excursions,” expressed Farriek.

– Pamela Chow

India's business travel market to still grow

India's US\$40 billion business travel market is expected to remain unfazed even though there has been a steep depreciation of the Indian rupee.

“I think that the rupee depreciation offers an opportunity to Indian companies, as services and products from India will become cheaper and this can be an accelerator for businesses,” said Gaurav Sundaram, regional director of GBTA India.

In 2018, the Indian rupee has performed the worst, with a depreciation of 13 per cent in value this year. It dropped more than a percentage point to 72.6 a dollar on September 17, in spite of India's finance minister Arun Jaitley announcing a plan to lower the country's current account deficit.

Harvinder Singh, country manager, India, United Airlines & director, United Airlines Business Services, added: “The corporate travel business is growing year-on-year above 10 per cent which is excellent. We have not seen any impact of rupee depreciation at this point of time.”

“Overall the industry sentiment remains positive with business travel witnessing a double digit growth,” Arnab Mukherjee, vice president - sales, JTB India, remarked. – Rohit Kaul



Genting Cruise Lines' Michael Goh (middle) and Princess Cruises' Farriek Tawfik (right) discuss MICE possibilities on a panel moderated by TTGmice's Karen Yue (left)



SIRO-A's world-famous integration of technology and dance is able to surpass attendee expectations at corporate events.

TOKYO

Exceptional quality. Expanding possibility.

Tokyo is broadening its focus for the future with a plethora of new experiences designed with delegates in mind. Over recent decades the city has successfully made the most of its popularity for business from all over the world and, alongside the event industry's current growth, it continues to expand. A reputation for innovation has helped to fuel the surge in the city's event offerings too, maintaining it as a top-choice destination for business tourism.

Tokyo is a hub for the cutting-edge and the ground-breaking. A distinct fusion of past and future, the city perfectly facilitates inspiration and creativity at events. By striving to appeal to each individual, Tokyo amplifies belief in what's possible. By recognising that quality should transcend expectations, delegates can experience something unique, new and very Tokyo.

From conference venues to hotels – temples to shrines, what Tokyo offers is unrivalled anywhere else.

Tokyo's warm welcome

The greeting delegates receive on arrival can greatly influence the tone for the rest of their trip – but nowhere does a welcome quite like Tokyo.

A meet and greet with one of Tokyo's "Yuru Kyara" will surprise and delight delegates on their arrival into Haneda



Hanepyon – the mascot for Haneda Airport Area.



Airport. Distinctive-looking local mascots, Yuru Kyara are popular for their bizarre or "kawaii" appearances. They can be organised on exclusive occasions to meet incoming delegates. Named "Hanepyon," – This Yuru Kyara prefers staying home in Haneda Airport area but, every so often, may be enticed away to receptions elsewhere.

For something different, it is possible to customise areas around the city using company branding and messages, known as "Street Jack." One recent example was in the Asakusa neighbourhood where it was left as a surprise for attendees, leaving a memorable impression. They get to enjoy a feeling of recognition as, along with thousands of others, they pass through flag-lined streets and under banners welcoming them whilst signage within buildings can be replaced to match the same theme. Being around a recognisable logo with messages of welcome in, what may be for some, an unfamiliar destination, can make a world of difference to any delegate's Tokyo experience.

A one-stop shop for Tokyo Unique Venues

Quality of experience is rarely unappreciated by delegates so in response to this desire, "Tokyo Unique Venues" has been created by Tokyo Convention and Visitors Bureau (TCVB). Using TCVB's comprehensive knowledge and experience, the new service will support MICE planners as events are brought to the city while encouraging greater use of unique venues, particularly for meetings, incentive visits and other business events. Its focus is to ensure organisers get the most from Tokyo's incredible selection of unique venues, regardless of whether it's for a conference of 500 or a dinner for 10.

One such event was recently hosted at the Edo-Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum with exhibits of Japanese homes throughout history. One exhibit (a house) was used for a drinks reception and networking event, whilst delegates enjoyed a tour of the exhibits in traditional rickshaws. In a



Guests who enjoy kicking about a football may relish the chance to play a private friendly with TOKYO CITY FC.

Being one of the world's leading meetings and conference destinations, Tokyo can definitely still deliver some serious fun. Its entertainment offerings are broad and inclusive; not to be found anywhere else in the world.

truly unusual twist, during warm evenings the heat can be combatted by Uchimizu – sprinklers that will gently cool guests throughout the venue.

With a range of options to suit any budget, this is just one example amongst a rich selection of unique venues that reflect Japan's culture as well its affinity for the modern and technical.

Let guests gather and engage

Being one of the world's leading meetings and conference destinations, Tokyo can definitely still deliver some serious fun. Its entertainment offerings are broad and inclusive; not to be found anywhere else in the world.

SIRO-A, techno circus (*America's Got Talent* Season 10, semi-finalists), are able to surpass attendee expectations with their world-famous integration of technology and dance. At corporate events their display can match the tone of the rest of the event from comedy through to

artistic interpretation. There is the option to directly incorporate company branding too, which helps unite spectators and the purpose of event through their exceptional performance.

Opportunities for delegates to get active and involved amid more serious business matters are a great way to sustain enthusiasm and spirit. Guests who enjoy kicking about a football may relish the chance to play a private friendly with TOKYO CITY FC at the team's club. Or come night time, dance troops might open up the stage and invite the audience up to dance and "wotagei," creating patterns and shapes using light from their phones.

Even the boardroom can provide a chance for theatre. RoBoHoN is a pint-sized robot that utilises AI to achieve an impressive variety of autonomous feats. In particular it has the ability to help deliver presentations with an air of playfulness, whilst helping to raise attendee engagement.

Ultimately, Tokyo's powerful reputation for both ingenuity and hospitality means its success as a top business destination is no coincidence. The recent introduction of Tokyo Unique Venues has only made it a more accessible choice for business events and, by listening to MICE organisers and planners, the city continues to become more open to all.



Left and below: RoBoHoN is a pint-sized robot that impresses attendees at events with its autonomous feats. ©SHARP CORPORATION



**BUSINESS EVENTS
TOKYO**

Corporate groups look to Japan as a learning destination

By Kathryn Wortley

A rising number of unique learning opportunities for business groups is stimulating interest in Japan as an international business events destination.

Industry officials and corporate buyers at Visit Japan Travel & MICE Mart 2018, shared that the country is increasingly seen as a place where corporate visitors can grow professionally.

According to Etsuko Kawasaki, executive director of the Japan Convention and Visitors Bureau, a 2016 study on why people chose Japan as a business events destination shows that the ability to “gain flashes of insight”, and its location as a place “where knowledge and talent meet”, were two of the top responses. Others were its safe, clean cities and track record in providing quality experiences.

In 2018, Japan is adding more centres for learning to its portfolio of unique

venues, including Yamagata Museum of Art, which opened in February 2018, and Aichi Museum of Flight, which showcases airplanes made in Japan.

Officials are hopeful that these venues will be successful, due to the growing number of business visitors to other museums nationwide.

For example, the Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology in Aichi Prefecture welcomed 460,000 visitors in 2017, up from 420,000 in 2016. About 20 per cent of visitors were from overseas, from companies in South-east Asia that are Japan-owned.

Toshihide Narita, deputy director and curator of the museum, said South-east Asia is a growing market as more Japanese companies are establishing operations there and want their staff to have an understanding of Japanese industry and technology.



JNTO's president Satoshi Seino highlighted that Japan must be made appealing for learning opportunities

“Our museum promotes the spirit of studiousness and creativity,” he said, adding that it “shows how challenges have been overcome through R&D”.

Meanwhile, Tokyo-based tour operator Hanatour Japan began offering tours of hospitals for business groups from the Philippines in March 2018. According to Lo King Yin of the company's international business department, most attendees are doctors or nurses seeking first-hand insight into Japan's medical practices and hospital management.

Weak rupiah holds incentives back

In anticipation of impacts a weaker rupiah would have on outbound incentive business next year, event planners in Indonesia are now drawing up strategies to cope with rate fluctuations while keeping demand from corporates high.

The rupiah has declined from around Rp14,300 against the US dollar in early August to Rp15,000 on September 5.

Eddy Efendy, director of Synergy Production Travel and Events, commented: “It's still difficult to predict the situation next year; we have to wait until December. But the incentive business is still fine for now.”

As the currency devaluation took place towards the end of the year, most groups this year have materialised, noted Eddy.

