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Heads up and eyes forward



Karen Yue
Group Editor

We are just three months into the Covid-19 crisis, yet many conversations have emerged about what the future of business travel and business events will be like at the end of the tunnel.

Some believe that the massive work-from-home movement will show business owners how work can still be done with reduced costs and without business travel, and they will be encouraged to keep this up even when it is safe to resume operations.

Some believe that companies and organisations, having tasted the advantages of webinars, will cut back on live events in better times.

Others, referencing the aftermath of SARS and the GFC, are certain that business travel and events will bounce right back up.

Their guesses are as good as yours at this point when countries are still at war against Covid-19. Border closures and city lockdowns are still in force, while some countries, like Singapore, Thailand and Japan, have only just (at press time in early April) started with stricter movement restrictions. And we are still nowhere near a cure.

I believe the aftermath is going to be a blend of all those projections, and the recovery will be slow in this terrible union of a health and economic crisis.

With governments emptying their coffers to prop up the national economy, save businesses and jobs, and nurse their ill citizens, we can expect an extended austere climate that will impact companies that are struggling to get back on track when Covid-19 cases are reduced. Companies will think thrice about non-essential expenditure, and may carry on with virtual meetings and teleconferencing for a longer time.

Domestic tradeshow may be the first to return. International gatherings will be challenged by some immigration restrictions that remain, continued corporate travel restrictions, and a reluctance to travel among individuals.

As you can imagine, competition for that tiny slice of returning business will be intense.

It may seem premature to set a timeline for recovery efforts now and when marketing messages are expected to fall on deaf ears, but we cannot afford to stand still. Business will return, and there are organisations and companies that are already strategising their recovery and reaching out to the marketplace. Moreover, we may just get a positive surprise to lift this gloom. How ready are you for that?



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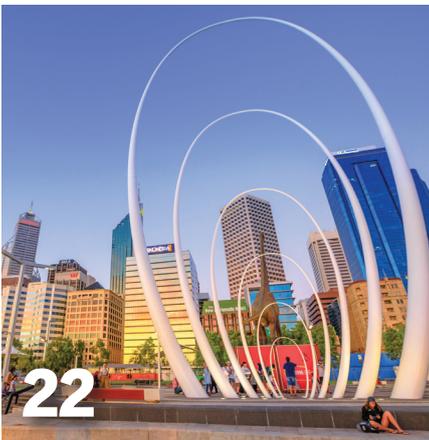
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TOP 5 HEADLINES THIS MONTH



▲ From left: Seoul is ready to welcome MICE visitors back once the dust settles; Covid-19 has resulted in empty event venues and million-dollar losses

Seoul Convention Bureau enhances subventions for post-Covid-19 recovery

Seoul Convention Bureau (SCB) has rolled out a new PLUS SEOUL programme to further help the business events industry in Seoul recover once the Covid-19 situation blows over.

CINZ unveils post-recovery plan for MICE Industry

New Zealand's business events industry association, CINZ is looking towards post-Covid-19 recovery by launching a new event, BE Reconnected, to be held at the end of this year.

Asian venues shutter amid city lockdowns and social distancing orders

Silence has befallen several MICE venues in Asian cities as the fight against the spread of Covid-19 heats up. Major convention and

exhibition centres destinations where strict lockdown orders have been issued, have temporarily shuttered.

As small event firms fight for survival, retrenchment is last on their mind

Widespread cancellation and indefinite postponement of business events across Asia-Pacific has hit boutique event companies the hardest with many resorting to clawing in outstanding payments and implementing tough cost-cutting measures to maintain cash flow and to retain as many of their staff as possible.

Japanese firms increasingly seeking online solutions

Japanese organisations are moving their events online in a bid to keep staff, stakeholders and customers engaged during the Covid-19 pandemic.



▲ Smaller events companies have been hit hard by Covid-19; heads think of ways to keep as many employed as possible

INTELLIGENCE

€145 billion of lost revenue for global exhibition industry due to Covid-19: updated UFI study

UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, has released numbers that reflect the impact that tradeshow postponements and cancellations are having for both the exhibiting companies as well as for the tradeshow industry around the world.

Based on UFI data, the orders that exhibiting companies will not secure will add up to €134.2 billion (US\$144.9 billion) globally, projecting to the end of the 2Q2020. This is an increase of almost five times the figure reported previously (€23 billion) which took into account cancellations only up to the end of the current quarter.



PERSPECTIVES



What do you do when the whole world is in crisis mode?

GainingEdge's Jon Sivertson provides a positive take on the current Covid-19 situation around the globe, and encourages businesses to make the best out of the situation with available resources.



Don't cancel, postpone instead

Euromic's Huw Tuckett urges the business events industry to adopt a wait-and-see approach in these uncertain times, and choose postponement instead of the cancellation of events.

Q&A



Geoff Donaghy, CEO of ICC Sydney and deputy chair of Business Events Council of Australia, speaks candidly about the bleak situation that Australia's MICE sector is facing, as well as his trust in the government to help the industry out of its doldrums.

