

May 2019

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A star is born

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Xinyi Liang-Pholsena
Editor, TTG Asia

Blurring lines

It's well-established that travellers are mixing their business trips with leisure time, giving rise to the emergence of bleisure travel in recent years and serving up new sales opportunities across the industry.

For hospitality providers, it no longer makes sense for hotels to neatly divide guests into two brackets – business and leisure – as lines between these two types of travellers have blurred significantly in recent years.

In my recent conversations with hoteliers in Bangkok, several of them shared that their properties, which traditionally targeted the business or long stay segments, are seeing more leisure travellers, as well as families. This blurring of segments as guests book across business, leisure and family trips is changing how these hotel companies are planning strategies, as well as designing their spaces.

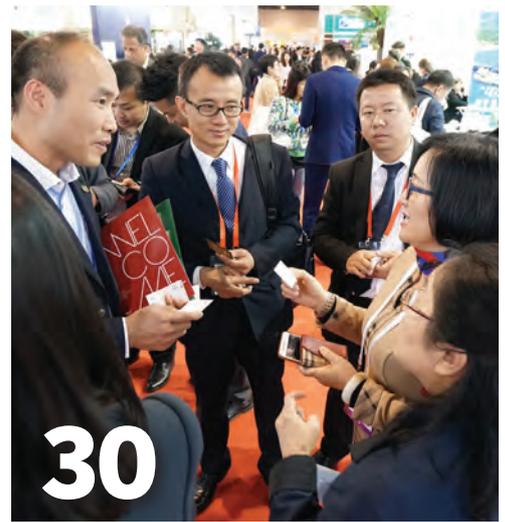
Add to that the emergence of Airbnb plus co-living and co-working trends among a new generation of millennial workers, more hospitality brands are incorporating elements of leisure and business stay from the start, innovating on traditional hospitality concepts to provide a more authentic and connected experience for guests.

Even events and meetings venues in hotels are no longer staid rooms offering standard services, becoming fluid, multifunctional spaces that are experiences in themselves.

W, being the daring design proponent that it is, wants to pack a punch with its new Brisbane property, which features a Great Room with a starry night ceiling, reminiscent of a star-clad evening in the Queensland outback. In Shanghai's Jing'an district, The Middle House touts an impressive 208m² Penthouse suite that can be turned into a sophisticated venue for events of various sizes, from intimate soirees to cocktail parties for up to 200 people.

These are just some examples of how hotels are staying ahead of the game. Our May cover feature (see pages 10-16) offers the low-down on how hotels and resorts across Asia-Pacific are offering imaginative spaces with sensory events for events.

Amid changing expectations and the work/life blurring, travel and hospitality players who know how to ride the waves of shifting corporate, lifestyle and generational and corporate trends will surely find lucrative opportunities in the art of bleisure.



COVER STORY

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New hotels and resorts across Asia-Pacific are offering imaginative spaces with sensory experiences for events. Think indoor starry-night ceilings, outdoor private gardens, and expansive beachfronts

COUNTRY REPORTS

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Khon Kaen has proven itself capable of handling large trade exhibitions, and is now transforming into an all-rounded MICE destination. By Rachel AJ Lee

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Business events in Shanghai are taking off thanks to recently launched air routes, new hotels, and revitalised historic areas, writes Caroline Boey

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South Tangerang may unseat Jakarta as the country's top business events destination in just a few years. Tiara Maharani reports

26 Philippines // Clark means business

The city's beehive of construction activities has reached frenetic proportions, paving the way for it to become one of the Philippines' most sought-after MICE destinations. Rosa Ocampo reports

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Snapshots

@ttgmice



The TTG team with SingEx's CEO Aloysius Arlando at the SingEx Chinese New Year celebration. February 11



Champagne, sweet servings and a view from above. Hosted buyers and media enjoy a ride on the Melbourne Star during AIME 2019. February 18



Australian country singer Tom Curtain entertaining the crowd during a Northern Territory showcase at AIME 2019. February 21



IT&CM China 2019 is China's only doublebill MICE event. The three-day event was packed with seminars, forums, exhibitions, power luncheons, and networking sessions. March 26

PERSPECTIVES

Prashant Kirtane, CEO & co-founder of Travelstop, shares his thoughts about how an AI-centric future can benefit and assist in streamlining the ever-growing corporate travel sector in APAC



INTELLIGENCE

Experience creation is the top priority for event planners in Asia Pacific, according to IACC's inaugural APAC edition of its *Meeting Room of the Future* report



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What's happening



May 13-16
TRENZ
Rotorua, New Zealand



May 15-17
ITB China
Shanghai, China



May 21-23
IMEX Frankfurt
Frankfurt, Germany



We love

New Moon (Bar) rises over Bangkok's skyline

Banyan Tree Bangkok has reopened its rooftop Moon Bar – which shares the zone with Vertigo Restaurant – after a series of extensive renovations.

The bar has undergone a complete transformation, and now sports new features such as a diamond-form bar, as well as a Moon Walk, which is a glass “bridge” vista point on the 61st storey where guests can enjoy breathtaking views of the Thai cityscape.

Planners can book out the entire Vertigo and Moon Bar, where the maximum capacity for sit-down dinner is 250 pax, while cocktail-standing capacity is 400 pax. Private functions for the whole venue require a minimum F&B spend of 2.7++ million baht (US\$85,300++)

per function from 18.00 to 22.30. The price includes a back-up venue in case of inclement weather.

Should a smaller private drink reception be required instead, there is also the New Neptune. This area requires a minimum F&B spend of 450,000++ baht per function from 18.00 to 22.30, and it can hold 70 pax for a sit-down dinner, or 100 pax in standing cocktail.

Staff can also create a corporate-branded cocktail upon request. Otherwise, choose from one of the Moon Bar's new cocktail offerings ranging from the vodka- and rum-based #VertigoStorm to the The Moonwalk featuring the Chandon Brut Sparkling Wine and Grand Marnier Cordon Rouge.

New Alila opens in Jakarta

Alila SCBD Jakarta has opened next to the Indonesia Stock Exchange, featuring a striking façade with its irregular, boot-like architecture comprising a long podium and a diamond-shaped tower.

The five-star property boasts 227 studios and suites, as well as recreational facilities such as a spa, outdoor swimming pool and gym. There are several F&B options ranging from the New-York style Vong Kitchen to 24-hour Le Burger, both by Michelin-star chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten and son Cedric, as well as Hakkasan speciality restaurants by the Hakkasan Group. For events and meetings, there are 13 event studios on-site.

The minimalist property features original art works, including the Orbital of Joy, a large wall-mounted artwork by Yogyakarta-based art duo Indieguerillas outside the entrance to the hotel; and a dramatic art installation titled Birds, Bats and Butterflies, created by Australian-born architect and artist Richard Hassell, in the lobby.



Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo floats out new venue for hire

Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo in Sri Lanka has unveiled 8^o on the Lake, billing it as the city's first mobile floating venue in a five-star hotel.

The floating venue on Beira Lake boasts an open show-kitchen, two air-conditioned decks, a translucent roof and minimalistic, white interiors that can accommodate over 100 people. It is suitable for private events, business luncheons or intimate cocktail evenings.

Event planners can choose to float the pontoon during sunset for delegates to enjoy the stars through the translucent roof after; or dock it as an extension to the waterside or the hotel's garden venue equipped with a pier.



- ADVERTORIAL -

Pop-up space surfaces in Melbourne

Australian boutique catering company Blakes Feast has joined forces with Harry the Hirer to create a pop-up event space at Melbourne's iconic Royal Botanical Gardens.

Called The Atrium, the conservatory-like structure will stand at Dog Flat from December 6-22, 2019. The function space boasts a cathedral roof, glass panelling offering panoramic views, three-metre-high walls, a terrace and a circular-shaped truss – all encased within a black powder-coated aluminium frame.

Accommodating 350 pax cocktail-style or 240 seated guests, the space is suitable for private parties, installations, as well as corporate gatherings.

Blake's Feast has created three premium menu packages featuring seasonal ingredients for The Atrium: cocktail, plated and banquet; as well as three beverage packages featuring curated wine lists from local producers.



Sunway rejuvenates its event areas



Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa has reopened its Grand Ballroom and event spaces after a four-month, RM54 million (US\$13.2 million) refurbishment.

The 210m² Grand Ballroom overlooking the lagoon and Sunway City now sports a nine-metre-high ceiling, grand crystal dome lights, smart lighting system and floor-to-ceiling windows. It can seat 2,000 guests in banquet setting, or be split into three smaller rooms.

In addition, the 32 column-free meeting and event rooms measuring 30m² to 344m² – including its pre-function and coffee break areas – have also been transformed with new carpeting, wall coverings, lighting and furniture.

Hot deal

Pullman Luang Prabang

Pullman Luang Prabang has launched a Meet and Play MICE package that blends outdoor experiences, socially-responsible events and corporate meetings together.

The package, bookable from now until August 31, 2019, enables groups to create their own customised corporate retreat, including full- or half-day meetings, one free room night for every 15 paid rooms, round-trip airport transfers for one VIP guest, discounts on group cocktails and dinners, and more.

Event organisers can choose from the 368m² Nam Khong Ballroom, 116m² Nam

Khan function room, or Le Salon boardroom. The trio of flexible venues creates options for events of all sizes, accommodating up to 300 delegates.

The property has also teamed up with a series of local partners to create unique off-site activities.

For example, corporate guests can visit the Laos Buffalo Dairy, the first dairy farm in Laos which supplies local products including buffalo mozzarella to Pullman Luang Prabang. Delegates will learn how this social enterprise is working with Lao farmers and diversifying the local agricultural industry. Guests will be able to meet the owners, Susie Martin and Rachel O'Shea, enjoy close encounters with their 150-plus buffaloes, visit the dairy, and taste their products.

Alternatively, groups can head to Ock Pop Tok, a sustainable textiles business that empowers the women of Laos. Launched in 2000 by local weaver Veo Douangdala and British photographer Jo Smith, the organisation works with more than 500 artisans throughout the country. Delegates can visit the textile factory, or participate in a weaving class.

Email H9112@accor.com or contact (856) 71 21 1112.

Laos Buffalo Dairy



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Say Hi To Everyone!

NEW

A first reveal of 2019's attendees during this interactive ice-breaker. Get to know who's who before the exhibition and be on the lookout for delegate profiles you want to meet. Open to all delegates from IT&CM Asia and CTW APAC.



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NEW

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Exhibition Walk-About

NEW

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ENHANCED

IT&CMA delegates have even more opportunities to engage and network with CTW APAC Corporate Travel professionals as both events are housed in the same hall.