But event planners may soon begin to feel some pain, as Indonesian agents typically quote in rupiah but make payments in the US dollar.

Pauline Suharno, managing director of

Elok Tour, said: “Some clients understand the conditions and are willing to pay the balance due to the devaluation... The problem is many companies do not want to adjust the pricing.”

Rudiana, director of sales and marketing of WITA Tour, added: “The depreciation of the rupiah made conditions unstable. We find it difficult to determine prices, even though we must immediately submit proposals for incentives (programmes) next year.”

“When the currency is not stabilised, the price balance becomes a problem,” he commented. “If the price is too high it will be difficult to sell, but if it is too cheap it also will reduce profits or even (be a) loss for planners.”

Compared with leisure travel, Rudiana said corporate incentives are more sensitive to a weaker rupiah.

Likewise, pricing is also the “most sensitive issue” for clients of Agustinus Pake Seko, president director of Bayu Buana, although the company has recorded a 15 per cent growth in business this year and bookings are still coming in for next year.

To cope with the currency fluctuations, Agustinus would suggest to clients to exclude some meals from the itinerary, and let group members find their own.

Suharno, meanwhile, would recommend a lower hotel category or a similar star-rated property outside of the city centre. Another option is to cut the duration of the programme. – Tiara Maharani

In brief

PPHG rolls out loyalty programme

Pan Pacific Hotels Group (PPHG) has introduced Pan Pacific Connections for corporate bookers.

A by-invitation only programme, Pan Pacific Connections recognises, retains and rewards loyal corporate bookers for booking rooms, meetings and events at all of its hotels, resorts and serviced suites. Membership is open to both corporate accounts and individual booker accounts, where members earn points for every eligible stay and meeting.

Corporate bookers can log-in to their account and book negotiated corporate rates or special corporate rates directly through the website, www.panpacificconnections.com. Members enjoy instant reward points for their bookings, which can be used to redeem a selection of rewards from hotel stays, dining, wellness, lifestyle and shopping products.

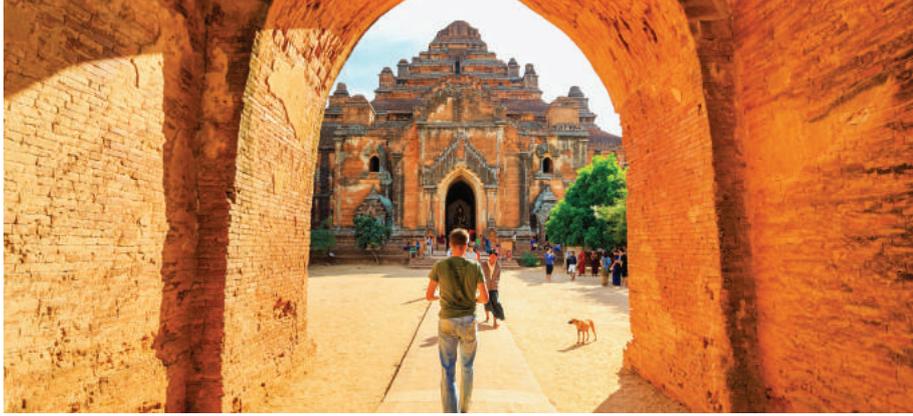
Destination and airline combine forces

Tourism Australia and China Southern Airlines have signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding to develop the business events sector in China.

Both organisations will work together to develop marketing campaigns and promotional activities targeting business event agents and corporate buyers in China, which is now Australia's largest source of visitors at 1.4 million. Chinese travellers spent A\$10.9 billion (US\$7.8 billion) as of the end of May 2018.

China Southern Airlines, headquartered in Guangzhou, has about 50 direct flights to Australia weekly.





Myanmar (pictured) is rising in popularity among corporate incentive groups

Longhaul buyers look beyond mainstream Asian destinations

By Yixin Ng

Longhaul demand for Asian incentive holidays is spreading beyond the usual favourites to destinations such as Vietnam and Myanmar.

Ben Gosman, managing director of Netherlands-based FreeStyle Incentives, said Vietnam is becoming an increasingly attractive alternative to the long-popular Thailand.

“The euro is weak compared to the dollar. It used to be at 1.5 dollar per euro, now it’s 1.1 – we lost 40 per cent,” he said. “Compared to the Thai baht we also lost 40 per cent in the last three years. With the euro down, Thailand gets more expensive, and Vietnam becomes very, very attractive.”

In Vietnam, Phu Quoc is an emerging destination for Gosman although mass tourism and construction on this island are becoming growing concerns.

This is also one of the reasons behind the change in FreeStyle Incentives’ Thailand programmes in recent years, with Hua Hin now offered as the beach leg in place of Phuket and Koh Samui.

“We used to offer Phuket and Koh Samui, but two or three years ago, we cut those out. It saves us a flight, and these areas are too crowded.

“We try to stay away from mainstream destinations,” Gosman remarked.

Meanwhile, Vietnam and Myanmar are also rising in popularity at Italy’s Ita Events, although Thailand remains the main South-east Asian destination for incentive tours, said Sandro Saccocio, senior project manager.

“Clients like South-east Asia for the food experience. They also like to (get hands on), so local cultural activities such as painting, fruit sculpting and weaving keep clients interested,” he said.

Agents devise ways to deal with peso drop

As the Philippine currency sinks in value to 54.1 pesos against the greenback – the weakest in nearly 13 years and eight per cent lower than at the start of the year – the business events sector is rethinking its strategies, and reining in outbound travel in favour of domestic and shorthaul destinations.

Angel Ramos Bognot, owner of Afro Asian World Events, said the peso’s reduced value has already spelt “disaster” for outbound business.

“Travellers are spending more and their money is of less value, which will result in delays or suspensions of their international trips, and they may opt to hold MICE domestically.”

For those going ahead with MICE abroad, “a shorthaul trip is advised as it’s more affordable”, Bognot pointed out.

Since this year, Canon Marketing Phil-

ippines has been limiting overseas trips in favour of rewarding its champions with local trips or a combination of domestic meetings, cash incentives, and non-cash products like raffling off luxury cars and Rolex watches.

With the peso’s depreciation, a trip abroad would exceed the company’s “fixed budget”, so Canon would opt for a domestic trip or host a business meeting locally combined with other perks, said Grace Obeya, sales and marketing manager, consumable group, consumer systems products division.

Such flexibility will enable the company to “still attain business objectives” although foreign trips combining business and relaxation are still booked in cases of special events, such as the launch of a new product or prototype, Obeya shared.

– **Rosa Ocampo**

ONE MINUTE with IT&CM Events

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Asian MICE Cruise Conference
Incentive Forums



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By SITE

site



We celebrated the role of women in the workforce

Session:
ICCA-TTG Passionate Breakfast
By ICCA and TTGmice

ICCA
TTGmice



We got into a hot debate over PCOs for events

Session:
Why Do You Need A PCO When You Can Organise Your Own Conference!!
By ICCA and World PCO Alliance

ICCA
World PCO Alliance



We embraced the legacy of association meetings leaving footprints that impact society and the economy in host destinations

Session:
Meetings Legacy: More Than Bed Nights
By GainingEdge

GainingEdge

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Thinking big, getting cosy

The flexible combination of spacious and intimate spaces made Marina Bay Sands the ideal choice for two of YPO's leading events, writes **Pamela Chow**

Event brief

This year, the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) returned to Singapore's Marina Bay Sands (MBS) – the only Asian city and the only venue to host YPO more than once – with a double bill: the Global Leadership Conference (GLC) and flagship event YPO EDGE.

The occasion brought upsized ambitions. These included 2,800 young leaders in attendance and a line-up of high-profile speakers, such as Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, as well as the founder of the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative, and former tennis champion Billie Jean King.

Challenges

To facilitate a series of plenary and concurrent sessions, discussion forums and networking functions, the integrated resort had to provide a combination of large and intimate spaces within a single venue.

"YPO needs a location where there is a hospitality venue that is big enough, but also offers quality and intimacy," said Terry O'Connor, YPO EDGE 2018 host city chair and former regional chair of Southeast Asia.

Feeding the delegates well was another crucial task, as they hailed from more than 90 countries and had diverse dietary requests.

Furthermore, the 2018 GLC and YPO EDGE

conference was YPO's first green meeting, putting the ISO 20121-certified venue and its expert team to the test. On top of these, the YPO delegation also comprised visiting spouses and partners, who were looking forward to a memorable experience at the iconic venue.