WEBINARS

Global DMC Partners (GDP), a leading global network of independently-owned DMCs, has launched Together at Home, a brand-new weekly webinar series. Each week, GDP will host a featured subject matter expert with topics ranging from resiliency and leading through change to health and wellness and financial management. www.globaldmcpartners.com/next-global-dmc-partners-together-home-free-weekly-webinar-series

As the Covid-19 pandemic keeps exhibition industry professionals apart, UFI – the global association for the exhibition industry – has launched UFI Connects, a schedule of regular talks, panels, and webinar sessions streamed online globally. www.ufi.org/news-media/uficonnects

In this on-demand webinar hosted by Egencia, entitled How can technology benefit business travel?, participants will learn why travel business is uniquely positioned to leverage business intelligence, the current capabilities at Egencia and how customers are benefiting from AI and data science, and the future of business data analytics. www.egencia.com/public/us/webinar-how-can-technology-benefit-business-travel

While not quite webinars, CWT's Business Travel On the Fly monthly podcast series are useful for business travellers who hope to make sense of the issues they face while performing their duties away from their desk and home. www.mycwt.com/podcast

E-teambuilding concepts on the uptake in APAC

A crop of new teambuilding formats held online has begun to flourish as companies in Asia-Pacific adjust to telecommuting and scramble for new ways to connect their local, regional and global employees.

These innovative concepts include online team karaoke, virtual reality (VR) challenges, and virtual scavenger hunts, which are seeing increasing take-up in Asia-Pacific as more companies in the region have been forced to close their physical premises.

For instance, Wildfire Entertainment has branched out from its initial corporate event entertainment services to launch Lockdown Karaoke, an activity where employees can harmonise on a 'live' virtual performance, which will then be produced into a music video.

The concept is a spin-off from another product by Wildfire Entertainment and Musicland, Many Voices One Team, typically offered for three-day conferences featuring a recording booth and a final music video at the conference's close.

Chelsea Curto, business director at Wildfire Entertainment, shared: "Our long-time friends at Usana Health Science Services have started the process with us. In lieu of entertainment at their event in South Korea in May – which was cancelled – Lockdown Karaoke will feature heavily in their virtual replacement event.

"We are working with a bank in Singapore to produce a video and 'live' virtual event in May, while several clients in Australia are in talks to put something together at the end of April."

Debuted when global travel restrictions were first announced was Asia Ability's cross-border VR teambuilding concept The Infinite Loop+, in which a company's teams in Singapore and New Zealand collaborated on a VR puzzle by communicating via video conferencing.

Now as offices shift to telecommuting, Asia Ability's programmes are "now geared at completely remote work settings, with participants joining in from their home workspace", shared David Fotheringham, director of Asia Ability.

The first of such programmes launched in Singapore is Go Remote, an app-based platform that gives participants a collection of active and creative challenges conducted in and around their working spaces. One new challenge is titled Race Around the World, where breakout teams must guide their explorers on a virtual journey across the world,



The Race Around the World activity can be conducted remotely

spending travel tokens and earning enjoyment tokens along the way. It is paired with teleconferencing breakout sessions that encourage team interactions and a facilitated review after the session.

Fotheringham noted: "We have been approached for remote events by a number of clients from telecommunications to banking to medical, and their objectives are strikingly similar – bringing teams together in this time of crisis.

"On top of the anxiety and discomfort caused by pandemic, the move to remote working arrangements has created instant upheaval in the workforce and our clients hope to calm nerves, strengthen relationships and build resilience in the new work dynamic."

Curto chimed in: "It is a new idea and our clients are really only just coming to terms with the 'new normal' in light of the pandemic and the ways it has changed the MICE industry. This is an incredibly stressful time, but having the opportunity to relax, laugh and sing is important.

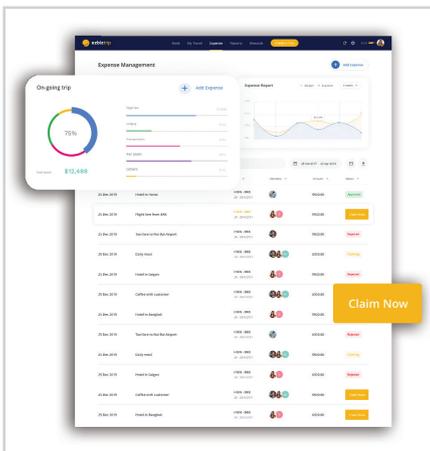
"Our clients are hoping that Lockdown Karaoke will bring their teams together and lift their spirits amid the stress of working from home and uncertainty around the virus."

The need for virtual connection during this time will force companies to innovate and open up to new forms of technology, pushing the industry forward in the long term, said both Fotheringham and Curto.

They concurred that in the future, more companies with regional and global offices may be inclined to hold virtual conferences more often in lieu of flying. However, employees will still have the "huge need to physically connect with each other" especially once the pandemic is under control, opined Fotheringham.

Currently, Asia Ability is working with its Catalyst Global teambuilding partners on more virtual events, such as remote wellness activities and a computer-based version of The Infinite Loop without a need for VR headsets. Meanwhile, Wildfire Entertainment hopes to expand its Lockdown Arts Line to include a dance version and a theatrical version, as well as exploring a make-at-home and educational workshop version of its LuMen act product. – **Pamela Chow**

EzBizTrip joins travel management platform scene



EzBizTrip is a new integrated travel management platform targeted at corporate customers from small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Apart from sending trip requests to their management teams, corporate travellers can create itineraries on EzBizTrip with a Smart Suggestion system. Underpinned by recommendation engines, the system provides travellers with personalised results that allow them to book swiftly and with certainty. They can also accurately record and submit all expenses on the go by snapping a photo of receipts and uploading them onto the platform. Furthermore, travellers can easily keep track of their expenses through automated expenditure reports and ensure they do not

go beyond the budget.