IT&CM Asia will be held from
24 to 26 September in Bangkok, Thailand.

www.itcma.com

Missed chances amid shortage

By Rosa Ocampo

Exhibition organisers are missing out on opportunities to expand regular events and mount bigger events in the absence of large-scale venues in the Philippines.

One glaring example is the Philippine Garment Industry & Fabric Expo, which is unable to double its exhibition space to two halls this year as a result of the lack of space at SMX Convention Center Manila.

“It limits us because we cannot expand to 100 booths,” the organiser, Marisa Nalana, president of Philippine Exhibits and Themeparks Corporation (PETCO), said. She added that the lack of large-scale venues also poses a problem for foreign event organisers who want to bring big fairs into the country.

Afro-Asian World Events’ owner Angel Ramos Bognot pointed out that as exhibition centres in Manila at this time are already fully booked for the year, the country is missing out on big exhibitions.

Bognot cited an example: “World Trade Center Manila cannot give me a date (for my event) this year (and only accept a 2020 date) because all of their regular exhibi-



Space within the World Trade Center Metro Manila pales in comparison to venues overseas

tions are already booked (with them).”

In comparison to mega venues overseas, Philippines’ venues are small. Its three largest venues – SMX Manila, World Trade Center Metro Manila and the Philippine International Convention Center – have a combined event space of just 30,000m².

This pales in comparison to other exhibition venues of formidable sizes built in South-east Asia in recent years, such as the 70,100m² Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Center; and the 68,100m² Jakarta International Exhibition and Congress Centre.

In addition, upcoming mega venues include the 22,600m² Kuala Lumpur Convention Center (its 11,000m² expansion will open later this year); and the 60,000m² Aichi International Convention Centre set to open in September 2019; among others in India and China.

Acknowledging that venues are small and “already operating on full capacity”, the Philippine MICE Roadmap launched last year has proposed “the construction of 10 exhibition halls with combined capacities of at least 100,000m² in the long term”.

Mitch Ballesteros, Ex-Link Events’ CEO, suggested that since events organisers and exhibitors constantly need venues and rentals keep escalating every year, industry associations could form a new group to help address the issue and come up with an alternative space.

For example, she shared that collectively, the industry can use crowdsourcing as a way to address the lack of venue space, instead of relying too much on developers, and being too comfortable in venues that are part of mixed-used developments.

AIME targets int’l buyers



This year’s Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) in Melbourne focused more on attracting international buyers, and created more networking opportunities for stakeholders.

AIME’s new organisers, Talk2 Media and Events, revealed that there were 50 per cent more hosted buyers than last year, and more than half of them were new to AIME.

Also, 65 per cent of buyers represented were from overseas, compared to just 18 per cent last year, thanks to a more thorough vetting process. Out of the 65 per cent, 70 per cent hailed from Asia.

“There was a greater focus on the quantity, quality and geographic range of (these buyers),” Matt Pearce, CEO of Talk2Media and Events, said. “We’ve

also vetted all the hosted buyers to make sure they fit the bill, (ensured) they have money to spend in the next five years, and that they are looking to spend that money in the region”.

Pearce also added new structures were adopted to encourage the right business meetings to take place. For instance, technology using algorithms were employed to match buyers and suppliers, although manual interventions were also used to get better outcomes.

“For instance, the Northern Territory in the past may not have been as interested in Chinese visitors, but they now have a direct service to Guangzhou from Darwin, so China now becomes more important and more interesting to them,” elaborated Pearce.

Networking opportunities have also been given more priority with meeting spaces redesigned, and the welcome party was adjusted for more food and less music to encourage talking.

Australian Podiatry Association’s events manager Pauline Taylor, who has attended more than 10 AIMEs, shared with *TTGmice* she appreciated the more personalised attention from organisers this year. – **Adelaine Ng**

In brief

PCMA to offer educational programmes

The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) is talking to convention bureaus, corporations and other partners in the Asia Pacific about developing a range of educational products and programmes, including official degrees on business events. The association also has ambitious plans for the APAC region, with a calendar for up to 20 knowledge exchanges this year.

Hilton launches new Signia brand

Hilton has unveiled a new meetings-and-events-focused brand, Signia Hilton, a portfolio of hotels.

Each Signia property will have a minimum of 500 design-forward guestrooms, and events spaces are expected to be the signature showpiece of each. Large ballrooms and pre-function areas will feature smart design paired with the newest technology, while small- to mid-size meeting rooms will feature unique designs to spark new ideas, and optimise work and collaboration.

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MICE hurdles for inner cities

More second- and third-tier Asian cities are courting global business events, but many planners have reservations about venturing beyond main cities. By **Rachel AJ Lee**

Asia-Pacific is seeing an upward trend in inbound business events, with average meeting sizes up three per cent, according to Carlson Wagonlit Travel's *Meetings & Events' 2019 Meetings & Events Future Trends* report.

Naturally, this has whet the appetite of both second- and third-tier cities – especially those that already enjoy healthy leisure arrivals – eager to carve out a slice for themselves in the ever-growing business events pie.

However, the path to success is not easy for some of these less-prominent cities, as they have to tackle various obstacles such as lack of meetings infrastructure, limited access, and international visibility.

Japan is an example of a country with a growing number of destinations keen on attracting global events, with its

national CVB leading numerous roadshows around the world to promote lesser-known cities. However, event planners who specialise in Japan expressed uncertainty over their ability to push corporate meeting groups beyond the country's main cities, with concerns about logistics and accessibility.

Felicia Teng, general manager of Singapore-based The Meeting Lab, shared: "I feel Japan's secondary destinations are not MICE ready yet. For example, there are hotels and meeting venues that still work on the basis of individual costing (as opposed to a meeting package) – like snacks by the item, coffee by the cup, or cookies by the diameter.

"Our clients just want to know (the total price), but calculations (with local venues) can be complicated. (Main cities like) Tokyo and Osaka are better, where more hotels can work in international style."

However, Teng noted that secondary destinations in Japan could stand a higher chance of being selected for groups that have repeatedly gone to main cities and now desire new experiences.

The observation holds true for other countries.

Mona Abdul Manap, CEO of Malaysian events specialist Place Borneo, found that Sarawak's off-the-beaten-track reputation has earned it favour among Asian and European

meeting planners as well as younger event delegates, who seek adventurous experiences that they can brag about on social media.

Citing an example, Mona said a four-wheel drive experience which involved travelling on dirt logging roads as well as a boat ride from Long Terawan were deemed the programme highlights for an incentive group from Poland.

As such, some representatives of Japanese cities are dangling unique local experiences as bait for groups.

Gifu Convention and Visitors Bureau's managing director Atsushi Ishida, pointed to Ukai cormorant fishing – designated as an Important Tangible Folk Cultural Property of Japan – as an example of an experience that is uniquely Gifu. Ishida added that it would work perfectly as an evening activity after a congress or meeting.

Yuko Sawatani, Okayama Convention Center's operation department marketing and sales division head, said Okayama is a "Muslim-friendly destination", and will be an attractive option for both incentive groups and meetings with Muslim delegates as it offers new experiences like homestays and Halal-certified local cuisine.

Accessibility is also a prime concern for event planners.

Tan Li Ting, manager of Apple Vacations Singapore,

opined that second- and third-tier destinations would be more appealing to corporate groups if they were accessible by an international airport or located near a major meeting city.

In the *American Express Meetings & Events 2019 Global Meetings and Events Forecast*, a quarter of surveyed planners across the region are choosing rising event costs, up from only three per cent last year.

Alicia Yao, deputy secretary-general, MICE Committee of China Association of Travel Services, agreed, as she found that emerging Chinese MICE cities have been able to use cost comparison to their benefit. She said CVBs in emerging Chinese destinations offer sponsorship to attract corporate groups, something that main cities Shanghai and Beijing do not do.

In addition, Yao said staying at an international five-star hotel with meeting facilities was 30 to 50 per cent cheaper in Suzhou as compared to Shanghai, and about 30 per cent cheaper in Hangzhou.

Besides touting their price appeal, eager inner cities can also leverage major events to boost their visibility on the global stage.

"Tokyo and its surrounding areas are busy and booked out with the Olympics, so people who want to hold events around the same time will head out to outlying cities... which is good for us. Also, two Rugby World Cup games will be held in Fukuoka. This will boost the destination's image," said Macphie Kenneth Alexander, international MICE sales, Fukuoka Convention & Visitors Bureau.

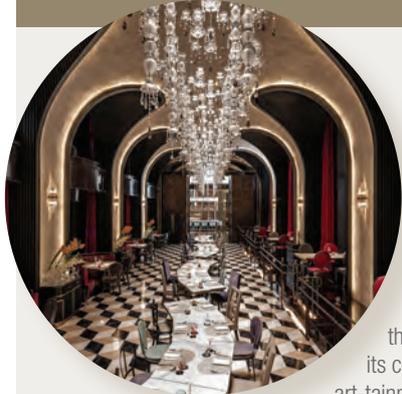
For Sarawak in Malaysia, hosting the 55th ICCA Congress in 2016 was key to its subsequent success as a hot meetings city.

Sarawak Convention Bureau's (SCB) COO Amelia Roziman noted: "When meeting planners decide on a destination, they seek a strong and dynamic delivery of the sessions paired with the best environment to captivate the audience and make the conference relevant."



Meet success at Incheon's Paradise City

North-east Asia's first integrated resort with Korea's largest convention centre linked to a luxury hotel



Located on Yeongjongdo in the vicinity of Incheon International Airport, serving the Seoul Capital Area, Paradise City is a new premium business events venue.

Paradise City's excellent location offers easy access to regional participants and international delegates from all over the world. The integrated resort wows with its contemporary, stylish design and mix of art-tainment, with 3,000 pieces of artwork on display, relaxation and after-hours fun activities to

help organisers achieve their business event goals.

Paradise City, which occupies the equivalent area of 46 soccer pitches, launched phase one in early-2017. In 2018 it hosted the World Aviation Conference, attended by 1,000 aviation professionals and specialists from 70 countries; the Montblanc de la Culture Arts Patronage Award; the Asia Artist Awards Red Carpet; and the esports Overwatch Pacific Challenge match, to name a few important events it has hosted so far.

Meetings planners have a wide choice of facilities at Paradise City to help them organise large or intimate events.