Solution

The Roselle-Simpur ballroom was transformed into an experiential Venture Marketplace of businesses, products and services. At the same time, networking events, private gatherings and breakout sessions were hosted at smaller, alternative venues with a touch of exclusivity.

These included private dining rooms of celebrity chef restaurants such as Adrift by David Myers, CUT by Wolfgang Puck and Osteria Mozza; the recently revamped 24-hour hotel lounge, Renku; the new LAVO Italian Restaurant & Rooftop Bar; and individual meeting rooms in the convention centre.

To elevate the culinary experience, MBS' banquet team curated special menus with more than 20 varieties of food per meal, with separate counters and buffet lines set up for those with specific dietary requirements, treating delegates to a selection of local and international food.

At least five meals were served daily, including Happy Hour drinks and canapés every

evening. The most impressive F&B setup was at the Venture Marketplace, which presented a seafood bar of fresh oysters, crab legs, prawns and more.

Other personal touches included a dedicated check-in counter for YPO attendees, YPO- and MBS-branded welcome amenities and gifts, as well as a YPO-branded pagoda in the Tower 1 lobby that served as a photo-worthy backdrop for delegates.

During their stay, delegates and their partners were invited to a private brand showcase at the Louis Vuitton Island Maison at The Shoppes. Participants were also treated to TWG Tea canapés and ferried around the mall with a dedicated buggy service.

To meet its sustainability requests, MBS' MICE team worked with the event organiser to incorporate several green event initiatives, such as using water dispensers instead of plastic bottles; recycling plastics, glass and paper where possible; as well as diverting leftover food away from landfills using onsite food waste digesters.

YPO also produced more than 2,800 recyclable registration bags, which included reusable water tumblers. At the end of the event, the organisers collected and recycled approximately 700 bags and achieved an overall event waste diversion rate of 75 per cent.

Key takeaways

Having previously hosted YPO in 2012, MBS had the advantage of familiarity with YPO's needs, enabling the venue's team to make suitable recommendations and work in partnership with the organisation's planning team.

Mike Lee, vice president of sales at MBS, reflected: "Our partnership with YPO was formed years ago, and to have the group return to our integrated resort for their 2018 event is akin to welcoming an old friend home."

"For that reason, some of MBS' senior management – including myself – were personally involved in the planning process with YPO. We were excited to work together again to push the event's boundaries of creativity and build on the success of its 2012 edition."

Event

Young Presidents' Organization
Global Leadership Conference
and YPO EDGE

Organiser

Young Presidents' Organization

Venue

Marina Bay Sands Expo
and Convention Centre

Date

March 5-9, 2018

Number of participants

2,800

Overturning challenges

It isn't easy to manage the flow of 30,000 people and to feed them, but the venue operator sails through with strong partnership and creativity. By **Caroline Boey**

Event brief

The Singapore FinTech Festival is the world's largest gathering of the global financial technology community. It is an event that offers cutting-edge content and high industry impact in terms of collaboration, networking, innovation and talent building in the financial technology space.

The 2017 second edition of this week-long festival attracted some 30,000 participants from more than 100 countries. Festival participants engaged in a series of interwoven events comprising the Global FinTech Hackcelerator, the Innovation Lab Crawl, the FinTech Awards and the Investor Summit.

A three-day conference was held concurrently and focused on nine themes including global market insights, data analytics, technology risk, sustainable fintech and regtech or regulatory technology, among others.

Challenges

Adrian Sng, general manager of SingEx Exhibitions, highlighted two main challenges.

He said: "With the festival attracting such a large number of delegates, catering for delegates' meals at designated gaps within the conference programme was a challenge. Transport to and from the venue also proved to be challenging, with multiple precinct bodies involved in the coordination of traffic flow for an event of such scale."

Solutions

The venue operator worked on managing the entire precinct from the start of the event planning process to better manage traffic flow and access to different car parks in the vicinity. Close collaboration with the traffic police, Land Transport Authority as well as transport operators proved crucial for a better site access experience for participants.

As for the catering challenge, Sng commented: "We turned the challenge into a unique experience for all delegates instead by offering all-day dining options involving multiple cuisines. This helped to ease the congestion during key meal times as well as to provide better delegate flow among the exhibits throughout the day."

Sng added: "Focusing on innovation in event design, the festival weaved a Singapore experience throughout the event platform. From serving a fusion of local food favourites, to being surrounded by locally inspired architecture in our dining and discussion areas, to offering locally designed merchandise, participants had access to not only valuable community insights and networks, but also a glimpse of Singapore as a destination."



Key takeaways

Staunch support and the strong relationship between the Monetary Authority of Singapore, The Association of Banks in Singapore and SingEx Holdings were instrumental in ensuring the success of the festival, an event spokesperson said.

By organising the event from a user's standpoint by mapping individual journeys and touch-points from pre-event, onsite, to post-event contributed to the success factors for the event. By enhancing the overall experience of a visitor will potentially translate into prospects for return on participation.

The festival's unique event design approach enabled participants to immerse in the Singapore experience, and the locally-inspired

Event
Singapore FinTech Festival 2017

Organiser
Monetary Authority of Singapore, The Association of Banks in Singapore and SingEx Holdings

Venue
Singapore EXPO and MAX Atria

Date
November 13 to 17, 2017

Number of participants
30,000 from more than 115 countries

architecture, showcases and F&B were key highlights that worked well.

The venue's director of sales, Janice Yee, observed: "Being able to offer a full suite of services and multiple platforms enabled the venue operator to address the customer's immediate needs. But it did not stop there and also looked ahead to pre-empt, and prepare for, future needs to retain the client."

The Singapore FinTech Festival 2017 won three awards at this year's Singapore Tourism Awards organised by the Singapore Tourism Board for Best Business Event, Best Trade Conference Organiser and Best Business Event Service Provider for Jublia, a home-grown event technology start-up.



Unique dining venues make mealtimes part of a memorable event and destination experience. *TTCmice* reporters sniff out some of Asia's hottest, most interesting tables that are great for corporate groups

Lost Heaven, Shanghai

What's special: The restaurant's concept and design are based on artistic and cultural elements of Yunnan's minority ethnic tribes. Every corner of the atmospheric restaurant on The Bund showcases the colourful and original patterns, handiwork and embroideries of Tibetan, Yi, Na Xi, Dai, Miao and Yao tribes. Local religious beliefs, ancient poems, song and dance also provide inspiration.

Serving Yunnan folk cuisine, the food is based on indigenous recipes and cooking techniques from the province, combined with a western and South-east Asian twist.

This unique approach has made Lost Heaven a one-of-a-kind restaurant, earning it the reputation of a "must-visit" and "landmark restaurant".

Event application: The average cost for dinner per head, not including drinks, is around US\$30. The second floor can seat around 200 people. DMCs in Shanghai have booked the venue for groups, and have also used the third and fourth floors where there is a bar, a terrace and a space for private parties and meetings.

Contact: contact@lostheaven.com.cn

Dockyard, Hong Kong

What's special: Located within Kerry Hotel Hong Kong, Dockyard is Hong Kong's first digital food court which relies on an app to deliver the menu, ordering and payment requirements.

For the technophobes, thankfully, there are also printed menus and a human cashier.

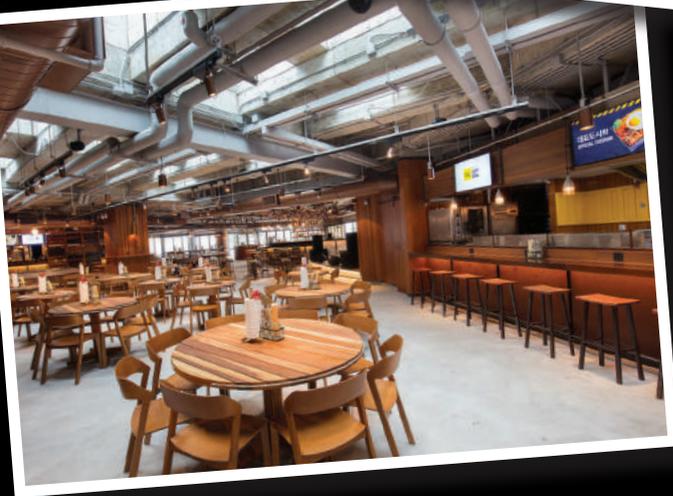
The restaurant comprises nine international food outlets, serving Chinese, Indian, Japanese food and more.