The business travel platform also rewards employees with products and services after redeeming points earned from cost savings when they use the programme. By encouraging smarter savings through rewards, companies can better manage budgets for corporate trips and overall financial spending.

"On average, business travellers spend at least 20 minutes trying to file and manage their expenses from a three-day work trip," shared Takaya Tomose CEO of EzBizTrip, who has reached out to travellers from Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia.

He said that time could have been better spent on "doing actual work and being productive".

WE
LOVE

The art of repairing with gold



Tucked away in Tokyo's luxury boutique district of Omotesando lies Saideigawa Pottery Studio, where founder and ceramic artisan Taku Nakano teaches *kintsugi* (gold joinery) to a growing number of business groups.

The traditional skill of using powdered or lacquered gold to repair broken pottery was born out of practicality, before it became a respected artform in the 14th century. Today, this rare activity offers insight into a fascinating side of Japanese culture and gives participants a stunning, luxury souvenir.

At Saideigawa, Nakano begins each 90-minute session by explaining the three philosophies behind *kintsugi*: nothing should be wasted; every object should get a second chance; and what people perceive as flaws can be beautiful.

The seven-step process involves choosing a broken plate, outlining the cracks with a marker, taping the pieces together, smoothing the surfaces, filling the cracks with resin and lacquer, adding the gold powder and polishing to perfection. With English instructions and patient, helpful staff, the activity is interesting, interactive and fun.

The basic package costs ¥6,600 (US\$61) and offers a choice of three modern plates with old designs. Under the premium package, at ¥10,500, participants can work on a plate from the Edo-period (1603-1868), enabling participants to bring home a piece of history.

The studio can cater for up to 80 pax at one time and offers deals for groups dependent on their needs.

Carlton debuts in Bangkok



Singapore's Carlton Hotel Group has spread its brand presence into Thailand, with the opening of Carlton Hotel Bangkok Sukhumvit.

Located between BTS Skytrain Asoke and Phrom Phong stations, the 338-room luxury hotel offers 1,200m² of configurable spaces across 10 function rooms, with the Grand Carlton Ballroom being the largest venue with a capacity of 600 guests. The function rooms are equipped with technology such as a high-resolution 220-inch LED screen for pin-sharp entertainment and presentations, and customised audiovisual services.

Guestrooms and suites range in size from 37m² to 129m², and come with sound-proofed windows, electric curtains and blinds and in-room IPTV.

Wah Lok, regarded as one of Singapore's finest Cantonese restaurants for three decades and recognised as being part of the Carlton flagship in the city-state, also has a presence in the Bangkok hotel. The main dining area sits up to 194 guests, while private dining rooms are also available for private events.

Other dining establishments in the hotel include all-day dining restaurant Plate, Tuxedo cafe, and Cooling Tower rooftop bar.

Avani opens in Busan's financial hub

Avani Hotels & Resorts has opened the brand-new Avani Central Busan Hotel in Busan, South Korea.

There are 289 rooms across seven categories on offer, where guestrooms feature either city or mountain views. Room amenities include flatscreen TVs, free Wi-Fi, rainshowers, and tea and coffee making stations.

Business travellers may avail facilities such as a meeting room, as well as The Lobby Lounge which doubles up as a casual meeting area. There is also an all-day dining restaurant that serves Korean and international fare, as well as a 24-hour gym.

The hotel is directly connected to the Busan subway system and is a 15-minute drive to Korean Train Express stop and international cruise terminal.



Melbourne Showgrounds shows off newest entertainment space

Victoria Pavilion, Melbourne Showgrounds' newest indoor-outdoor event space, is now open as part of a rejuvenation of the precinct.

Built at a cost of A\$8.5 billion (US\$5.1 million), the Victoria Pavilion comprises a pillarless 1,950m² room ideal for functions, conferences and exhibitions, along with a 560m² glass foyer. It can accommodate up to 1,850 people in theatre-style, 1,200 in banquet-style, or a maximum of 2,000 for standing cocktail parties. Naturally, the space can also be configured to cater for smaller events and exhibitions. The versatile space also features multipurpose event access with large roller-doors and weight bearing floors. The building also sports direct access to the Main Arena, has a commercial kitchen and smaller function rooms within the adjacent Royal Block.

Additionally, food offerings at the venue were designed by Melbourne Showgrounds' executive chef, Neil Rocke, with most dishes incorporating award-winning products from the Australian Food Awards.



Qatar unveils business class lounge at Changi Airport

Qatar Airways has opened its new premium lounge serving business class passengers at Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 1, operating daily from 07.30 to 02.00.

Designed with the aim of narrowing the gap between business and first-class lounges, the lounge features contemporary Arabic design elements, ultra-luxurious interiors and custom furniture pieces.

The 700m² lounge can host 85 passengers at any given time. Guests can relax in one the lounge's seven different seating areas – including sound-proof, semi-private spaces known as quiet pods – have a tippie at the centrepiece martini bar, where a dedicated mixologist is at hand.

The lounge is also equipped with a full kitchen to prepare food orders on demand, on top of an existing buffet spread offering an international menu.

With the addition of the new Singapore



lounge, the airline now operates five international premium lounges with others located in London, Paris, Beirut and Bangkok.