Take a look at what the integrated resort has to offer

- The 711-room five-star Paradise Hotel & Resort has four restaurants, serving Asian and Western cuisine, and two bars
- The Convention Center, linked to the property, can seat 1,824 people, theatre-style, in its Grand Ballroom, and other meeting rooms can accommodate between 50 and 448 people
- The 58-suite Art Paradiso luxury boutique hotel is an adults only property, and features an exclusive contemporary restaurant SERASÉ
- Cimer is a Korean-style destination spa, pool and recreational activity centre, and includes a traditional Korean jjimjil spa experience
- Chroma, the largest club in North-east Asia, can accommodate 3,000 people, and world-class DJs spin a variety of music genres every night
- Paradise Art Space, which curates a wide range of creative exhibitions and masterpieces, is a unique attraction
- Plaza, inspired by the main square in Florence, Piazza della Signoria, offers



shopping, dining and cultural activities

- Studio Paradise is the largest video-making and special effects studio in the capital
- Paradise Casino is Korea's largest premium casino with 499 cutting-edge game stations

Paradise City also manages the two hectare Culture Park, which can host up to 4,000 people for mega outdoor events.

For business events that include families, the opening of theme park Wonder Box, in March, with amusement rides and attractions, completes the integrated resort's varied offerings for business events.

Make Paradise City your meeting success partner.

Convention Center Spaces

Space	Size (m ²)	Theatre-style (No. of people)
Grand Ballroom	1,500	1,824
Sapphire	590	448
Emerald	400	316
Meeting Room A	155	90
Meeting Room B	65	50
Meeting Room C	65	50
Meeting Room D	95	60
Meeting Room E	70	50



For more information, email: sales@paradian.com



Watch that space!

New hotels and resorts across Asia-Pacific are offering imaginative spaces with sensory experiences for events. Think indoor starry-night ceilings, outdoor private gardens, and expansive beachfronts

AUSTRALIA

W Brisbane

An unapologetic nod to 'Brisvegas', the 312-key W Brisbane marked the re-entry of the W brand in Australia after a 13-year hiatus when it opened in June 2018.

Expect the unexpected with decor colours that pack a punch, a pool dominated by zebra patterns and spa beds that glow. It is full of fun and thoughtful details with motion-sensitive neon room numbers that change colour as you pass by and a concierge reachable by WhatsApp. The Extreme Wow Suite showcases a limitless

panoramic vista of the Brisbane River and mountains.

The hotel also boasts 1,100m² of event space, including the 595m² Great Room with a starry night ceiling, reminiscent of a Queensland outback evening full of stars. The statement lighting and four-metre LED wall panels are perfect for presentations. The W also offers a versatile Studios and Strategy Room with river views and floor-to-ceiling windows, allowing natural light to flow in. – **Adelaine Ng**

United Places Botanic Gardens

Billed as a new concept in luxury boutique

accommodation, United Places is designed to combine the idea of a hotel and a home. There are just 12 suites boasting spacious and opulent rooms with premium amenities and a personalised concierge service.

Every room is a 'suite', allowing for meetings in the room with living spaces that are separate from the bedroom. United Places is also the only hotel in Victoria with a two-hatted restaurant, Matilda, where one floor can be transformed into a meeting space for up to 80 people. And yes, it serves in-room dining. – **Adelaine Ng**

CAMBODIA

Courtyard by Marriott Phnom Penh

Following hot on the heels of Courtyard by Marriott's first Cambodian outing in Siem Reap, a sister property opened in Phnom Penh in January.

The long-awaited international brand's appearance in Phnom Penh is appealing to business travellers seeking globally renowned hotels, which are scarce in the capital. It has two meeting rooms catering for up to 48 pax, as well as outdoor function spaces, including a rooftop swimming pool area, deck and rooftop bar offering views of the city. An Executive Club Lounge overlooks the Mekong River and features its own private meeting room space. – **Marissa Carruthers**



Clockwise from left: TTC Hotel Premium - Angkor; Courtyard by Marriott Phnom Penh; W Brisbane

Bottom: Rosewood Hong Kong

TTC Hotel Premium - Angkor

Building on Siem Reap's growing collection of properties geared towards business events, TTC Hotel Premium-Angkor has been hosting regional events since opening in May 2018.

It boasts an intricately designed conference hall and accompanying facilities in Khmer style that contain five flexible spaces, depending on the event or meeting. At full capacity, the largest space – the theatre – houses up to 200 pax, with a cocktail or banquet setting hosting 100 pax across 10 round tables. Outdoor events and cocktail evenings can also be arranged around the pool.

– **Marissa Carruthers**



HONG KONG

Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel

The 471-room Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel is the park's first hotel since it opened in 1977. The first-ever city resort hotel in Hong Kong offers a full suite of resort and business facilities with nature-themed decor, a 16m-high aquarium in the main lobby, a large lagoon pool, and four dining spaces.

For business events, the hotel offers more than 2,000m² of meetings space across nine function venues, as well as outdoor spaces. A 1,200m² pillar-free grand ballroom can cater for 960 guests banquet style, and up to 1,200 guests for a cocktail reception. – **Prudence Lui**

Rosewood Hong Kong

With 322 rooms and 91 suites, Rosewood Hong Kong has made its first foray into the city. Standing on the Kowloon waterfront and overlooking Victoria Harbour, this ultra-luxury property is situated within the Victoria Dockside arts, design and conceptual retail district.



Guestrooms here start at 53m², while suites start at 92m² making them among the largest in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the 1,000m² Harbour House and The Garden House suites feature wraparound Victoria Harbour views from their private sky terraces on the 57th floor.

For events of all sizes, the hotel offers 3,200m² of meetings space which includes a 1,000m² ballroom; a 300m² Pavilion Hall with floor-to-ceiling windows; and The Orangery, a private garden with gorgeous views overlooking the harbour. – **Prudence Lui**

INDIA

ITC Grand Goa

ITC Grand Goa further reinforces ITC Hotels' exclusive partnership with The Luxury Collection brand in India. This 252-key village-styled resort is set amid 18.2 hectares of lush landscape, with direct access to the pristine Arossim beach in Cansaulim, South Goa.

Each of its rooms and suites feature private outdoor spaces in the form of a balcony or patio providing picturesque views of the Arabian Sea, landscaped gardens, lagoons or the multi-level swimming pool.

The hotel offers perfect outdoor spaces with the Seaside Lawns for 500 people; the Forest, a tropical garden for 350 people; the Boathouse overlooking shimmering lagoons for 25 people and private beachfronts. Indoors, the hotel features the Salcete Ballroom that seats up to 370 and can be divided into three separate sections. It also offers the Benaulim for smaller meetings of 30 people; and the Cansaulim Room for informal networking events for up to 40. – **Rohit Kaul**

INDONESIA

The Apurva Kempinski Bali

Standing atop the cliff of Nusa Dua, with views of the Indian Ocean and tropical gardens, The Apurva Kempinski Bali features 475 luxurious guestrooms, suites and villas.

The resort is designed for meetings, where the Candi Ballroom offers ocean views and 1,076m² of pillar-free space; while the smaller Ocean View Grand Ballroom and Cliff Boardroom bask in abundant natural light overlooking the beach; and a spacious 2,200m² oceanfront lawn is a unique outdoor venue for gatherings and events.

The property also offers unique, bespoke experiences for groups who are looking for outdoor and cultural interactions. Customised experiences on offer include classes in Balinese dress and cooking, a temple ceremony, or yoga on the beach. – **Mimi Hudoyo**

JHL Solitaire Gading Serpong

This 144-room property is the first five-star hotel in the Gading Serpong area in

South Tangerang, West Jakarta. It stands approximately 10 minutes away from the Indonesia Convention Exhibition.

Located on the top floor of the hotel, the pillar-free Sky Ballroom can accommodate up to 800 people theatre-style, and offers a 180-degree view of the city.

The hotel also features seven meeting rooms, including the Sky Garden Room. Other indoor venues can accommodate up to 20 pax theatre-style and when combined with the open-air garden, the space can host up to 80 people for standing receptions or product launches.

For a casual corporate dinner party, the Empress Chinese Bar near the swimming pool is a great outdoor venue for up to 150 people. The hotel's all-day dining venue, Mangan Restaurant, is also available for event buyouts. – **Mimi Hudoyo**

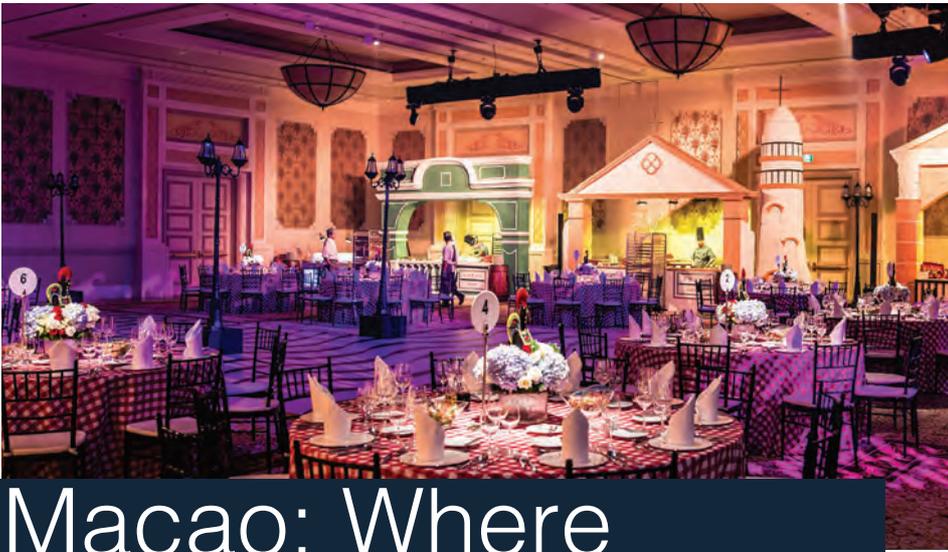
LAOS

Pullman Luang Prabang

As Laos starts to tap into the business events market, new hotels are ensuring their properties are ready to cater to busi-



Clockwise from left: The Apurva Kempinski Bali; ITC Grand Goa; JHL Solitaire Gading Serpong



Macao: Where an extraordinary experience awaits



Get ready for a taste of vibrant Macao, where old-world Sino-European architecture and culture merge together in themed banquets hosted in Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel and The St. Regis Macao. An extraordinary experience awaits.

Themed banquet

Guests will be immersed in a nostalgic atmosphere as the themed banquet transforms the ballroom and teleports them into the colourful city during its bygone era of the 1960s.

Through the 'Macao Fiesta' theme, which is exclusively designed by the two hotels, the banquet pays tribute to the destination's cultural heritage as it recreates iconic landmarks, entertainment and cuisine.