The design of the space adopts an industrial chic vibe with a nautical twist, paying tribute to the maritime history of the Hung Hom location.

Dockyard also hosts some of the hottest live bands in town. Table football and pool are available for hire, perfect for getting delegates to socialise.

Event application: Dockyard can accommodate groups with 10 to 100 guests. Planners can choose either a set menu or buffet. For exclusive venue buyout, a minimum spend applies and the rate varies according to the service and setup needed. Full venue hire is only available on weekdays.

Contact: (852) 2252-5228



From above: Lost Heaven, Shanghai; Plataran Menteng, Jakarta; Dockyard, Hong Kong

Plataran Menteng, Jakarta

What's special: Located in Menteng, Central Jakarta, an elite residential area since the Dutch Colonial period, Plataran Menteng is an elegant restaurant that has been a hit with product launches, small meetings, corporate gathering or theme dinners.

While it retains the European-style facade of the 80-year-old house, the venue was expanded from a single-storey building into three levels.

Plataran Menteng serves fusion Indonesian cuisines inspired by Indonesian and Asian traditional recipes.

Event application: The first floor comprises two dining areas and two private rooms that can altogether accommodate up to 120 seats.

The second floor offers two dining areas and five private rooms, three of which can be combined to form a larger venue. The private rooms can host six to 100 guests.

On the third floor is a cigar lounge and a dining area for 60 people plus a bar and access to the rooftop. This area is suitable for product launches, pre-dinner cocktails on the rooftop, and dinner in the dining area.

The private rooms and main dining areas can be hired for private events, varying minimum charges apply to different spaces.

Set and customised menus are available for planners to pick from.

Contact: www.plataran.com

The Korea House, Seoul, South Korea

What's special: Set within a historic government reception hall modelled after the Joseon Dynasty's Jagyeongjeon building at the Gyeongbokgung Palace, The Korea House treats visitors to a host of royalty-infused experiences. Visitors can dine on traditional royal Korean cuisine, participate in group cultural activities while dressed in traditional *hanbok*, prepare local cuisine such as kimchi and more.

Event application: Experience programmes run for 1.5 hours and are open to groups of at least 20 people. Groups of more than 50 participants require prior reservation and coordination with officials in charge.

Planners should note that this venue is closed on the third Monday of each month, Seollal (Lunar New Year's Day) and Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving Day).

Contact: www.koreahouse.or.kr

Sonya's Garden, Alfonso, Cavite

What's special: Sonya's Garden is a spacious, rustic and relaxing restaurant in the middle of a vast garden. It serves fruits, flowers, vegetables and herbs from its five organic and pesticide-free greenhouses as well as freshly baked bread with homemade dips from its own bakery. A gourmet Filipino menu featuring meat entrees is available for groups of 10 or more.

Mid-priced, food is consistently good. The cool climate, charming garden setting and options for lodging, spa, and quaint shops are worth the two-hour trip for groups that want to escape Manila's urban jungle post-meeting.

Event application: Sonya's Garden can accommodate up to 400 persons in the main restaurant. Sonya's Garden also has two event venues.

Contact: www.sonyasgarden.com

Cover story

IFT Educational Restaurant, Macao

What's special: IFT Educational Restaurant is a training unit for the hotel and culinary students of Institute for Tourism Studies, Macao. It encourages Macao's future hoteliers to put theories into practice, and supports their endeavour to serve guests at international standards.

The facility supports organic agriculture and the slow food movement. It also recycles food waste by turning it into fertiliser, practises crop rotation and uses biological pest control at its garden at the IFT Mong-Há Campus.

It is also worth noting that IFT Educational Restaurant had found its way into the Michelin Guide's Bib Gourmand awards last year.

Event application: Set lunch is priced from MOP280 (US\$35) per person while set dinner and buffet are priced from MOP380 and MOP280 respectively. Customised menus are not available. The restaurant supports venue buyout for groups of 80 to 100 guests.

Contact: fbreservation@ift.edu.mo

Supanniga Cruise, Bangkok

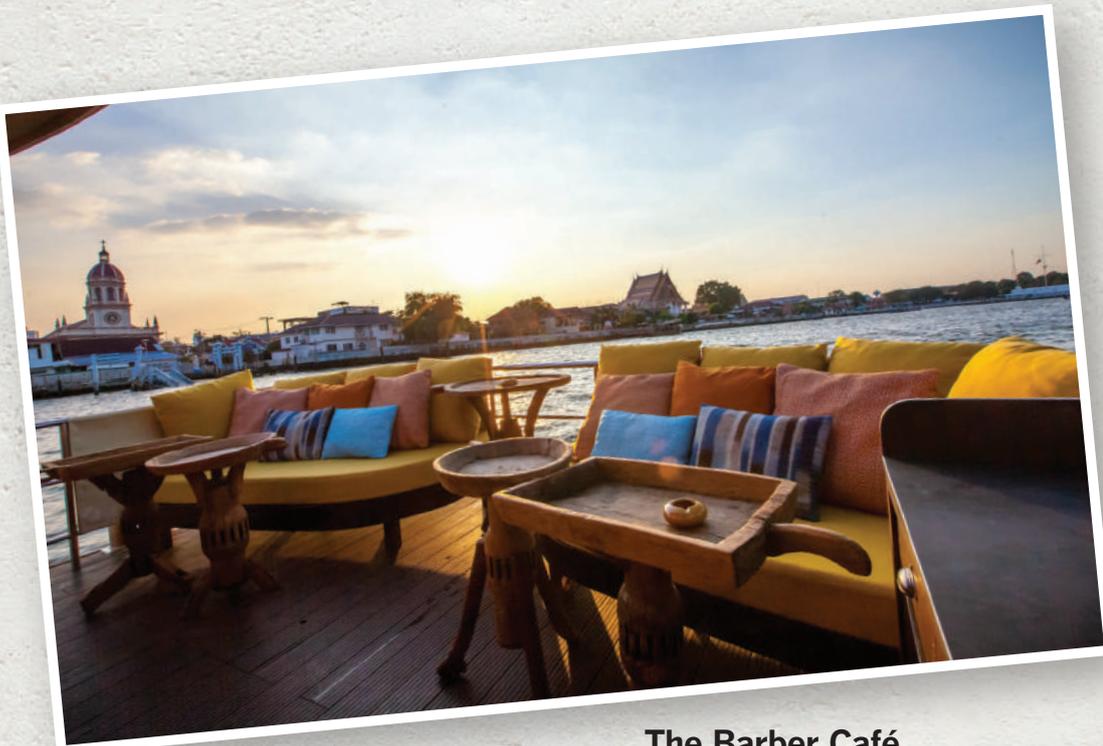
What's special: Supanniga Cruise, a new 40-seat dinner cruise, is the latest product of the Laorauvirodge family which is behind the hugely popular Supanniga Home Boutique Hideaway and Krua Supanniga by Khunyai restaurant in Khon Kaen, and Supanniga Eating Room in Thonglor, Bangkok.

Beautifully designed and wearing warm and welcoming hues of yellow, orange and brown, and using traditional materials such as Mudmee silk and terracotta, the Supanniga Cruise makes for a memorable setting for dining events.

Event application: Two cruise options are available: Evening Cocktail Cruise and Evening Champagne Cruise as a pre-dinner activity, and Sunset Dinner Cruise which presents a six-course Thai dinner and grand nighttime view of the glittering architecture on the riverbank.

Supanniga Cruise welcomes private charters, with prices starting from 47,000 baht (US\$1,452) for an hour-long Evening Cocktail Cruise to 120,000 baht for a 135-minute-long Dinner Champagne Taittinger Cruise. The cruise seats 40 people – 24 on the top deck and 16 on the lower deck.

Contact: info@supannigacruise.com / pa@supannigagroup.com



Above: Supanniga Cruise, Bangkok

Baan Khanitha & Gallery, Bangkok

What's special: The Baan Khanitha is renowned among Bangkok folks for being the purveyor of top quality Thai cuisine. The first restaurant of the group opened in Sukhumvit Soi 23, occupying an elegant wooden Thai house that is richly decorated inside with handicrafts, sculptures, paintings and lush plants.

The second brand opened on Sathorn Road, this one occupying a more modern house with whitewashed walls. But true to Baan Khanitha fashion, the interior is warm and welcoming, dressed in red wood, vibrant paintings and oversized potted plants.