Qatar Airways connects Singapore and Doha with three flights a day on an Airbus A350-1000 aircraft, with each flight offering 46 business class and 281 economy seats.

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Mark Meehan

Travelport's managing director Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa tells [Rachel AJ Lee](#) that tech investments in managed travel are critical now

Travelport recently published its Global Digital Travellers Research. What are some of the interesting findings?

We surveyed 23,000 leisure and business travellers from 20 countries, and found that more millennial business travellers in Asia-Pacific use a mobile device when researching (68%) and booking (67%) a trip than in any other region worldwide. Use is second highest in North America (64% and 55%, respectively) and lowest in Europe (54% and 45%, respectively). One-third (36%) of millennial business travellers here even claim they use mobile devices to both book and pay for 'every trip'.

The study also revealed, however, that millennial business travellers here have a growing list of pain points with current digital offerings. Around half are frustrated by companies not giving them access to their booking information on all of their mobile devices (53%), not using data to remember their preferences (45%) and not giving them the option of booking everything in one place (48%).

These findings indicate that corporate travel in this region is on the verge of leaving the digital age and entering a 'post-digital era' as defined by Accenture. In this post-digital world, digital is simply the price of admission for doing business – it is no longer a differentiation advantage.

Why do you think Asia-Pacific is ahead of North America and Europe in digital usage?

According to McKinsey, China and India account for one-third of the world's Internet users. The region's enormous pool of digital consumers supports a flourishing and innovative technology sector.

The superb digital experiences that Asia-Pacific consumers receive elsewhere – particularly from online and offline retailers – mean they expect to receive the same level of digital convenience and an enjoyable experience from travel providers.

It is the strong demand for change that sets Asia-Pacific travellers apart from their peers.

Demand in this region is now among the highest worldwide for three types of digital offerings: memorable and engaging digital experiences, technology that makes travel easier to manage, as well as technology that improves personalisation.

For the foreseeable future,

we believe the success of companies in the travel industry, as well as the technology companies supporting them, will largely be defined by their ability to effectively act like sophisticated modern retailers.

What can companies do to make business travel more seamless for millennial corporate travellers?

BCD Travel, one of the world's biggest TMCs, has set a benchmark on providing a seamless travel experience. They defined their digital strategy as providing anytime access to trip information and tools from any connected device – from phones, tablets, PCs to Macs – through their engagement platform TripSource.

During travel disruptions, travellers can be reached by TripSource in close to real time with location-based risk alerts and emergency response check-ins. They can also instantly connect with their travel programme through a connection to DecisionSource, BCD Travel's proprietary data intelligence and insight platform.

How is Travelport helping to manage the pain points of current digital offerings?

Travelport has been helping agencies apply various emerging technologies to optimise different touch-points throughout a traveller's journey. A buzzword in the airline industry today, NDC (New Distribution Capability) is also a technology that can provide flexibility to shoppers.

Travelport is a strong advocate for new ways of unbundling services, selling fares and ancillaries through menu style pricing and tailoring, through Travelport's Rich Content and Branding solution. This provides new opportunities for agencies to build more direct relationships with their customers.

What does the post-digital era look like to you, and how is Travelport planning to capture this market?

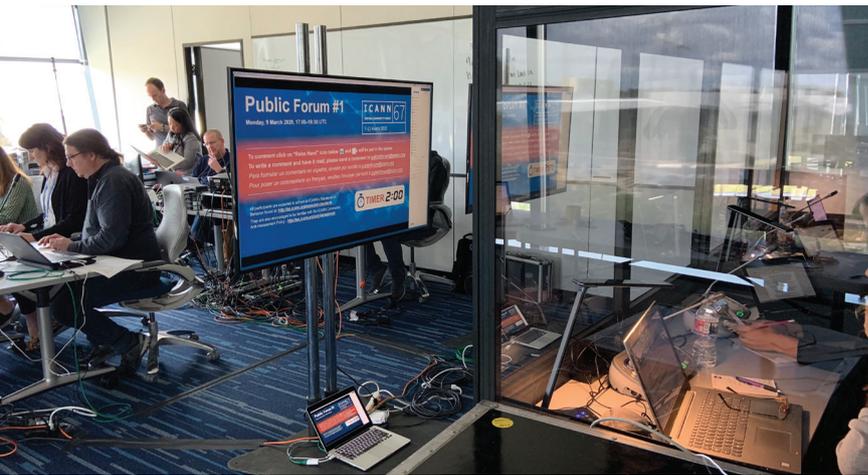
Travellers are increasingly prioritising value over cost, demanding more autonomy over personalisation and using digital solutions to research and manage their trips. These are among the key findings of our Global Digital Traveller Research, which also depict our view of the post-digital world.

In this new era, we are helping travel sellers use digital channels to deliver value in more modern and sophisticated ways. For instance, by analysing consumer data signals from the GDS platform, we are in a unique position to inform and improve the traveller buying journey. From shaping how and when to market and detailing the most relevant content, we can advise on what to do next to increase agencies' conversions, loyalty and retention and maximise the value of every trip.



Welcome to a new digital era

This new paradigm for distance communications will change the way meetings, seminars and conferences are conducted post Covid-19, reports [Caroline Boey](#)



With event organisers turning to technology and online solutions to avoid disruptions caused by Covid-19, suppliers say hybrid and/or virtual meetings are trending and will fuel their development even when the industry recovers.