This venue features architectural icons such

as A-Ma Temple and the Ruins of St. Paul's, plus a range of entertainment options like fortune telling, Chinese calligraphy, Portuguese Fado music and salsa dancing to reflect Macanese traditions.

Culinary delight

The diverse culinary traditions of Macao is showcased through a wide range of Portuguese and Macanese dishes. Guests will be served by staff dressed as local fishermen carrying flat baskets on poles, while sangria is served from a terracotta barrel by a staff dressed as a villager riding a trishaw.

Go local

To present the best of Macanese cuisine, treat guests to the 'Go Local – Macao Inspired' coffee break or the 'Dim Sum Trolley' coffee break, two special themed experiences which offer a taste of the destination through unique local delicacies.

Delegates can even bring home a taste of Macao as they master the skills of whipping up a delectable Portuguese seafood rice from hotel chefs during the teambuilding activity.

Flexible meeting facilities

With various themed packages, the experienced and creative events team at Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel and The St. Regis Macao will lend their expertise in designing unforgettable experiences, which promise to impress groups with different needs and sizes.

For intimate meetings, The St. Regis Macao offers a few venues to choose from including the regal Astor Ballroom – which seats 648 guests – while Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel has over 14,000m² of meeting space, plus the 4,891m² pillar-less Kashgar Ballroom that is suitable for any occasion and can accommodate up to 5,000 guests.



Enjoy greater benefits with Meetings Beyond Imagination

Stay Period:

From now until December 18, 2020

For events booked from now until December 31, 2019, organisers and delegates can enjoy special privileges on cocktail reception, AV equipment, restaurants & bars, spa and even shopping (T&C applies) at the Sands Resorts Macao. In addition, event organisers can enjoy more with more bookings*.

Book more and get more:

- Book 25-100 rooms daily and enjoy 1 offer
- Book 101-150 rooms on peak and enjoy 2 offers
- Book 151-200 rooms on peak and enjoy 3 offers
- Book 201 rooms or more on peak and enjoy 4 offers

Offer:

- 5% off on the master bill
- A complimentary room for every 25 rooms booked
- A complimentary room upgrade for every 25 rooms booked
- 50% off ferry tickets

Terms & Conditions

**This offer applies to bookings with a minimum stay of 2 consecutive nights with 25 rooms per night, together with the purchase of a standard meeting package and/or standard banquet menu for all group attendees.*

For more details, visit www.sheratongrandmacao.com, or contact the sales team at +853 8113 0700 or email sales.macao@sheraton.com



**Sheraton
Grand**

MACAO HOTEL
COTAI CENTRAL



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MACAO • COTAI CENTRAL

Cover story

ness guests, and Pullman Luang Prabang is leading the way.

Opened in July 2018, it is the first of its kind in a town known more for its cultural heritage than convention halls and meetings spaces.

Set around landscaped tropical gardens, babbling brooks and ponds, the conference centre comprises five flexible meeting rooms, a breakout room, a fresco area and day-lit ballroom. For intimate events, the two-bedroom suite hosts up to 50 guests next to the private pool, or 12 for a board meeting.

– **Marissa Carruthers**

MALAYSIA

W Kuala Lumpur

Perfectly situated in the city centre, the 150-key W Kuala Lumpur overlooks the Twin Towers. One of its most distinct design features is the pixel or dot, which is integrated throughout the hotel and symbolises a multicultural Malaysia.

All of the guestrooms feature a mix of the city's heritage and modernity with indigenous "Wau" tassels and pixelated recreations of batik designs.

For events, W Kuala Lumpur offers 1,475m² of meetings space and unique setups with beanbags and sofas. Even non-traditional meeting spaces such as a bar or suite can be transformed for small gatherings. Attendees can break the mould in a bold conference space, or host a celebration in the Great Room, which can cater for 700 people and features an impressive, 11-meter-high HD LED wall.

After a day of meetings, guests who want to explore the city can approach a W Insider, who recommends places and crafts itineraries. – **S Puvaneswary**

Banyan Tree Kuala Lumpur

Organisers looking to get away from crowds may consider the 55-room Banyan Tree Kuala Lumpur.

Occupying the top seven floors of the Banyan Tree Signatures Pavilion Kuala Lumpur Building, the hotel boasts stunning views of the Petronas Twin Towers and Kuala Lumpur Tower.

Rooms and suites here start from 51m² and go up to 200m². For events, Banyan Tree offers three fully equipped boardrooms to hold meetings for up to 16 people each. The property's two restaurants are versatile and can be used for private functions.

With Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur City Centre Park and Kuala Lumpur Eco Park within easy walking distance, organisers can also incorporate recreational activities in the evenings after a day of heavy discussions, or delegates can also make use of the spa. Best of all, the entire property can be bought out by meeting planners. – **S Puvaneswary**

MYANMAR

Rosewood Yangon

Rosewood Yangon marks the brand's first outing in Myanmar and seventh in Asia.

Located in the city's historic core on The Strand, Rosewood Yangon is housed in a heritage 1927 building – originally the New Law Courts – that has been lovingly restored inside and out.

The 205-key property boasts five dining venues, a spa, rooftop infinity pool and a fitness studio. Meeting and function facilities include a Ballroom, Heritage Salon, Bridal Suite, Event Studio, three meeting rooms, and a Terrace Suite boasting a large outdoor deck. – **Marissa Carruthers**

Awei Metta Yangon

Since opening last December, Awei Metta has proved a popular Yangon venue for business events.

Located in the leafy western suburbs, halfway between the international airport and downtown Yangon, the modern 46-key resort overlooks the Gary Player-designed Pun Hlaing Golf Club. It features a 315m² ballroom, which acts as a conference room and can seat up to 250 people. There are an additional two meeting rooms, for up to 20.

Other amenities include a small business centre, restaurant, lobby lounge and bar, cigar room, fitness centre, spa, swimming pool and tennis courts.

– **Marissa Carruthers**

PHILIPPINES

Grand Hyatt Manila

This new hotel set within the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig literally takes luxury to new heights. Taking full advantage of the building's height – at 318 meters or 62 storeys, the tallest in the Philippines – the hotel occupies the top floors above luxe residences and commercial areas.

All of the 461 spacious rooms feature unobstructed views of the metro's skyline. Meanwhile, business events venues also dazzle with the latest technology, modern equipment, and luxe decor including the pillar-free jewelry-box inspired Grand Ballroom that features a show kitchen facility. – **Rosa Ocampo**

SHANGHAI

The Middle House

Located in the heart of Shanghai's Jing'an district, The Middle House is Swire



From left: W Kuala Lumpur; Awei Metta Yangon



Hotels' latest addition to The House Collective group of hotels.

The 111 modern studios range from 50m² to 100m² in size, with interiors designed by Piero Lissoni, who blends his minimalist style with classic Shanghaiese elements. For intimate events, there is also the 110m² Gallery Suite that comes with its own private terrace, separate bedroom and living room.

For larger events, the Penthouse, occupying an impressive 660m² on the 14th floor, features an inviting living area perfect for entertaining, and outdoor terraces with views overlooking Nanjing Road West. The Penthouse even boasts an outdoor area, and its own 208m² indoor room that can be converted further into two smaller spaces for more intimate events. It can hold up to 200 people for a cocktail party. – **Prudence Lui**

InterContinental Shanghai Wonderland

As the world's first underground hotel, the 336-key InterContinental Shanghai Wonderland is an 18-storey resort that is built into the wall of a once-abandoned quarry in the Sheshan Mountain Range.

Sixteen floors are underground and two floors are submerged underwater into a 33m-deep aquarium, where guests can watch marine life and enjoy round-the-clock butler service.

Event planners will find the 900m² Wonderland Grand Ballroom impressive. The space is divisible into three function rooms, features sky lighting and can accommodate drive-in displays. The light and water theatrics are spectacular, and can be customised for events.

– **Prudence Lui**



From top: InterContinental Shanghai Wonderland; Village Hotel at Sentosa

SINGAPORE

The Capitol Kempinski Hotel

Taking over the heritage icon Capitol Theatre, The Capitol Kempinski Hotel marks Kempinski's debut in Singapore, presenting 157 keys and a collection of luxurious meeting and ballroom spaces.

Intimate gatherings or board meetings of up to 20 can be hosted in one of the elegant meeting rooms or The Private Dining Room, which affords high ceilings, natural daylight, an integrated LED screen and a chef's table for the option of a bespoke dining experience.

Larger events of up to 220 guests can be hosted in the event salon, which is equipped with state-of-the-art conference technology; in the open show kitchen; or

even in the directly linked Capitol Theatre next door, whose multi-functional space features a rotational floor system.

– **Pamela Chow**

Village Hotel at Sentosa

Newly opened in April, this latest addition to Far East Hospitality's Village brand is Sentosa Island's next big draw for meeting and incentive groups thanks to its more affordable and egalitarian price point.

The 606-key property features outdoor event spaces by the pool and various ballroom spaces from 88m² to 778m². These include Village Square – a 330m² space able to host up to 190 guests in banquet seating – which can be

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From left: W Kuala Lumpur; Awei Metta Yangon

TTG TRAVEL AWARDS 2019



Cast Your Vote Now!

You Determine Who Clinches The Top Honour In The Industry

TTG Travel Awards, Asia-Pacific travel trade's most celebrated event, is back for its 30th year to honor the industry's crème de la crème. Tell us which company has made exemplary achievements and contributions that have raised the bar of excellence and taken the industry to greater heights.

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

awards.ttgasia.com

Closing Date: 10 July 2019

Award Categories

1. Travel Agency Awards

Winners in this category are decided by votes from industry suppliers.

- Best Travel Agency – Chinese Taipei
- Best Travel Agency – Hong Kong
- Best Travel Agency – India
- Best Travel Agency – Indonesia
- Best Travel Agency – Japan
- Best Travel Agency – Malaysia
- Best Travel Agency – Singapore
- Best Travel Agency – South Korea
- Best Travel Agency – Thailand
- Best Travel Agency – The Philippines
- Best Travel Agency – Vietnam
- Best Corporate Travel Agency
- Best Online Travel Agency

2. Travel Supplier Awards

Winners in this category are decided by votes from travel consultants and experts.