The group presently owns four restaurants – the other two on Sukhumvit Soi 53 and at Asiatique – and a dining cruise.

Like all Baan Khanitha restaurants, the Sathorn branch is a fine-dining venue, and every dish is made with only the finest and freshest ingredients, many of which are sourced from the group's own Baan Panalai Organic Farm.

What makes the Sathorn branch stands out from the rest, is its Gallery which exhibits selected art pieces made by local and international artists.

Event application: Baan Khanitha & Gallery's Terrace Room seats 120 guests while the Sathorn Room accommodates 35. The Silver and Jewelry room each seats 40 guests.

Contact: info@baan-khanitha.com; www.baan-khanitha.com

The Barber Café & Bar, Kuching

What's special: The restaurant retains the nostalgia of its past – a hairdressing salon that was in operation for more than 80 years until it closed in 2014. The floor tiles and half-length mirrors are original fixtures, while other paraphernalia such as the barber chairs, mannequins with wigs and hairdryers are props sourced from other hair salons.

The private dining room, known as Shanghai Room, has a unique Chinese theme, with Chinese furniture and paintings of olden China adorning the walls.

Tucked behind the restaurant is a bar tended by a mixologist who is versatile in crafting various cocktails. A pop-up cocktail station can be arranged with advance notice for delegates to try their hands at making their own concoctions.

Event application: For foreign delegates who wish to sample local Sarawak cuisine or fusion Western cuisine, this place is an attractive proposition. Its location, near the Kuching Waterfront and within walking distance to the main city hotels, makes it an ideal dinner venue in the city for group with less than 100 people.

Shanghai Room can seat 50 people. With advance notice, the chefs are able to accommodate various dietary requirements, including gluten free and vegan diets. Menus can be customised.

There is no minimum spend for venue buyout, but a minimum group size of 80 pax applies.

Contact: barberkch@gmail.com/penelopeling@gmail.com

Funatsuru, Kyoto

What's special: Sitting on the western bank of the Kamo River, Funatsuru is one of the most prestigious *kawayuka* restaurants in Kyoto, dating back to 1870.

The five-storey building has been registered as an important cultural property by the national government and incorporates many of Japan's most impressive design elements, as well as traditional gardens and one of the city's largest decks for diners, stretching out towards the river.

The venue serves French cuisine using the freshest local ingredients and produce of the season.

Event application: The venue has one restaurant and three banquet halls, all adorned with Japanese art and overlooking the Kamo River and the Higashiyama Mountains.

The Grand Ballroom has a capacity of 200 people in a buffet setting, while the smallest of the three halls, the VIP Room, seats up to 40 people. A buyout of the banquet halls is possible, while planners can also request for customised menus.

The venue is also able to arrange a selection of entertainment, some unique to this ancient capital of Japan, including the *Kyo-mai* traditional dance performed by Kyoto geisha, live music performances with *koto* and *shamisen* bamboo flute, or even the dissection of a whole tuna by a sushi chef.

Contact: www.funatsuru.com/en/party@vmc.co.jp

Yakatabune Harumiya, Tokyo

What's special: Traditionally popular during the hot summer months, *yakatabune* – which literally means roof-shaped boat in Japanese – can now be rented throughout the year.

While the skyline of Tokyo may have changed dramatically in the 250 years since these party boats were first launched, the boats remain true to their traditions. The food that is served – and the way in which it is served, at low tables with guests sitting cross-legged – has not changed down the years. After the meal has been cleared away, musicians and singers of traditional Japanese music come on, often dressed in kimono. The modern version of aural entertainment – the karaoke machine – may be available too.

Event application: Yakatabune Harumiya operates five boats and can provide charters for groups of between 20 and 80 people. Prices for a 2.5 hour cruise, including entertainment, range from 10,000 yen (US\$90.25) per person to 25,000 yen per person, depending on the menu. The company operates three routes, with the Cherry Blossom Cruise being the most popular during spring and the Odaiba Cruise, taking in the fireworks, a hit on summer evenings.

Contact: yakatabune-tokyo.com/index.html

Bollywood Veggies, Singapore

What's special: Planners looking to highlight sustainability and farm-to-table practices at their event can consider this sanctuary away from the bustling city centre of Singapore. Located in the tranquil countryside of Kranji, Bollywood Veggies has a 4.05ha farm of 540 types of plants, with a bistro that features local and fusion dishes. Here, groups can participate in farm tours, treasure hunts, kampong (village) races, terrarium-making or plant-potting sessions, culinary classes and tasting of farm harvests and farm brew.

Event application: The venue offers packages for corporate groups starting from S\$40 (US\$30) per person, with limits of 20 to 300 pax. Planners who would like a completely customised itinerary can write in with their requirements.

Contact: events@bollywoodveggies.com



Above: The Barber Café & Bar, Kuching



Ocean Restaurant by Cat Cora

What's special: If you've taken your events to all the best rooftop dining venues, perhaps it is time to look down – down into the underwater world.

Ocean Restaurant by Cat Cora offers South-east Asia's only underwater aquarium dining experience. Located within Resorts World Sentosa's S.E.A. Aquarium's Open Ocean exhibit, the restaurant puts diners right with underwater creatures – separated only by floor-to-ceiling glass walls.

Food is prepared with sustainably sourced meat and seafood.

Event application: Ocean Restaurant by Cat Cora does not have private dining rooms, but the venue can be hired for a private event. A maximum of 70 guests is allowed for a full venue buyout.

Contact: dining@rwsentosa.com

Bongraecheon, Seoul

What's special: Bongraecheon is named by the Seoul Metropolitan Government as one of the city's Proud Korean Restaurants, and certified by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism as a restaurant that provides an authentic royal cuisine experience.

Solid recognitions aside, Bongraecheon is a beautiful venue, occupying a traditional Korean house with sprawling lawns and verdant gardens.

Staff are dressed in the *hanbok* of royal courtesans, and guests are served like kings.

The menu emphasises light and clear tastes, with every dish skilfully prepared to demonstrate the essence of traditional Korean cuisine.

Event application: Bongraecheon comprises two function halls: the 73m² Bongraecheon 1 seats 50 guests while the 50m² Bongraecheon 2 seats 20.

Contact: bongraecheon@mayfield.co.kr

SMT Seoul

What's special: SMT Seoul is the brainchild of Soo Man Lee, founder of SM Entertainment company which is behind many of South Korea's biggest music and film talents.

The modern restaurant sits in the upscale Cheongdam-dong district, and its interior is styled like the home of a moneyed celebrity who entertains frequently – large living rooms, cosy nooks for friendly get-togethers, karaoke studios, and themed dining areas.

As the restaurant is also a popular venue for SM Entertainment artists, there is a private elevator from the basement carpark to allow VIP guests to escape inquisitive eyes. Planners with VIP corporate guests will appreciate this convenience.

The menu at SMT Seoul features Seoul-style cuisine with Western, Chinese and Japanese influences, and much attention is paid to plating.

Event application: Playground on the lower level is suitable for larger luncheons and dinners, and seats 80 people. Penthouse on the third and fourth levels feature multiple private dining rooms and semi-private spaces, and can accommodate 50 people seated.

On the fifth, topmost floor is the Rooftop Terrace, an open space that makes a perfect canvas on which to create unique events. It is suitable for 100 guests in a standing cocktail setup.

For private events, a chef's table can be arranged.

Contact: www.smt-seoul.com



Above: SMT Korea



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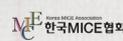
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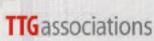
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A new look at Taiwan

Taiwan dangles unique destination appeals and venues that will interest even serious conventions, writes **Pamela Chow**

A vibrant line-up of business events taking place in cities outside of Taipei, Taiwan is helping to raise the profile of these destinations as interesting option for even more high-profile gatherings.

An example is the Global Harbour Cities Forum on September 26 that shone the spotlight on the waterfront Kaohsiung Exhibition Centre in the Asia's New Bay Area as well as the nearby offshore Penghu Island.

To draw even more corporate traffic to Penghu Island, MEET Taiwan is marketing the area as 2018 Most Beautiful Bays at the World Congress, as well as participate in a business exhibition that features a carnival, concert and container-park show floor.

"There are many developments and events coming up that we are excited to be a part of. For the rest of 2018, we will be promoting Taiwan's business events following an ocean theme, encapsulating destinations like Kaohsiung's bay and islands like Penghu," shared Jessie Tseng, executive director of MEET Taiwan.