Commenting on how Covid-19 could affect event organisers and participants, Veemal Gungadin, founder and CEO, GlobalSign.in, said: "Given the current situation and where things are going, I think companies should seriously start looking into virtual and hybrid events.

"It is impossible to predict the end date for Covid-19 and its repercussions. Investing in live streaming is a safe bet because there is an immediate need for it. But we also believe a whole new paradigm is going to emerge from this situation.

"A lot of people are going to experience organising, or attending, a virtual event for the first time and they will start looking at how it could replace some of their physical events or act as a complement."

Gungadin shared that only a few small-scale Singapore government events were able to continue with a physical format – to communicate important messages – as there were only a few attendees and measures were in place to ensure participants' safety. It was the same for some businesses too.

Such measures included health and travel declarations, temperature checks, more space between seats, and making sanitisers available.

Hybrid events, usually small in scale, he added, were also being live-streamed to a larger audience in parallel.

Gungadin said: "We did such an event (in end-March) which was a briefing session at IMDA's PIXEL on digital solutions to keep a safe and healthy workplace amid Covid-19."

▲ **Congress Rental offers a Remote Simultaneous Interpretation (RSI) language solution**

For Congress Rental, which has offices in Australia, Singapore and Indonesia, its point of difference is its Remote Simultaneous Interpretation (RSI) language solution, which helped Nuskin and ICANN proceed with international events in recent weeks.

According to managing director Jeremy Ducklin, RSI allowed interpreters to be remote from the event they were providing the interpretation/translation and the platform further extended to having the audience remote.

Ducklin said: "The ICANN event was a truly remote meeting with all the presenters in remote locations worldwide. At its peak, it had 690 people listening to their community forum session with many remarks complementing the online nature of the meeting and the language support that we provided.

"Similarly RSI was used for a Honda event where space was an issue," he shared.

"We are now talking to one client with a requirement for an online AGM where the presenter and presentation need to be shown at the same time to 1,000-plus shareholders," Ducklin noted, adding that enquiries and proposals for remote solutions have trebled in the past week.

But Kenny Goh, founder of Singapore-based event tech company miceNEUROL, said event organisers must look beyond just the end product or the broadcast portion.

Goh – a proponent of event tech "integration" – pointed out: "There many piecemeal solutions for virtual MICE. Many like Zoom, YouTube, etc focus on the last-mile solution – the broadcasting solution."

But there are few integrated event tech companies that start from accreditation and registration, or even start from contact management. As such, Goh cautioned that even though the tech solutions are in place, the systems integrators are not, which may bring about serious consequences.

"When there is a problem, the broadcasting media may blame the registration company, the registration company may blame the accreditation company which may blame the onboarding system, which may blame the AV supplier which may blame the telco. That is the problem," he explained.

Claiming that the implementation of integrated virtual conferences and exhibitions is "low cost", Goh has been spending time educating event organisers instead of deploying its systems over the last few weeks.

For some organisers, going hybrid is a defence strategy and Goh observed that the Covid-19 pandemic could provide the opportunity to lead event organisers to adapt, adopt integration and succeed.

"... live streaming is a safe bet because there is an immediate need for it. But we also believe a whole new paradigm is going to emerge from this situation."

Veemal Gungadin
Founder and CEO, GlobalSign.in



Lean, mean, sustainable

Being truly sustainable requires more than just placing a ban on single-use plastics, and some of Asia's hotels and resorts are setting serious examples that demonstrate care for community and environment

CAMBODIA By Marissa Carruthers

Treeline Urban Resort

The minimalist resort – founded by Cambodian architect Hok Kang – was constructed around the ancient trees that sit on the riverside spot it was built on.

No single-use plastic can be found in any of the 48 rooms, and the property is in the process of eliminating it from back-of-house operations. Instead of plastic or Styrofoam takeaway containers, Treeline uses palm leaf and eco-friendly cardboard boxes.

Solar energy is used to heat water and used cooking oil is donated to local NGO Naga Earth, which is then turned into biodiesel. To ensure the hotel does not contribute to the city's waste – where infrastructure is lacking – Treeline uses an advanced sewage system and composts food waste onsite.

It is also strongly committed to helping communities. All herbs, vegetables and fruit are sourced from organic Happy & Co Farm on the outskirts of Siem Reap; local pottery studio Loyuyu designed the ceramics that dot the property; and spa products are made onsite, with ingredients sourced locally where possible.

Treeline also employs locally where it can. For example, water hyacinth weavers make bin covers; wood carvers craft the palm wood items adorning the hotel; and take-away containers are created by nearby villagers from palm leaves.

The property is also spearheading a tree-planting project along Siem Reap River, which it overlooks, and its staff regularly take part in city clean-ups.