Airline Awards

- Best Full Service Carrier
- Best Airline - Business Class
- Best Inflight Service
- Best Boutique Airline
- Best Airline Connectivity
- Best Low-Cost Carrier

Hotels, Resorts and Serviced Residences Awards

HOTEL Chains

- Best Global Hotel Chain
- Best Regional Hotel Chain
- Best Local Hotel Chain
- Best Hotel Representation Company
- Best Luxury Hotel Brand
- Best Mid-range Hotel Brand
- Best Budget Hotel Brand

HOTELS – Individual Property

- Best Luxury Hotel
- Best Mid-range Hotel
- Best Budget Hotel
- Best Independent Hotel
- Best Boutique Hotel
- Best City Hotel – Bangkok
- Best City Hotel – Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City
- Best City Hotel – Hong Kong
- Best City Hotel – Jakarta
- Best City Hotel – Kuala Lumpur
- Best City Hotel – Macau
- Best City Hotel – Manila
- Best City Hotel – Seoul
- Best City Hotel – Singapore
- Best City Hotel – Taipei
- Best New City Hotel
- Best Airport Hotel

RESORTS – Individual Property & Serviced Residences

- Best Beach Resort
- Best Integrated Resort
- Best Serviced Residence Operator
- Best Serviced Residence (Property Level)

BT-MICE Awards

- Best Business Hotel
- Best Meetings & Conventions Hotel
- Best BT-MICE City
- Best Convention & Exhibition Centre
- Best Convention & Exhibition Bureau
- Best Events Technology Provider ^{NEW}

Travel Services Awards

- Best Airport Operator ^{NEW}
- Best Airport Lounge Operator
- Best NTO (National Tourism Organisation)
- Best Tour Operator
- Destination of the Year ^{NEW}
- Best Theme Attraction
- Best Cruise Line ^{NEW}
- Best Luxury Cruise Line ^{NEW}
- Best River Cruise Line ^{NEW}
- Best Car Rental Company
- Best Travel Technology Provider ^{NEW}
- Best Travel Insurance Company

3. Outstanding Achievement Awards

The winners in this category are decided by the TTG editorial team.

- Travel Personality of the Year
- Travel Entrepreneur of the Year
- Best Travel Marketing Effort
- Most Sustainable Travel Company

4. Travel Hall of Fame

Honoring organisations that have won at least 10 consecutive years at the awards.

These special award winners will be recognised at every TTG annual awards presentation ceremony. Votes for them will not be counted.

Inducted Travel Hall of Fame honorees are:

- Singapore Airlines Limited (2002)
- Singapore Changi Airport (2002)
- Hertz Asia Pacific (2005)
- Royal Cliff Hotels Group - The State of Exclusivity & Fascination (2006)
- Star Cruises (2008)
- Sabre Asia Pacific (previously known as Abacus International) (2009)
- Silkair (2010)
- Lotte Tour (2011)
- Hong Kong International Airport (2013)
- Raffles Hotel Singapore (2013)
- Regal Airport Hotel (2015)
- Banyan Tree Spa (2015)
- Qatar Airways (2016)
- Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (2016)
- Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (2016)
- Royal Plaza on Scotts (2018)
- Royal Caribbean International (2018)
- Best Western International (2019)
- Travelport (2019)

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

For Travel Agency and Travel Supplier Awards

1. Please use the correct voting form.

Voting Form A: Travel Agency Awards

For voting by hoteliers, airline staff, car rental companies, cruise operators, national tourism organisations, GDS companies and all other travel professionals (except travel consultants, tour operators and destination management companies).

Voting Form B: Travel Supplier Awards

For voting by travel consultants, tour operators and destination management companies only.

Online Voting Forms

You can also opt to vote using our online form at awards.ttgasia.com

2. Voting Criteria

Please refer to the voting criteria for each category and title to ensure that all judging is done on an equal basis.

3. Voting Rules

- Only one voting entry per person is allowed – using the voting form or online voting.
- All votes are confidential.
- Voting forms are published in selected TTG Travel Trade Publishing print titles and issues and are also available online at awards.ttgasia.com

- No responsibility will be accepted by the organisers for voting forms lost, delayed or damaged in the post.
- There are no pre-nominated contenders for any voting awards.
- The results for TTG Travel Awards 2019 are final and no correspondence will be entertained.
- Voting forms will be tabulated and evaluated by an independent auditor in Singapore.
- Voting Closes 10 July 2019.

4. Voting Form Submission

Completed voting forms are to be returned to:

SINGAPORE

Della Ng (TTG Travel Awards 2019)
TTG Asia Media
1 Science Park Road #04-07 The Capricorn
Singapore Science Park II
Singapore 117528
Tel: (65) 6395-7575 Fax: (65) 6536-0896

HONG KONG

Ms Carol Cheng (TTG Travel Awards 2019)
TTG Asia Media
8/F, E168, 166-168 Des Voeux Road Central,
Sheung Wan, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2237-7272 Fax: (852) 2237 7227

VOTING FORM A: TRAVEL AGENCY AWARDS

For voting by • Hoteliers • Airlines staff • Car rental companies • Cruise operators • National Tourism Organisations • GDS companies • All other travel professionals (except travel consultants, tour operators and destination management companies)

VOTE ONLINE AT
awards.ttgasia.com

Criteria

Best Travel Agency in its respective category in terms of:

- Professionalism and excellence in staff.
- Best value-added services to client.
- Best use of computer technology applications towards improving efficiency and effectiveness in services provided to client.

1. Best Travel Agency– Chinese Taipei

2. Best Travel Agency – Hong Kong

3. Best Travel Agency – India

4. Best Travel Agency– Indonesia

5. Best Travel Agency – Japan

6. Best Travel Agency – Malaysia

7. Best Travel Agency – Singapore

8. Best Travel Agency – South Korea

9. Best Travel Agency – Thailand

10. Best Travel Agency – The Philippines

11. Best Travel Agency – Vietnam

12. Best Corporate Travel Agency

13. Best Online Travel Agency

VOTER INFORMATION

Name: Job title: Company:

Address:

Country:

Telephone no.: Fax no.:

Email: Signature:

Please refer to the next page for
VOTING FORM B:
TRAVEL SUPPLIER AWARDS

VOTING CLOSES
10 JULY 2019

VOTING FORM B: TRAVEL SUPPLIER AWARDS

For voting by • Travel Consultants • Tour Operators • Destination Management Companies

Airline Awards

Criteria

Best airline in its respective category in terms of:

- Best product, services and facilities.
- Most consistent and reliable network and schedules.
- Most agent-friendly in terms of reservations, commissions, incentives, ancillary opportunities and servicing.
- Best agency outreach programmes, including trade promotions and marketing, training and relationship-building.

14. Best Full Service Carrier

15. Best Airline - Business Class

16. Best Inflight Service

17. Best Boutique Airline

18. Best Airline Connectivity

19. Best Low Cost-Carrier

Hotels, Resorts and Serviced Residences Awards

Criteria

Best Hotel Chain in its respective category in terms of:

- Most consistent in products and services.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas, incentive programmes and servicing.

Best Hotel/Resort/Serviced Residence in its respective category in terms of:

- Best services and facilities.
- Best range of value-added benefits.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.

HOTEL CHAINS

20. Best Global Hotel Chain

21. Best Regional Hotel Chain

22. Best Local Hotel Chain

23. Best Hotel Representation Company

24. Best Luxury Hotel Brand

25. Best Mid-range Hotel Brand

26. Best Budget Hotel Brand

HOTELS – Individual Property

27. Best Luxury Hotel

28. Best Mid-range Hotel

29. Best Budget Hotel

30. Best Independent Hotel

31. Best Boutique Hotel

32. Best City Hotel – Bangkok

33. Best City Hotel – Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City

34. Best City Hotel – Hong Kong

35. Best City Hotel – Jakarta

36. Best City Hotel – Kuala Lumpur

37. Best City Hotel – Macao

38. Best City Hotel – Manila

39. Best City Hotel – Seoul

40. Best City Hotel – Singapore

41. Best City Hotel – Taipei

42. Best New City Hotel

43. Best Airport Hotel

RESORTS – Individual Property

44. Best Beach Resort

45. Best Integrated Resort

SERVICED RESIDENCES

46. Best Serviced Residence Operator

47. Best Serviced Residence (Property Level)

BT-MICE Awards

Criteria

- Best services and facilities catering specifically to the BT-MICE market.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing the BT-MICE market.
- Most desirable and attractive incentives and value added services to business travellers and MICE planners.

48. Best Business Hotel

49. Best Meetings & Conventions Hotel

50. Best BT-MICE City

51. Best Convention & Exhibition Centre

52. Best Convention & Exhibition Bureau

53. Best Events Technology Provider

Travel Services Awards

Criteria

- Best product, services and facilities.
- Most consistent and reliable in delivery.
- Most innovative offerings.
- Most agent-friendly in terms of ease of booking, commissions, incentives and servicing.
- Best agency outreach programmes, including trade promotions and marketing, training and relationship-building.

54. Best Airport Operator

55. Best Airport Lounge Operator

56. Best NTO (National Tourism Organisation)

57. Best Tour Operator

58. Destination of the Year

59. Best Theme Attraction

60. Best Cruise Line

61. Best Luxury Cruise Line

62. Best River Cruise Line

63. Best Car Rental Company

64. Best Travel Technology Provider

65. Best Travel Insurance Company

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Finding its MICE voice

Khon Kaen has proven itself capable of handling large trade exhibitions, and is now transforming into an all-rounded MICE destination. By **Rachel AJ Lee**

Designated as one of Thailand's five key MICE cities since 2013, secondary city Khon Kaen is on track to live up to the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau's (TCEB) expectations of evolving into a more well-rounded business event destination.

Khon Kaen was chosen for its strategic location, close to the Indochina and Mekong Subregions, both of which hold "bright futures" for the Thai city's business events sector, Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, president of TCEB, said. In addition, the north-eastern region of Thailand comprises 19 provinces and one-third of the country's population, which also represented "huge room for business opportunities".

"It is our policy and mission to grow the MICE industry, to help distribute income to regional areas apart from Bangkok," he added.

As such, TCEB's current marketing activity for Khon Kaen is centred on promoting the up-and-coming Thai city's capabilities through roadshows held in Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.

"TCEB has been leveraging MICE shows in neighbouring countries as a platform for the city to gain exposure in these potential markets. Since last year, Khon Kaen city officials have joined us at roadshows," Chiruit said.

In addition to roadshows and relevant marketing activities, TCEB has also launched a guidebook, which can be used as a marketing tool for the city by DMCs and suppliers.

Since the opening of Khon Kaen International Exhibition and Convention Centre (KICE) in 2017, a number of shows have been held. For example, the Khon Kaen Coffee Bakery Ice-Cream & Franchise is a cloned event from Bangkok that attracted around 10,000 delegates from both Laos and Thailand in August 2018.