Over in Taichung, where the Asia MICE Forum 2018 was recently held, the industrial city will get its softer, greener side played up by the World Flora Exposition. Running from November this year to April 2019, the expo will be held in multiple new facilities across Houli, Fengyuan, Waipu and Shuinan districts. Taichung will also host the 2019 Taichung East Asian Youth Games.

Not only will these events raise the profile of the bay area and Taichung, the destinations are also getting a boost through new event venues.

Taiwan-based GIS Group has launched the GIS Taichung Wenxin

Convention Center and the GIS Kaohsiung Asia's New Bay Area Convention Center.

The former, designed by renowned Japanese architect Toyo Ito, features three meeting rooms incorporating several design concepts and glass walls.

Meanwhile, the GIS Kaohsiung Asia's New Bay Area Convention Center boasts five differently sized meeting rooms, coupled with advanced equipment, technical support and spacious lounges.

Jason Yeh, CEO of GIS Group, said: "The MICE industry is a main part of the Asia's New Bay Area plan. The transportation, accommodation, catering and tourism around that area form a package to attract local and foreign corporates to host their meetings and events."

He added that clients, especially those from Taipei and Hsinchu City, have expressed the need for more business event facilities in both Taichung and Kaohsiung.

Yeh pointed out that the new convention centres were designed to cater to the rise in "non-traditional" events that are "much more casual



TALKING NUMBERS

4
The number of new event centres that opened in Taichung in time for the World Flora Exposition, to be held from November 2018

14
The number of meeting rooms that the upcoming Tainan Exhibition Centre – scheduled to open in 2021 – will have

40
The average number of trade-shows hosted by Kaohsiung Exhibition Centre annually

"The MICE industry is a main part of the Asia's New Bay Area plan. The transportation, accommodation, catering and tourism around that area form a package to attract local and foreign corporates to host their meetings and events."

Jason Yeh
CEO, GIS Group



and creative”.

He said: “We offer different sizes of conference spaces, which allow a better fit for different event requirements. Instead of having fixed meeting settings, we are very flexible so guests can design their own meeting setup according to their needs.”



From left: GIS Kaohsiung Asia's New Bay Area Convention Center; Kaohsiung Exhibition Centre

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

1 Taiwan has announced visa-free entry for Russian nationals for visits of up to 14 days. The trial programme will run until July 31, 2019, when it will be reviewed for extension.

2 Scheduled for a 2021 opening is the Tainan Exhibition Centre, bringing 600 booths and 14 meeting rooms to the south. Also in the pipeline are plans for exhibition and convention centres in Taoyuan and Taichung.

3 Thai Vietjet will start five-times-weekly flights between Bangkok and Taichung from November 3. The flight departs Bangkok at 09.00 and arrives in Taichung at 13.45. The return leg departs Taichung at 14.30 and lands in Bangkok at 17.15.

Taiwan Caters to Muslim MICE



A growing interest in Muslim-majority source markets has emerged among Taiwan's business event players, as overall visitor numbers from these markets rise. To testify

to its success in forging a Muslim-friendly environment, Taiwan was ranked among the top five non-Muslim destinations for Muslim travelers, the latest MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2018 shows.

In view of the growing importance of the Muslim market for Taiwan, the Taiwan External Trade Development Council is commissioned by the Bureau of Foreign Trade to establish a Taiwan Halal Center (THC) in April 2017 to serve as the unified window for Taiwan to advocate the halal industry. By promoting international halal market information exchange, Taiwan Halal Center is able to assist manufacturers in obtaining halal certifications and business opportunities, and creating a friendly environment for Muslims. International halal expos have been organised in Taiwan as premier platforms for foreign and domestic companies to showcase their latest halal foods and products, where exhibitor profiles include confectioneries, health foods, prepared foods, beverages,

pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, food additives, and ingredients.

The number of Muslim-friendly accommodations has since been increasing in tandem with annual Muslim festivals staged. The total number of halal-certified manufacturers, restaurants, and hotels has reached 930 in Taiwan so far; by the end of the year, the number is expected to reach more than 1,000. There are also more Muslim-dedicated prayer rooms, courtesy prayer mats, Mecca direction signs, and purification facilities set up in new locations. Muslim prayer rooms are also available in many meeting and event facilities island wide.

Taiwan has introduced much to promote its appeal to Muslims, from those residing in Taiwan (estimated to be 50,000) to Muslim visitors from overseas. MEET TAIWAN provides extensive information about Muslim-friendly meeting and exhibition facilities and halal-certified restaurants, making Taiwan a popular choice for meetings and events for Muslim communities.

About MEET TAIWAN | Since 2009, the Bureau of Foreign Trade (BOFT) under the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) has been dedicated to improving Taiwan's MICE industry. For continued investment in the industry, Taiwan's MICE Promotion Program (MEET TAIWAN) was launched to steer Taiwan's MICE industry to shine on the global stage. Taiwan's MICE Promotion Program is aimed at turning Taiwan into a leader for outstanding MICE services with the long-term objective to enhance the quality and efficiency of services, strengthen Taiwan's brand, and sharpen the nation's competitive edge in the global market, making Taiwan one of the top destinations for MICE business.

Tantalising experiences

Yogyakarta's rich heritage, diverse ancient sites and unique venues are injecting more flavour into corporate programmes. By **Mimi Hudoyo**



Corporate groups can indulge in traditional performances and venues in Yogyakarta

Yogyakarta may not have large convention facilities to boast of like her more popular sister MICE cities, but her heritage and culture have proven to be formidable lures for corporate event planners in search of memorable destination experiences.

I Gusti Putu Yaktianuraga (Bagus), managing director of Werkudara Nirwana Sakti, a major event and travel management company in Yogyakarta, told *TTGmice*: "People may only know of Borobudur and Prambanan, but there are actually 52 temples in and around Yogyakarta and Central Java. These are our strong assets. Heritage and culture are our competitive edge in courting business events. Therefore, all our events feature local content built on Javanese cultural values and wisdom."

Three of Yogyakarta's most popular heritage sites are business event-friendly. Prambanan, Borobudur and Ratu Boko Palace have a combined collection of 19 event venues, ranging from a 60-seat indoor space to a sprawling outdoor area for up to 10,000 people at a standing cocktail reception.

Some of these venues have been utilised for public events. The Prambanan Temple Gardens, for example, hosts the annual Prambanan Jazz

Festival which has featured international music greats like Shakatak, Shane Filan and Diana Krall.

Roswita, head of events division, Taman Wisata Candi Borobudur, Prambanan and Ratu Boko Management, noted that there are even more spaces around the temples which are suitable for small and medium-sized gatherings.

As well, there has been a recent rise in efforts to promote the smaller and less-known temples in the destination for corporate activities.

For instance, corporate teambuilding groups could start the day with breakfast at Candi Sambisari, a Hindu temple in Kalasan, followed by a bicycle trail along small villages to Candi Plaosan in Bugisan near Prambanan. Stops at a tofu or *tempeh* cracker factory could offer CSR opportunities.

Another option which would suit a corporate incentive programme is a visit to Candi Banyunibo followed by a sunset dinner at the nearby Ratu Boko Palace.

The only downside to using smaller temples is space limitations.

To resolve this, Werkudara Nirwana Sakti ropes in the local community for support. Around Candi Plaosan and Candi Banyunibo, for example, are open spaces belonging to the local community.

"We'd hire the space, set up tables, lighting and stage, and use the temple as backdrop. We'd involve the locals by having them to prepare drinks such as coconut juice (from coconut harvested from their trees) and home-cooked favourites such as *soto* (soup) and *pecel* (salad)," said Bagus.

Events planned at Candi Banyunibo could utilise an area for traditional archery managed by the locals.

Such community involvement helps sustain the livelihood of the locals. For example, renovation and promotion of Sojiwan Temple have transformed the area into a tourism village over the last couple of years.

Warjono, board member of the tourism village, said: "When the government started renovating Sojiwan Temple in 2004, we formed a tourism awareness group to identify our potential. We now have *andong* horse carts and *gerobak* ox carts to provide visitors with traditional transport, bicycles for rent, and local delicacies produced in home industries."

UNESCO assistance in 2015, followed by support from the local government and universities, encouraged the local batik industry to thrive. Local designs depicting reliefs from Sojiwan Temple are a hit now.