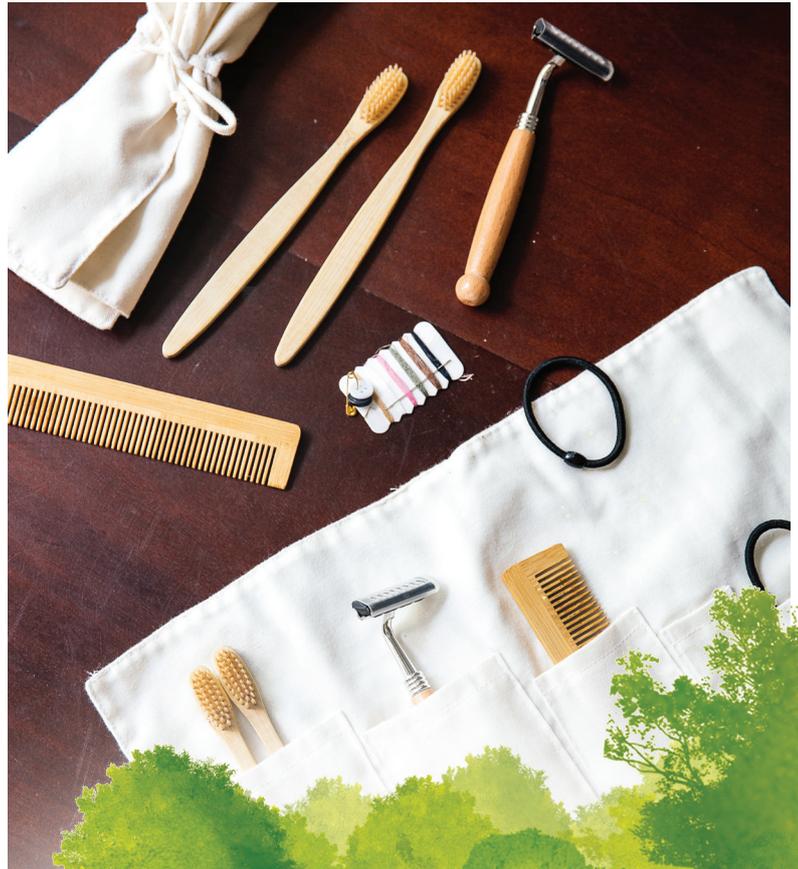
Knai Bang Chatt

The 11-room property opened in 2005 after two years spent restoring several New Khmer Architecture villas. Its owners launched the Hand in Hand programme from the get-go, where the aim was to provide employment to the young people of poverty-stricken communities while preserving the environment of coastal Kep town.

Since then, the project has worked tirelessly to improve the education, health and livelihoods of more than 550 families in nearby Chamcar Bei village by training many of the young in hospitality. These villagers are also employed at the resort and neighbouring Sailing Club.

It is a staunch champion of the sustainable movement, employing a full-time sustainability manager and green team. In 2016, Knai Bang Chatt became the first hotel in Cambodia to be awarded the global Green Growth 2050 gold certification. Outside of the property, daily coastal clean-ups are conducted by staff.

Knai Bang Chatt also boasts an onsite organic farm, with the menu created around what is available at the



market that morning and seasonal locally-grown ingredients to reduce carbon footprint. This is supported by a Sustainable Resource Centre that creates compost in the form of bokashi and vermicast.

The centre hosts a series of horticulture and composting workshops, as well as upcycling projects – such as turning wine and beer bottles into glasses – and has set a target to reduce waste sent to landfill to five per cent this year.



▲ Solar panels on Hotel ICON's rooftop

◀ Treeline Urban Resort does not have single-use plastic in rooms

HONG KONG By Prudence Lui

Hotel ICON

Wholly-owned by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hotel ICON is not only committed to educating the next generation of hospitality professionals, it is also determined to uphold sustainable practices.

Unlike other hotels, Hotel ICON is a “live research lab” to experiment with and adopt the latest technology in hospitality. For instance, the lobby is home to Asia’s largest indoor vertical garden. Designed by French botanist and artist Patrick Blanc, it houses over 8,600 plants across 71 species.

The hotel’s engineering team developed a water purification process for the vertical garden in close partnership with Blanc. It also touts that it was the first in Asia to champion the ORCA (Organic Refuse Conversion Alternative) technology that turns food waste into water. Since mid-2018, the garden receives all its recycled water and nutrients from an ORCA machine.

In addition, 77 solar panels situated above The Market buffet restaurant generate approximately 20,790kWh annually. The energy supports the illumination and irrigation of the vertical garden as well as heating and cooling needs.

Aside from green hardware, the hotel also hosts sustainably-driven events. For instance, it organised Asia’s first Future Electric Vehicle Leaders Circle 2018 in collaboration with Charged Hong Kong.

Kowloon Shangri-La, Hong Kong

The five-star accommodation started on its sustainability journey back in the 1990s, with the formation of two committees, one overseeing environmental protection, the other food, life and safety.

Aside from featuring sustainably-sourced food and locally and ethically-sourced ingredients in its Rooted

in Nature cuisines, the hotel conducts seminars for its suppliers and vendors to ensure they comply with its stringent standards that encompass food safety, environmental protection and no child labour. Random checks and unannounced visits are done to ensure compliance.

In April 2018, the hotel “donated” a guestroom to the Chan Wong Suk Fong Memorial Secondary School, aimed at helping students and locals develop careers in the hospitality industry. The simulated hotel guestroom replicates a room within the Kowloon Shangri-La, Hong Kong, complete with a bathroom and amenities.

Another school outreach was conducted last July, when hotel chefs visited the Caritas Jockey Club Lok Yan School to celebrate the grand opening of the school’s renovated food lab. The special school provides education for wheelchair-bound children who rely on tube feeding. Chefs guided parents and caregivers in preparing a memorable meal for 100 children and guests, as well as excited their senses by seeing, smelling, tasting and touching black truffle, which they learnt about for the first time.