From February 28 to March 3 saw the 2019 E-San Industrial Fair take place. The largest show for industrial and agricultural machinery in the country's north-east also saw the participation of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in the form of pavilions. The three countries, and China, also sent trade missions who visited the show for business talks.

"All these events are proof of Khon Kaen's location as a gateway of business into the Indochina region," Chiruit said. He added that another B2C event, by the Thailand Chamber of Commerce, would also be relocating its fair to Khon Kaen for the first time.

The Thai city has also expanded its repertoire from exhibitions to the conferences and meetings segment.

For instance, the city played host to the PATA Destination Marketing Forum 2018 in November. The event welcomed over 300 delegates, and comprised fam trips which showcased what other activities the city could offer for corporate groups.

According to ICCA statistics, Khon Kaen hosted seven international conferences in 2017 and 2018; attracting around 2,600 delegates. Previously in 2015 and 2016, Khon Kaen only hosted one international conference per year.

Aside from KICE, other business-ready hardware Khon Kaen offers include several hotels with facilities capable of hosting meetings.

The Pullman Khon Kaen Raja Orchid has a ballroom that can hold

The up-and-coming Thai city of Khon Kaen has both the hardware and software to handle corporate groups



Angel House Studio/Shutterstock

TALKING NUMBERS

1.3 million

The number of overseas business events travellers to Thailand in 2018, up from one million in 2017, a percentage growth of 19.9 per cent. Thailand's top five market sources are China, India, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea

95.6 million baht

Equivalent to US\$3 million, this was the generated revenue from business event travellers to Thailand in 2018, up from 88.5 million baht in 2017

200%

The percentage growth in the CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) market. This was the strongest growth market for Thailand in 2018



“The challenge is how to convince event organisers about the readiness of such a destination, especially when it’s less well-known...”

Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya
President, TCEB

1,800 pax theatre-style, while Charoen Thani Khon Kaen has a similar space that can hold 1,300 pax theatre-style. Each property also features 10 breakout rooms, and both have hosted international conferences before.

Elsewhere in the city, Central Plaza Khon Kaen has a hall capable of hosting 3,000 pax theatre-style, and is also connected to a shopping centre. There

are also smaller properties that offer six to 10 meeting rooms for smaller-sized groups of between 250-300 pax.

When asked about the difficulty in marketing secondary cities, Chiruit shared: “The challenge is how to convince event organisers about the readiness of such a destination, especially when it’s less well-known when compared to the other more popular Thai destinations of Phuket, Pattaya and Chiang Mai.”

He added that event planners also had to be assured the city has infrastructure and facilities that were business events ready, and are able to cope with the scale of events, especially international ones.

In Khon Kaen’s case, Chiruit reiterates that the up-and-coming Thai city is definitely business events capable.

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

1 The profiles of eight more Thailand cities have already been studied, and Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) will be setting up a meeting and public hearing with the stakeholders in each destination in a bid to develop more MICE cities.

The destinations will also be further classified into three categories: international MICE city; regional MICE city; and domestic MICE city.

2 TCEB has recently signed MoUs with 12 private and public organisations to boost tradeshows in MICE-designated cities outside Bangkok, including Khon Kaen.



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MICE momentum builds in Shanghai

Business events in Shanghai are taking off thanks to recently launched air routes, new hotels, and revitalised historic areas, writes **Caroline Boey**

Shanghai's ability to remain fresh and exciting, with the continuous addition of new infrastructure and attractions for business events, has earned the city a strong business events reputation.

According to CWT Travel Meetings & Events, a division of Carlson Wagonlit, it holds the top spot among the top 10 cities in Asia-Pacific in 2019, and industry members are upbeat the city will continue to do well.

Violet Wang, destination manager,

Pacific World China, commented: "We have 200 airports in total in China, while another 240 are being planned or are under construction for completion before 2022, which means air capacity could double over the next three years. Ongoing projects include Terminal 3 of Pudong International Airport, and this will definitely benefit the future of international events."

Wang added Shanghai's safety factor, booming business environment – including surrounding areas

like Suzhou, Taicang and Hangzhou – good hotel and conference infrastructure, as well as increasing numbers of professionals, all make the city attractive for corporate and association meetings and incentives.

"Business is definitely increasing, at least for our company. Our event volume nearly doubled in the past year and will continue to increase," she said.

The growth potential for business events in Shanghai saw international carrier Delta Air Lines launching a non-stop daily service between Shanghai Pudong International Airport and the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in 2018, linking China's business centre and the American carrier's US hub, which offers more than 1,000 departures a day.

Wong Hong, president, Delta, Greater China and Singapore, said the new service complements Delta's existing direct flights between Shanghai and Detroit, Seattle and Los Angeles, providing the city with

The Pudong New District of Shanghai





“We forecast growth of about five to 10 per cent for Shanghai in 2019, as there are a lot of good opportunities since many companies continue to be curious about China’s rapid evolution.”

Sam Braybon

Director,
The Bespoke Travel Company

non-stop service to and from four US gateways.

For Shanghai-based Sam Braybon, director of The Bespoke Travel Company, the opening of Shanghai Edition hotel with nine different F&B venues, the revival of Columbia Circle – an historical area with good event potential – and the reopening of the Shanghai History Museum with a 9,800m² exhibition area home to around 1,100 artefacts – are giving

TALKING NUMBERS

1 Shanghai’s position in the top 10 Asia-Pacific cities ranking for meetings and events in 2019, according to Carlson Wagonlit’s CWT Travel Meetings & Events division

61 The latest 2017 report showing the number of events hosted by Shanghai, based on ICCA’s international association meetings criteria

116 The number of members participating in Shanghai’s Conference Ambassador Program

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

1 The Ministry of Culture and Tourism – the merging of the country’s Ministry of Culture and China National Tourism Administration – was formed in 1Q2018. The new ministry is expected to boost cooperation between the government, and organisations such as the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Commercial Sub-council, as well as travel trade inbound associations to encourage inbound growth. Industry members are optimistic the ministry’s formation will lead to dialogue on inbound business policy and matters.

2 The US\$3.9 billion Shenzhen International Convention and Exhibition Center in the Fuhai sub-district of Bao’an is scheduled to open in September 2019. Offering more than 1.5 million square metres of space in total, its 500,000m² of indoor exhibition space will replace Germany’s Hannover Exhibition Center as the biggest in the world. It will also feature 18 exhibition halls measuring 20,000m² each, a 40,000m² exhibition hall, a 1,700m-long central hallway, two lobbies, 11 subsidiary buildings, and 100,000m² of meeting space. It stands three kilometres away from Shenzhen International Airport’s future Terminal 4, and seven kilometres from Terminal 3.

3 The China International Import Expo (CIIE) made its debut in November 2018, taking up 27,000m² of space at Shanghai’s mega National Exhibition and Convention Center. The show was attended by an estimated 30,000 delegates.

The second edition in 2019 is expected to expand to 40,000m². The event is hosted by China’s Ministry of Commerce and the Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, in partnership with the World Trade Organization, UN Conference on Trade and Development and UN Industrial Development Organization.

China International Import Expo (CIIE) at the Shanghai National Expo and Convention Center



DMCs and meeting planners new options.

He added Shanghai’s varied dining and restaurant scene, which caters to differing budgets, has given rise to food-related activities being “super popular”.

“Our company is just about to launch a new cooking class in a French Concession villa,” he shared.

Other new ideas for activities that might appeal to international meeting participants include an art tour of the city’s best galleries with an art industry insider or, a jog through new and super cool paths in the South Bund area, he added.

On the city’s outlook, Braybon said: “We forecast growth of about five to 10 per cent for Shanghai in 2019, as there are a lot of good opportunities since many companies continue to be curious about China’s rapid evolution.”

Demand for Shanghai last year was high with room rates rising despite the increase in hotel inventory, and market sentiment for 2019 continues to be buoyant.

Julien Delerue, founder and CEO, 1000meetings, an RFP technology platform with a database of hotels in China spanning the past 10 years, said: “For the last two years, the average five-star room rate was around RMB1,000 (US\$146). Now the rate ranges between RMB1,300 and RMB1,500 during peak periods,” Delerue commented.

But meeting planners considering Shanghai also have access to less-expensive options, and Delerue pointed out Shanghai also offers plenty of four-star and lower-category room options below RMB1,000.

Kin Qin, deputy general manager, Century Holiday International Travel Group, is also upbeat about Shanghai. He commented: “There are certainly a lot of air access choices to Shanghai, and the supply of new hotels has been increasing over the last two years.

“With the continued increase in air capacity and hotel inventory, Shanghai continues to be a popular destination, and its image will also get stronger.”



An aerial view of the Indonesia Convention Exhibition

A star is born

South Tangerang may unseat Jakarta as the country's top business events destination in just a few years. **Tiara Maharani** reports

South Tangerang (Tangerang Selatan), which lies on the south-western border of Jakarta, is gearing up to become a major player on the global business events destination stage, as more events and new developments arrive in the city.

In 2015, Indonesia Convention Exhibition (ICE), the largest convention and exhibition centre in the country, opened with 220,000m² of events space in South Tangerang's Bumi Serpong Damai (BSD) area.

Since then, the number of events in Banten province – which includes South Tangerang – has been on the rise.

According to the Indonesian Exhibition Companies Association (IECA), only 15 events were held in Banten province in 2016. That number doubled to 33 events in 2017, and rose further to 58 events in 2018.

"Of the 58 events, 80 per cent were held in South Tangerang. This shows that Banten's MICE activities are centred in South Tangerang," Deden Sunandar, IECA's Banten chapter chairman said. "Events have not only increased in quantity, but also in quality."

"Before ICE opened, most events in Banten were only on a local scale. Now more than 50 per cent of events are international," he added.

Irvan Mahidin, vice chairman of Indonesia Event Industry Council (IVENDO), said organisers are starting to consider South Tangerang because it is closer to Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. Exhibitors can easily transport goods from the airport or seaport to the exhibition hall.

"The local government is very cooperative in helping organisers – from immigration, customs to taxation. Organisers are truly spoilt in South Tangerang," Mahidin noted.

However, conveniences such as these have not yet attracted Chinese organisers to South Tangerang. One of the main reasons, said Mahidin, is because most people only think about the capital city of Jakarta. As the largest metropolitan city in Indonesia, Jakarta is still more attractive than South Tangerang.

That is why ICE is very focused on promotions and has been proactively participating in tradeshow and conducting roadshows, Ryan Adrian, president director of Indonesia International Expo (which owns ICE), said.

Adrian added: "Over the past three years, ICE's business has grown 30 per cent. However, the number of international events held at ICE remains relatively low. We want to increase international events, and one way to do that is to



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“Events have not only increased in quantity, but also in quality. Before ICE opened, most events in Banten were only on a local scale. Now more than 50 per cent of events are international.”