Today, the village is capable of hosting a corporate dining event for up to 200 delegates at its Pendopo Hall, with entertainment provided by locals who play the *gamelan* and meals cooked to strict standards by local families.

Beyond temples, Yogyakarta dan-

REVIEW CENTRAL

Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel By Mimi Hudoyo

The Marriott brand finally breaks into Yogyakarta, a growing city that has been attracting upscale corporate-friendly hotels.

Rooms

The 347-key hotel offers 140 twin rooms of various categories, making it a cinch for event planners to accommodate larger groups of delegates.

I love that even the Deluxe Room, the humble lead-in room category, was spacious and impressive. It measures a generous 40m², and once the sliding walls between the bedroom and the bathroom are retracted, the room feels even more spacious.

MICE Facilities

Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel has a few things to boast about when it comes to business events offerings.

Kraton Grand Ballroom, which seats 2,500 people theatre-style or 1,650 banquet guests, is recognised as the largest venue of its kind in the city. The ballroom can be split into three smaller sections, each good for 750 pax in a theatre setup. Supporting the ballroom are seven meeting rooms that can host events with 100 to 140 guests, theatre style.

These venues are placed together in an area with a dedicated entrance, ensuring privacy for event attendees.

Large pre-function spaces allow for easier crowd control.

Another pride of the hotel is its event technology. All meeting rooms are fitted with 176-programmable pillow lights, adjustable ceiling lights which can produce 360 different colours – the first hotel in town with this feature – as well as high-steel platforms and catwalk structures.

Planners and event attendees also



enjoy the support of the Marriott's Meeting Service App, which allows service requests to be made in real time.

The hotel takes events support a step further by providing free booking tools, allowing attendees to easily reserve accommodation, as well as mobile check-in.

Other facilities

There are three F&B outlets in the hotel: The Yogyakarta Kitchen all-day dining restaurant; Taman Sari Bar & Grill, a Mediterranean casual eatery by the pool; and the Lounge.

For relaxation, there is Quan Spa, a 24-hour fitness centre, and an indoor and outdoor pool with a whirlpool that comes surrounded by tropical gardens and a sun deck.

Room count 347

Star rating Five

Contact

Tel: (62-274) 6000888

Website: www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/jogmc-yogyakarta-marriott-hotel/

gles a plethora of other heritage sites that make interesting additions to corporate programmes.

The labyrinth of small lanes inside Kotagede, the capital of Mataram Sultanate in the 16th century, is perfect for *Amazing Race*-type team-building games which give participants a valuable history lesson.

There are also a number of traditional houses with *joglo* halls that are open for lunch and dinner.

Shinta Noor Kumala, coordinator of the Kotagede Heritage Trail, said: "When house owners realise that

their homes are admired by foreigners for their traditional architecture and heritage value, they would want to keep and preserve their houses. This is one way we help to conserve Kotagede and our home, and empower our people."

Yogyakarta's unique venue options extend to museums such as Sonobudoyo and Affandi Museum, traditional markets such as Pasar Ngasem, and more.

Yurry Apreto, director of GM Production Indonesia, said meetings in Yogyakarta need not be saturated

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

1 The new Yogyakarta airport is slated to be fully operational by 2H2020, replacing the current Adisutjipto International Airport. The first phase of development will include a 130,000m² terminal with a capacity of 15 million passengers a year, a runway that will be the widest in Indonesia. A toll road and railroad connecting the city centre and the new airport are also in the pipeline.

The new airport is expected to bring more direct international and domestic air access to Yogyakarta.

2 The Joglosemar development, which covers the surrounding area of Borobudur, is underway to significantly cut travel time across Yogyakarta, Solo and Semarang, turning the three cities into one major integrated destination. Works include the Yogyakarta-Solo toll road and the Semarang-Yogyakarta toll road.

3 Tebing Breksi, which is popular for its sunset views and picturesque surrounds, is now regarded as the next big tourism attraction in Yogyakarta. The road heading to Tebing Breksi and up to Ijo Temple has been upgraded, and a village compound comprising accommodation, retail shops and a restaurant has been built. Under development are glamping grounds, while a second amphitheatre great for private events is in the pipeline.

In response to growing demand from business event planners, the Tebing Breksi management is also preparing to form an event management team.

with cultural activities in order to offer a sense of place. It could be as simple as sitting on the floor to meet in *lesehan*-style.

To further develop the destination for business events, industry players hope the regional government will continue to develop new products, improve facilities and infrastructure, and step up promotions.

Yurry said: "We are facing competition from (other Indonesian cities like) Belitung and Mandalika, and need to keep attracting new and returning business events."

The allure of faraway shores

More incentives from Asia may soon be making their way westwards, as soon as connectivity improves and prices for trips become more competitive. By **Rachel AJ Lee**



From left: Rio Secreto is an underground river in Mexico; swimming with whale sharks in Mexico can be arranged for an unforgettable incentive trip

Asian corporate incentive groups are appearing to gain a stronger interest in destinations in Central and Latin America, according to destination specialists who have reported a rising number of enquiries from Asian planners.

Susanne K Prenzel, director of sales and marketing of Mexico-based Epic DMC, told *TTGmice* that while the current Asian traffic for her company is leisure, interest in Mexico is now spreading to corporate incentive planners.

"They are drawn to Mexico's history, culture and food," she explained.

So strong and promising is the Asian interest that hotels in Cancun are starting to employ more Asian staff and offer Asian breakfast options, observed Prenzel.

Maria Isabel Castaneda, repre-

sentative of Peru-based Milenaria Meetings and Incentives, is also seeing Asian demand extending beyond the leisure segment. In response, her company has assigned a staff to attend a tradeshow in China to get business leads.

However, enquiries from Asian corporate incentive planners have yet to be converted into confirmed bookings, with price sensitivity being the main obstacle.

Castaneda said Asian incentive planners often found tailored incentive programmes to be too pricey, preferring instead the cheaper regular leisure tour itinerary.

For Luis Herrera, senior sales manager of Panama-based Panamazing Groups & Incentives, Asian corporate bookings have materialised.

Herrera said: "Two years ago there were no Chinese MICE



groups. Last year, we received a few Chinese groups as well as a few Japanese incentive groups that came on cruise ships."

Mark Jordan, regional director of sales with tour specialist Amstar, has also started to welcome Asian incentive business in the last two years, in the form of three small but high-end Chinese groups that went to Santo Domingo, the capital of Dominican Republic.

He said: "We arranged a walking tour of the Old City and dinner at a high-end restaurant. Their tour was part of a larger Caribbean and Latin America programme."

However, the progress – while promising – is slow for Jordan.

"I'm constantly told the Asian market is going to explode (particularly South Korea, Japan and China), but I'm still waiting for that to happen. For Amstar to have a (sales) office in Beijing, there must be business there," he said.

Still, he is keen on promoting Central and Latin America as well as the Caribbean to the Asian incentive market. Amstar is pushing the region – everything south of Mexico – as a single destination.

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

1 In February 2018, Argentine airline Norwegian Air Argentina applied and was given approval for the Buenos Aires to Perth route. A trans-polar flight between the two destinations would take less than 15 hours. China Southern, Singapore Airlines, and Qantas also have rights to fly the route.

The Airbus A350 and Boeing's 787 and 777 are all capable of operating the route. They would not fly over the South Pole but around Antarctica, taking advantage of the winds which circle that continent. Norwegian Air Argentina is a division of Norwegian, an established European low-cost airline.

2 Non-stop flights to Latin America from Hong Kong and other Asian cities could be just five years away, thanks to new aircraft that can fly farther than ever before, reported *South China Morning Post* in September 2017. Ultra-longhaul aircraft would help put Hong Kong within reach of Mexico City and Brazil's Rio de Janeiro, with São Paulo not far off.

Airbus has produced a plane capable of flying distances of just under 18,000km. Its ultra-long-range version of the Airbus A350-900 can carry 230 passengers for up to 20 hours, while the Boeing 777-8 will be capable of flying 300 a similar distance.

Jordan explained: "If you're going to come all the way from Asia and you have the budget, you won't want to just see one destination. A possible itinerary would be three nights in Mexico, two nights in the Dominican Republic, two nights in Jamaica, and maybe even a side trip to Cuba. This is what our vice president of sales promotes when he goes to Asian tradeshows."