INDONESIA By Tiara Maharani

Bintan Lagoon Resort

The Indonesian resort employs several sustainability measures, such as recycling its material waste – wood is repurposed as furniture or artsy decorations – and supporting the livelihood of local farmers and fishermen through purchases of food supplies.

Bintan Lagoon Resort’s (BLR) community commitment is extended to needy groups. It invites orphanages and the needy for a meal together, and contributes necessary supplies towards these groups. Opportunities to help these communities are made available to corporate groups hosting events onsite. For example, participants in a corporate teambuilding session can build bicycles together, which are then donated to the local community. To date, 50 bicycles have been donated.

BLR also runs a Gotong-Royong (which means communal work) campaign where all staff members including the heads, work together to clean the resort.

Alila Seminyak

The push for sustainability begins with the resort’s architecture and design, where its open-plan layout maximises natural cooling – think no air conditioning – in public areas.

Beyond design, Alila Seminyak has implemented a zero waste to landfill initiative. For instance, organic waste in the hotel is processed as compost, while liquid waste is used to water plants around the resort.

Meanwhile, non-organic waste is manually sorted into glass, PET plastics, and recycled where possible. Glass, for example, is crushed and used to make building materials, which can be incorporated into the hotel or sold.

Alila Seminyak also seeks out better alternatives when it comes to its amenities. Straws made out of corn starch, which is 100 per cent compostable and biodegradable, have replaced plastic ones. Takeaway room dining boxes are also made out of eco-conscious material. Meanwhile, vendors are selected in accordance as to how environmentally-friendly they are.

COVER STORY: HOTELS & RESORTS

Recently, Alila Seminyak introduced its own hydroponic garden. Compared to soil-based gardening, the hydroponic system allows gardening in limited spaces, and saves water as plant roots will only take up as much water as they need, while the excess is recirculated to other plants in the system. The organic produce is used in the resort's day-to-day dishes and cocktails, with none going to waste.

Alila Seminyak has also partnered with Bali Sustainable Seafood, a local social enterprise that provides sustainably fished seafood such as skipjack, an Indonesian fish, as opposed to Bluefin tuna.



JAPAN By Kathryn Wortley

Hoshinoya Karuizawa

Located in Nagano Prefecture, this Japanese resort operates under a system it calls Energy in My Yard, which uses clean, local resources.

For starters, it introduced hydroelectric generators to tap the energy from the Yukawa River, which runs from nearby Mount Asama through the property, and geothermal generators to draw geothermal energy from deep underground. Together, these sources supply about 70 per cent of the resort's total energy needs, and has zero emissions.

It also helps that the resort's design is energy efficient. For example, small windows are positioned high in the ceiling to bring in cool air during the summer and keep rooms warm in the winter.

One of the property's latest green initiatives is a toothbrush recycling programme. Staff collect and sort the toothbrushes, which are first sent to a recycling company that turns them into pellets, before being transformed into products such as containers and garden planters.

Hundred per cent of the resort's waste is sorted into 28 categories and recycled.

Ecotourism is also a large part of the resort's DNA, with activities available for guests such as the protection of the environment of the Asian black bear.

Kamikatsu Kaitakudan

This glamping resort in rural Tokushima Prefecture, on Shikoku island, was set up to be as sustainable as possible. It comprises Base Camp, which is home to glam tents, and Bar Irori, which offers food and beverage.

As much as possible, local resources are used and reused. The accommodation is located in the small town of Kamikatsu, which is surrounded by mountains and forests, so the baths, for example, are made from local cedar while Bar Irori's furniture are crafted out of upcycled wood. Other onsite buildings are renovated, rather than built from scratch, to promote sustainability.

▲ Alila Seminyak's very own hydroponic garden

In addition, the facility uses water drawn from mountain springs for drinking, cooking and bathing, while its electricity is generated by solar panels. Meanwhile, all heat is generated using local firewood and charcoal when and where necessary, to avoid waste.

The town the resort sits in also has its own green initiatives, which Kamikatsu Kaitakudan operates under. For instance, the property serves only local food and drink to reduce the resort's carbon footprint while promoting sustainable dining. Drinks are predominantly derived from, or garnished with, local citrus varieties. Single-use plastic is avoided, and staff provide reusable and returnable containers to guests.

MALAYSIA By S Puvaneswary

The Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa

This four-star, beach-front property in Malaysia with 115 villas was renovated in 2005 using the principles of green design. For instance, clear corrugated plastic roof material can be found on certain buildings – such as the recycling centre, lobby entrance, restaurant deck and staff area – allowing for maximum natural light to enter the space.

Meanwhile, the villas sport a green roof made from dried leaves while its walls are covered in foliage to reduce heat absorption, both of which help to cool



▲ Hoshinoya Karuizawa's rice terrace in the summer

down the living space's ambient temperature, reducing the need for stronger air conditioning. Solar hot water panels are used to heat water, while energy-saving lights are installed throughout the resort.

The Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa passes on eco-friendly know-how to its guests, such as through organic farming courses which are also available to the local community, and daily two-hour-long eco-walks. During the latter, staff introduce guests to green practices that can be adopted in their homes. Ideas include rainwater harvesting to water plants; and using small spaces such as walkways to build vertical gardens to grow certain types of vegetables, fruits and herbs.