Deden Sunandar

Banten chapter chairman,
Indonesian Exhibition Companies
Association

attract the Chinese market.”

The largest Chinese event held at ICE thus far, in October 2017, was the 19th TeoChew International Federation Convention with 5,000 participants.

“Several exhibitions from China have been held in South Tangerang. The scale is still small, but every year it always gets bigger,” Adrian shared.

For 2019, Mahidin has targeted the Chinese market, and aims to grow it by 40 per cent.

“There are still many sectors that have not been worked on, and we have not yet explored many Chinese regions. Currently, most events come from Hong Kong, Beijing, and Guangzhou,” Mahidin said.

The potential for growth in South Tangerang has inspired Alcor Prime – which oversees The Kasablanka Hall, Upperroom, and Bekasi Convention Center – to open a multipurpose venue in Alam Sutera, Banten province. This new 10,000m² venue, expected to open in December 2019, will feature a 6,000m² grand ballroom and another 1,000m² ballroom that can be divided into six breakout rooms.

Jim Tehusjarana, director of Alcor MICE, noted that the demand for

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

1 The construction of the third runway at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport will be completed in June 2019. The new runway will enable the airport to handle 120 flights per hour. Once the third runway is completed, a new Terminal 4 – to be completed in 2023 – will be built at the airport, and when operational, will be able to cater for up to 45 million passengers annually. In total, the Soekarno-Hatta International Airport aims to accommodate 120 million passengers each year.

2 To connect Jakarta and South Tangerang, the regional government is building a new mass rapid transit (MRT). The construction of the north-south corridor MRT will be completed in 2021. This MRT project will complement transportation facilities further in South Tangerang. There will also be a new Light Rapid Transit between Bumi Serpong Damai and Soekarno-Hatta International Airport.

3 With a growing demand for special events, the Indonesia Convention and Exhibition plans to convert 5,000m² of exhibition space into a hybrid convention hall, and enlarge the space to 9,000m². The new hall will feature Indonesian design motifs and a ceiling height of more than 10 metres. The space, which is divisible into smaller ballrooms, gives meeting planners the flexibility to organise events of all kinds.

event space by corporates in the area were relatively high. As such, Alcor MICE were “targeting corporate and community events”.

Tehusjarana added: “At Tangerang, companies need space to exhibit their products on a small scale. At ICE, the space is too big for them. We want to bridge that gap by providing medium-scale spaces that are also flexible for large events.”

With continued infrastructure growth and strong commitment from the local government, the future of South Tangerang’s business events industry is bright. And if this growth continues over the next five years, industry players say the city could well rival Jakarta as the centre for business events in Indonesia.

TALKING NUMBERS

2.9 million

The total number of business events travellers that visited the Indonesia Convention and Exhibition in 2018, a growth of 30 per cent over 2017

2,644

The number of three- to four-star hotel rooms in South Tangerang as of 2017, according to the latest data from Statistics Indonesia

16

The number of hotel ballrooms and unique venues in South Tangerang that can cater for between 200 and 1,000 people

Soekarno-Hatta
International Airport



Clark means business

The city's beehive of construction activities has reached frenetic proportions, paving the way for it to become one of the Philippines' most sought-after MICE destinations. **Rosa Ocampo** reports

Major developments in Clark are opening the doors to future business events. For example, Clark International Airport is now undergoing significant modernisation and expansion. By next year, it will open a new terminal that is expected to triple passenger capacity from four million to 12 million.

When completed in 2021, the NLEX-SLEX Connector Road will radically reduce travel time between industrial hubs Clark and Calamba in Laguna, and the Subic-Clark Cargo Railway will connect Clark's airport to Subic Port in 2022.

This is amid an increasing number of investments pouring into commercial, industrial, trade and real estate

projects into the Philippine city.

Emboldened by these developments, SMX Hotels and Conventions has started building the standalone 4,000m² SMX Convention Center Clark, a departure from the usual SMX convention centres that are within an SM shopping mall.

Vice president sales and marketing, Maria Agnes Pacis, for SMX Hotels and Conventions expects Clark to see "a surge in domestic and international flights, and an upswing in numbers and size of corporate meetings and trade events."

As such, SMX Clark will have three trade halls, three function rooms and 14 smaller meeting rooms with eco-friendly features. The company is also expanding its existing Park Inn by Radisson Clark, adding

100 more hotel rooms. Both developments are slated to open in 1Q2020.

SMX Clark is also seen as an option for northern Luzon clients to hold big conventions and other events, instead of having to travel all the way to Manila. Clark also has a handful of smaller venues, such as the ASEAN Convention Center and Quest Plus Conference Center.

In addition to Park Inn by Radisson, other hotels are moving in quickly to open international brands in the city. Hilton Clark Sun Valley Resort is expected to open in November this year, while the 350-room Hyatt Regency will open in 2022. The 260-room Marriott Hotel Clark also recently opened last year.

Meanwhile, homegrown hotel brands such as Quest and Royce are also expanding their hotel portfolios in Clark.

With these new developments, Clark has the potential to become a conference and exhibition hub, and possibly even serve as an alternative business events city to metro Manila, located about two hours away.

Darlene Achumbre, assistant sales and marketing manager of Midori



From above: What the Clark International Airport expansion will look like; major events like the 2019 SEA Games will show off the city's prowess



TALKING NUMBERS

12 million

The number of passengers Clark International Airport will be able to handle when the new terminal opens in 2020. That is triple the amount of the current capacity of just four million

4

The number of districts in Clark: Clark Freeport Zone; Clark International Airport; Clark Global City; and New Clark City

10,000

The estimated number of athletes, coaches and officials Clark will be welcoming for the biennial 2019 SEA Games



“We are seeing unprecedented infrastructure build up and scores of business, commercial and industrial establishments moving into Clark...”

Darlene Achumbre

Assistant sales and marketing manager, Midori Clark Hotel

Clark Hotel, noted: “We are seeing unprecedented infrastructure build up and scores of business, commercial and industrial establishments moving into Clark, reminiscent of the not-so-distant past when Bonifacio Global City (BGC) in Taguig strove to compete – successfully, it turned out – as metro Manila’s other CBD.

“Clark’s accessibility to major road networks and the growing number of domestic and regional airlines flying to and from Clark International Airport makes it one of the preferred MICE destinations,” Achumbre said.

Clark is also less congested than metro Manila and is renowned for being a safe destination.

“Clark is proving to be the elusive combination of a business and leisure destination without the traffic that characterises most urban destinations,” Achumbre added.

She said that the new point-to-point buses that leave hourly for Clark from Terminal 3 of Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Ortigas business centre, and Trinoma in Quezon City “are a big help” in further boosting Clark’s accessibility from Manila, in addition to the increased domestic and Asian regional flights to and from Clark.

Because of Clark’s tourism pull, Achumbre said there are no more high and low seasons. In February for example, her hotel enjoyed unusually high occupancies in the 90s.

The Clark brand launched late last year integrates its four districts, and

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

1 Cleaner and less polluted waters are wowing guests in metro’s Manila Bay, an area where top convention centres and business events hotels are situated.

Manila Bay’s clean up began in January, part of the massive and long-term programme to rehabilitate the 190-kilometre coastline that will include business establishments’ compliance with environmental regulations, building sanitation infrastructure, resettling informal dwellers, and long-term education for the population.

2 The island resort of Boracay is cleaner and quieter due to its ongoing rehabilitation that involves the construction of roads, cessation of noisy parties on the beach, and strict implementation of rules governing sanitation, sewage disposal and easement.

3 The Resorts World Manila complex, a destination in itself located just across the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, is expanding with the opening of new hotels and other tourist attractions.

For instance, the Hotel Okura Manila is set to open in 2H2019, while Resorts World Manila’s Maxims Hotel will be renamed Ritz-Carlton. New hotels that have already opened within the integrated resort are the Sheraton Manila Hotel (January 2019) and the Hilton Manila (October 2018).



highlights plans for a clean, green and vibrant city without the pressures of city life. Instead, it seeks to offer effective town planning that can mix business, pleasure and a relaxing lifestyle comfortably.

Colliers International research manager, Joey Bondoc, said: “Developers [should] expand their MICE facilities in Clark, because it is becoming a preferred destination for international events and conferences.”

In addition, neighbouring areas of Pampanga and Zambales also offer attractions for incentive travel, CSR activities, and pre- and post-tours.

JP Cabalza, inbound manager for Corporate International Travel and Tours said Pampanga is renowned for having the best cuisine in the

Philippines. The cuisine is a medley of Spanish, Chinese and local influences that are unique to Pampanga, and would be a wonderful experience for delegates.

Cabalza also agreed that meeting planners can put together teambuilding events with sports activities and adventure destinations nearby such as Mount Pinatubo volcano, or the jungles and animal safaris in Subic. CSR activities can also be held with indigenous communities and farming communities in and around Pampanga and Zambales.

Come December, Clark will also reveal its hosting capabilities by hosting some of the 30th SEA Games events at its world-class sports facilities currently under construction in New Clark City.

A rendering of the upcoming SMX Convention Center Clark



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Pushing all the right buttons

The inaugural Industrial Transformation Asia-Pacific (ITAP) presents the latest technologies and solutions to enhance competitiveness – alongside a creative way to plan and run a tradeshow, writes **Gerardine Donough-Tan**

Event brief

Organiser SingEx Exhibitions and international partner Deutsche Messe decided against replicating the world-renowned Hannover Messe as an Asian edition. Instead, they chose to focus on specific applications and opportunities for Asia-Pacific businesses to start, scale and sustain their industrial transformation journey.

The event covered sectors such as aerospace, automotive, biomedical sciences, chemicals, consumer goods manufacturing, electronics, marine and offshore, oil and gas, and precision engineering.

The aim was to create a strategic platform that could evolve with these industries, shaped by current leaders and experts, yet encouraging newcomers as well. Companies could exchange best practices and forge new partnerships to tap on the region's growth.

Challenges

Starting a new tradeshow isn't easy, let alone running it well to satisfy partners, exhibitors and attendees. From stimulating awareness and interest among companies to participate, the organising team then had to market the event, and draw buyers and visitors to the exhibition and simultaneous conference.

"We recognised the strategic importance of the event in spearheading economic progress and also synergies that can be drawn through community collaboration," said James Boey, executive director, SingEx Exhibitions.

"However, companies would also have to recognise that transforming an organisation requires a mindset shift among leaders and staff alike. It is Workforce 4.0 who are crucial to the success of Industry 4.0."