To nudge curious planners into action, Costa Rica DMC is working with the local tourism board on strategic campaigns to increase Costa Rica's visibility in Asia, revealed Gabriela Sanchez, director of sales & marketing. As well, fam trips for Asia-based incentive agents are offered, and Sanchez said her agency would look into participating in relevant tradeshows in Asia should interest continue to grow.

Destination specialists who spoke to *TTGmice* explained that the growing Asian interest could have been triggered by recent improvements in air access to Central and Latin America.

Previously, travellers from Asia take almost a day at least – with lengthy transits – to get to destinations in the region. But things have changed with All Nippon Airways (ANA) commencing its first direct flight from Japan to Mexico this year. Joining that is Air China, which launched a service between Shanghai and Panama, via a two-hour Houston transit.

Prenzel believes that the new ANA service will present business opportunities beyond Japanese corporate groups, as it makes Mexico more accessible to travellers from other important Asian markets like Thailand and Hong Kong.

With improved air access, Herrera is expecting an increase of 10 to 15 per cent in Chinese incentive groups over the next two years.

WHERE TO STAY

Grand Hyatt Bogota

The first Hyatt hotel in the Colombian capital and the first Grand Hyatt branded hotel in Colombia has opened with 372 rooms including 50 suites.

Amenities in the Grand Hyatt Bogota include the upscale Ushin Japanese & Grill, all-day Capitalino Restaurant, Ilustre Bar, and 2,270m² of meeting and event space ranging from the 1,000-pax Grand Ballroom to the 25m² conference room.

Recreational facilities include the Zaitania Spa boasting 11 treatment rooms, three hydrotherapy pools, steam room, and dry sauna; as well as an indoor pool and gym.

Mandarin Oriental Canouan

Located in Canouan – a small island in the Caribbean archipelago nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines – Mandarin Oriental Canouan is the brand's first resort in the region.

Rebranded from the Pink Sands Club, Canouan, the property sits on a stretch of Godahl Beach, and offers 26 colonial-style suites and six four-bedroom Lagoon Villas. F&B options include two fine-dining restaurants, a spa with nine treatment rooms, an infinity pool, fully-equipped fitness centre, tennis courts, and Kids' Club.

There is also a watersports centre for more adventurous pursuits.



Grand Hyatt Bogota's king guestroom offers a view of the Andes

Hampton Inn by Hilton Monterrey and Homewood Suites by Hilton Monterrey Apodaca

Hilton has opened the Hampton by Hilton Monterrey Apodaca and Homewood Suites by Hilton Monterrey Apodaca, the company's second dual-brand property in Mexico.

Located 10 minutes from the city centre, the 96-room Hampton Inn by Hilton offers complimentary Wi-Fi and a 24-hour business centre.

Meanwhile, Homewood Suites by Hilton offers 69 studio and one-bedroom apartments, each furnished with fully-equipped kitchens. Wi-Fi, 24-hour business centre and a convenience store are available to guests

While each hotel has its own lobby and dining area, there will be communal areas such as the 24-hour fitness centre, outdoor pool, basketball court, and a meeting space for up to 100 guests.



Learn about the history and significance of the Panama Canal (pictured) at its eponymous visitor centre

Bangkok, a hive of action

IT&CMA and CTW Asia-Pacific 2018 brought together event planners and corporate travel managers from all over the region and beyond. Photos by Yingyong Unanongrak



Embracing change in business events

The Malaysia Business Events Week headed up to the cool and misty Genting Highlands in August to get delegates thinking deeply about the future of business events



MICE cruises right in

A strong and lively audience at the first Asian MICE Cruise Conference. Photos by Yingyong Unanongrak

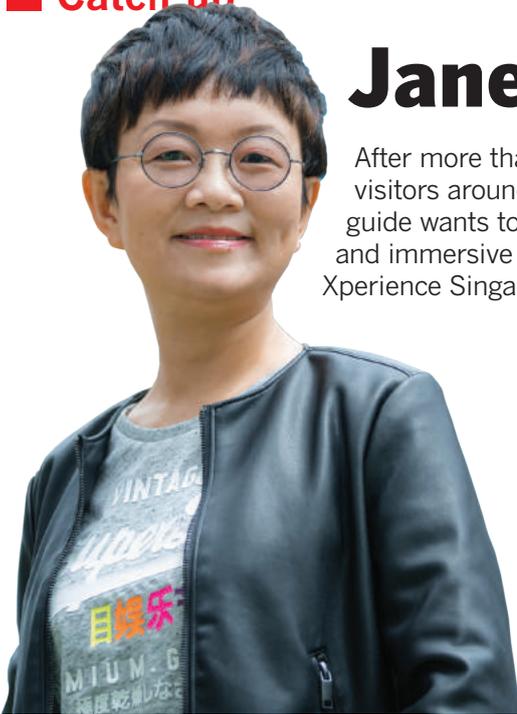


A power-packed morning session

Successful women in MICE were the centre of attention at the inaugural ICCA-TTG Passionate Breakfast event on September 18. Photos by Yingyong Unanongrak



Catch up



Jane Goh

After more than a decade of showing visitors around Singapore, this tourist guide wants to offer more innovative and immersive tours as the director of Xperience Singapore Events & Travel DMC

You started in hospitality and eventually joined tourism. What drew you to this field?

I felt like I had found my calling to showcase Singapore to the rest of the world.

From groups, I branched out to private tours, and all these experiences helped me realise that there are many other things we can do

to sell the country as a destination, but they're not being done yet. There's a lot of focus on man-made attractions, but the soft (experience) is not there.

I wanted to show another side of Singapore that a lot of travellers and incentive visitors have not seen.

What sort of soft experiences?

A lot of our special interest groups or cultural troupes have done tours for locals before, but not tourists. They don't know who to approach or how to go about it.

Activities like learning and performing the Chinese lion dance, and rowing across Marina Reservoir on dragonboat can be done not just

for travellers, but for conferences, events and teambuilding attendees.

In fact, the dragonboat racing group had approached a travel agent for a partnership in the past, but was turned down.

We would like to promote this to event planners so that they know there's something different they can do here in Singapore.

What are you anticipating most in your new DMC role?

This is a new direction for me, so I'm looking forward to how we can make the company different, and become successful among the many players in the market. - Pamela Chow

Appointments

Darren Waite

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre has appointed Darren Waite as director of sales. Waite was last with AccorHotels where he was regional director of sales and marketing for Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

Greg Findlay

Greg Findlay has joined Makati Shangri-La, Manila, as general manager. Prior to joining the Shangri-La group, Findlay was the general manager of The Westin Bund Center in Shanghai, China.

Jeremy Simeon

The Song Saa Private Island in Cambodia's has appointed Jeremy Simeon as executive chef. Trained in French techniques as well as macrobiotic cooking, Simeon brings with him 25 years of culinary experience.

Kurt Otto Wehinger

Kurt Otto Wehinger has been appointed general manager of Pan Pacific Singapore, transferring from Australia where he was the general manager of Parkroyal Darling Harbour and area general manager

for Oceania for the past 2.5 years. Wehinger has also managed hotels under international brands including Kempinski and InterContinental.

Samit Ganguly

Hyatt Regency Phuket Resort has appointed Samit Ganguly as general manager. Ganguly first commenced his career with Hyatt in 2002, where he has held positions as director of convention sales at Hyatt Regency Dubai, and director of sales at Hyatt Regency Kolkata.

Stephane Roubin

Conrad Hong Kong has appointed Stephane Roubin as hotel manager. Born in France, he joined Hilton around 15 years ago and he has worked in various establishments of the hotel chain across the globe.

Stéphanie Walters

Stéphanie Walters has joined The Datai Langkawi as director of sales. She will manage all the direct B2B transactions for the European market, as well as develop the golf segment.

Stephen Antram

Wharf Hotels has appointed Stephen Antram as general manager of Marco Polo Shenzhen. He was previously general manager of InterContinental Beijing Beichen.

Tania Getzov

Tania Getzova has joined InterContinental Singapore Robertson Quay as general manager. The Bulgarian joins from Hotel Indigo Lower East Side New York, where she was the opening general manager since 2014.



Greg Findlay



Kurt Otto Wehinger



Stephane Roubin



Stéphanie Walters



Tania Getzov

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The article The Technology Experience in TTGmice June 2017 by Karen Yue has been awarded a PATA Gold Award 2018 in Travel Journalism - Business Article category.



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3/4[^]-NIGHT MALAYSIA GETAWAY

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