Another challenge was to maximise exposure for exhibitors while enabling buyers and visitors to cover the two halls (20,000m²) efficiently. A further consideration was to live up to the event's name by using innovative technologies and creating multi-faceted, seamless touch points for attendees.

Solution

SingEx set about engaging governments and the business community. For a solid foundation, it first tapped Singapore government agencies to form the steering committee. An international advisory committee was also formed, comprising leading MNCs from the European Union and Japan with strong presence in Singapore, and trade associations.

The show featured five country pavilions. Many advisory committee members became partners with prominent stands.

While transformational roadmaps are im-



Event

Industrial Transformation Asia-Pacific

Organiser

SingEx Exhibitions, with international partner Deutsche Messe

Venue

Singapore EXPO Halls 1 and 2

Date

October 16-18, 2018

Number of participants

15,000 from 55 countries

portant, in reality, players are of different sizes and at varying stages of adoption.

"We developed a unique 'Learning Journey' to help attendees navigate the event and maximise their return on engagement and learning," Boey explained.

Beginners, early adopters and trailblazers were channelled to well-laid-out exhibition sections and sessions, which included two learning labs, two 'sandboxes' and a novel interchange booth – a SingEx knowledge-exchange platform to facilitate offline to online engagement among exhibitors and attendees. On the sidelines were a plenary hall and two 'theatres'.

Some 2,400 visitors registered for 110

guided tours over three days.

"ITAP 2018 was well-represented by professionals from a wide spectrum of industrial sectors who shared their valuable knowledge and skills with over 15,000 global attendees," noted Boey.

Founding partner Siemens' big islands, for instance, stood out in the industrial automation and digital factory sections. Siemens had a separate registration desk in the foyer for invited visitors and conducted special tours of its pavilions.

For sustenance, Rasel Catering offered international F&B with local elements, such as curry puffs, *laksa* and chicken rice. It also introduced new technology – the 'IBOX', an innovative way to reduce queues and waiting time. People could use a tablet or download the app to order food in advance and collect at scheduled times.

Six food kiosks also drew a steady stream of people throughout the day, as did the casual dining area with complimentary refreshments for VIPs, speakers, conference delegates and media.

Key takeaways

ITAP 2018 was one year in the making. With strong public and private sector support, and creative planning and design, it drew a good turnout. It showed the business of Industry 4.0, not just gadgets or slick presentations.

Post-exhibition, several exhibitors hosted technical visits to demonstrate various advanced manufacturing facilities and innovation centres.

■ Catch up

Anne-Marie Quinn



The dynamic founder and managing director of Adelaide-based All Occasions Group divulges how she keeps her passion alight

Your company just turned 20 years and is a leading conference organiser in South Australia. How did you get started?

I studied tourism and hospitality at University of South Australia and interned at the Adelaide Convention Bureau. I was there for six years and had a small stint in a PR company before starting All Occasions. I was in my late 20s when I launched the company. I learnt along the way by working with different clients, and handling different situations.

What motivates you to stay in this business?

When people appreciate the role that you play, and the skill set that you

bring, it gives me a sense of accomplishment and achievement because I am helping somebody else deliver on their target and ambitions. If we can do that successfully and put on a really good conference, showcase Adelaide, and also achieve the financial outcome, that will give me a great sense of satisfaction.

You have the International Astronautical Congress and World Fisheries Congress among your clients. What's your secret in staying competitive in a challenging environment?

I think you've got to be a risk taker as there is a lot to manage. Make sure you create a well-balanced

team that covers a lot of different skills. I know the specific areas that I am good at and stick to that. I also don't micro-manage people; I think you need to be able to trust people.

What is the biggest risk you've taken so far?

We recently took on a financial risk for a smaller conference by working with a professor by underwriting it. It turned out to be very successful and we made a reasonable profit at the end of the day. But for that to work, we had to have majority control over decisions, and how money was being spent. In that instance, we had a contract that clearly defined our expectations. That is

certainly something that I see happening more and more, that requirement to financially underwrite something. You've got to be astute to know how to make that assessment, whether to underwrite an event or not.

How has the market changed in the past two decades?

There's been a merger of associations, so there are probably less associations out there. I think that they have become a lot more business savvy, so for accountability, they are now run like businesses. Therefore, transparency is now more important. That is critical because we find that clients sometimes

have been burnt in previous experiences and are not as willing to hand over control.

So how do you convince a burnt client to trust you?

Trust takes time to build so I think you need to be honest and straight talking, and have discussions about why you recommend certain courses of action or certain decisions.

Are you concerned though about the associations sector shrinking?

I think it is a reality, and it is important to have strategies in place for how to deal with it. The PCO market will naturally shrink and grow depending on the amount of business. A lot of the associations are also employing in-house PCOs now. In some instances, opportunities are reduced, but that naturally cleans out the industry. So I'm not as concerned as we've got a good strategy and process in place as to how we win business.

– **Adelaine Ng**

■ Appointments



Fion Huang

Andy Watson

The SAP veteran was recently promoted to senior vice president and general manager for SAP Concur, Asia Pacific Japan and Greater China. He has been tasked with accelerating the growth of SAP Concur's business in the regions he oversees.

Fion Huang

Destination Gold Coast has appointed



Jason Leung

Fion Huang as senior business development manager – Asia. She is responsible for securing new conference and incentive business for the Gold Coast, and will work closely with corporate and incentive clients in Greater China and South-east Asia.

Jason Leung

Jason Leung is now general manager of Singapore Marriott Tang



Joyce Wong

Plaza Hotel. His most recent role was general manager of Le Meridien Singapore, Sentosa.

Joyce Wong

Sheraton Petaling Jaya Hotel has appointed Joyce Wong as director of sales & marketing. She was previously commercial manager at Hilton Kuala Lumpur.

Oscar Postma

The industry veteran is



Rosmalia Hardman

now Regent Singapore's new general manager. Prior to joining Regent, Postma was corporate director of rooms for Capella Hotel Group.

Rosmalia Hardman

Rosmalia Hardman has been named the new director of revenue, sales and marketing for Wyndham Destinations Asia Pacific's managed properties across South-east Asia. The Singapo-



Sherrilyn Charles

rean joins Wyndham with more than 30 years of industry experience.

Sherrilyn Charles

The Caribbean native has joined Sheraton Grand Danang Resort as director of sales and marketing. She joins the resort from Samoa, where she was the complex director of sales and marketing for two connected Sheraton properties.

Coming together to talk business

IT&CM China and CTW China convened in Shanghai from March 19-21, attracting event planners and corporate travel managers from all over. Photos by [Bidi Ji](#)





Aloysius Arlando

SingEx Holdings CEO and SACEOS president-elect shares future plans for both his company and the association with **Pamela Chow**

SingEx Venues issued a S\$50 million (US\$36.9 million) tender proposal to STB for the venue management of Singapore Expo. What convinced STB to pick SingEx again?

As a product, Singapore Expo started off with an exhibition focus. We need to bear in mind what attendees and organisers' changing needs and expectations are. It's (no longer) just about a space for play, but it has to move towards a solutions focus.

A key point that I hope worked in our favour was a very clear demonstration that we know the business well; we know what the undercurrents, trends and opportunities are; and that we are moving towards (providing) a suite of solutions that (anticipates and meets) the unmet and varying needs of our customers.

What does this mean for SingEx's direction going forward?

Being the incumbent, we don't take competition lightly. That's why we need to ensure that we are customer-focused, understand the customer journey well, know the marketing and operating environment and then we can establish a suite of solutions that cater to the customers' and their customers' needs.

We now try to understand why our clients want a certain design, and what objectives they're trying to achieve. We've become a business event consultant of sorts, and we've put in certain investments based on our customers and the feedback we received.

We are also applying some of our learnings – rethinking how the F&B scene should be like – in some of the new services we are rolling out.

Venue management has changed with the evolution of the business events industry. What trends are dominating the market now?

We have new industries coming up and emerging regional opportunities led by burgeoning economies in South-east Asia. Also, because of digital disruption, industries are intersecting more than ever.

This is going to lend itself very well to new events, event design and event platforms, in order to cater to the varied needs of event attendees.

How is SingEx responding to this?

This is where we believe in bringing different communities – the core and adjacent communities – together, to create “aha” and “wow” moments. This is how we designed the FinTech Festival as a platform for the intersection of industries.

You've spoken about the festival concept and events “opening up” – is this the future of trade exhibitions?

I think we need to demystify “festivalisation”. It's very easy to say it means “to spice things up”, but it's not about being frivolous. The spirit of festivalisation is to activate the senses – whether through visual discourse, physical touch or music – so that the engagement is not just a mono-experience. It's to make the attendee feel *shio*k (great).

It's about what the customer is trying to achieve, and what will make it memorable for their customers. Typically, they have two objectives: to expand their network and have a taste of what the destination has to offer. When you blend business and destination appeal, it collectively becomes an experiential arrangement.

It's about the different ways to ensure the engagement is welcome. Whether it is done by festivalisation or a more traditional way, it depends on what the event objectives are.

For example, we introduce things like all-day dining, where we let the customer decide when to eat and how much to eat. Food is a conversation starter, and from this simple application, it helps to foster exchange and get conversations going.

What critical concerns are you hearing from the industry?

The baseline provision of services has risen. Merely providing the space and the key to the client is no longer going to cut it. Eight years ago, everybody was talking about free Wi-Fi as the rage; now, it's commonplace and expected, like electricity.

As clients get more exacting and sophisticated, what is the baseline now? Key considerations are Wi-Fi,

F&B, flexible spaces and providing a range of services. They're also looking into community engagement and social responsibility – and soon, these are going to be what we call “the new basics”.

What else? That will depend on the operating environment. Some can be plug and play, but in more advanced economies like Singapore, for example, just having a transactional moment is not going to be enough. You need to have the space and the programme to facilitate collaboration, workshops and labs on site.

Tell us about your plans as incoming president at SACEOS. What changes can the trade look forward to with your involvement?

My main objective is to build on the good work and effort that's been put in by the exco of today and yesteryears. Moving forward, it's important to look at what key factors are at play in developing the industry – like communities, technology, capabilities, ecosystems and new businesses that are emerging.

The way forward cannot be done by ourselves; it's a partnership with government agencies and global associations.

I am working on how we can stay connected to these key associations, and build up Singapore as an incubation or pilot-testing base for these associations to reach out to the Asia-Pacific region.

This will also provide business opportunities for our members. Now, it's about making sure that we can rally the different sectors of the industry to be a force to be reckoned with.





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