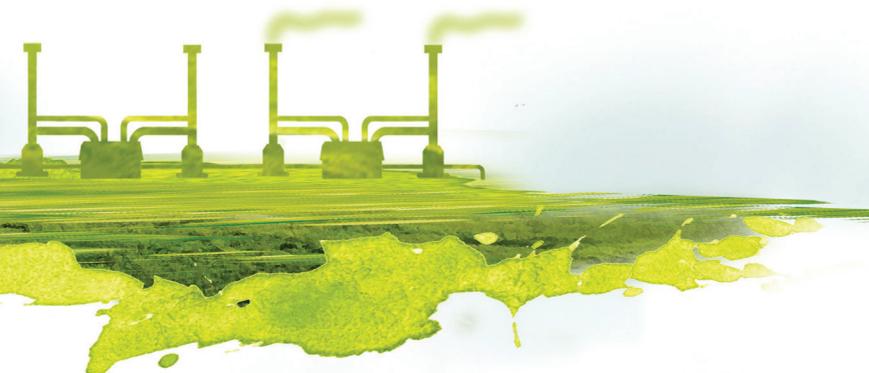
The resort also rears chickens, ducks and fish for the kitchen.

Borneo Eagle Resort

Located in Sabah, Borneo Eagle Resort believes in identifying and grooming local talents from Sabah as part of its promise to the community, with the aim of developing these individuals to take over senior management positions.

Next, fish served at the resort come from Bayu Aquaculture, a local company, owned by Echo Resorts (also the parent company of the resort). This prevents exploitation of fish from the oceans and reproduces fingerlings from the farm's own brood stock which are grown for consumption. Additionally, fresh vegetables that are free from pesticides and chemicals are obtained from Green-Os, an organic farm also owned by Echo Resorts.

At the resort, kitchen waste composted for use as plant fertiliser, while fruit peels are used to feed earthworms which create worm casts, a source of nutrients for plants. Fruit peels are also used to produce garbage enzymes through fermentation with sugars and as organic pesticides against garden pests.



Grey water – water discharged from washing and showers, is treated by anaerobic process with microbes before being recycled for watering plants and flushing toilets. Meanwhile, black water – waste water from toilet flushing – is treated anaerobically before being released back into the ground through seepage.

MYANMAR

By Rachel AJ Lee

Hilton Mandalay

The 231-room Hilton property in northern Myanmar has two sustainability initiatives in place – both in partnership with Diversey, a service provider with sustainable solutions for cleaning and hygiene.

In 2019, Hilton Mandalay implemented the CoffeeBriques programme, which turns waste coffee grounds into CoffeeBriques, an eco-friendly fuel alternative to normal charcoal, that can be used for cooking and heating. The used coffee grounds are collected, dried, starched and moulded into briquette.

Recycled coffee waste generates up to 80 per cent less emissions than charcoal. The process of making CoffeeBriques also does not require burning, which results in less pollution. This also helps to minimise waste that goes to landfills. Around eight kilogrammes of CoffeeBriques can be used for four hours of grilling.

In Myanmar, charcoal and firewood are still the main sources of fuel for cooking in everyday life. With the CoffeeBriques programme, Hilton hopes to inspire local communities and companies to try making their own or use alternative sustainable sources of fuel.

Hilton Mandalay is also part of Hilton's soap recycling programme, which is in line with the hospitality company's Travel with Purpose 2030 goals – the group aims to cut its environmental footprint in half and double its social impact investment by 2030.

Soap is recovered from Hilton Mandalay, which is transported to a local site for recycling through a cold-press method.

New soap bars are then distributed to communities in need, from monasteries to women shelters across Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, Ngapali, as well as a fishing village in Ngapali. The project is run directly by local non-profits, and employ underprivileged communities, hence providing livelihood opportunities.

PHILIPPINES

By Rosa Ocampo

Atmosphere Resorts & Spa

Situated near to the world-renowned Apo Island – home to community-organised marine sanctuaries – Atmosphere Resorts & Spa in Dauin, Negros Oriental, is huge on marine protection and conservation.

Regular underwater and beach clean-ups on its protected house reef form part of Project Aware's global Dive for Debris database. An in-house marine biologist holds regular educational talks to raise awareness on coral reef conservation, plastic pollution, and other key topics in support of marine conservation.

As part of the Fourth Element, Mission 2020, the resort pledges to eliminate front of house single-use plastics and to continue expanding its sustainability and awareness rising efforts with guests, suppliers and the local community.

Atmosphere’s sustainability goals extends to the terrestrial environment – think solar power-heated hot water; power-cut-off switches in rooms; dual flush toilets and absence of water urinals; use of saltwater in pools that dramatically cuts chemical use; and 40 per cent energy inverters on air conditioning units.

The resort also practices waste segregation, as well as provides complimentary and reusable aluminium water bottles; bamboo and grass straws; and bamboo toothbrushes for guests.

It supports the local community through its boutique where mostly Philippine-made products are sold, such as hand-printed T-shirts made in Negros; food produced by the Bata ng Calabnugan orphanage; handmade, upcycled jewellery from Lumago Designs; and ethical bags from Ecovie.

Amarela Resort

Green ethos have been well thought out since the inception of this eco-friendly resort in Panglao, Bohol.

During construction, trees in the sprawling area were preserved while suitable wood and materials were salvaged from dilapidated structures and turned into delicately-carved furniture pieces with intricate latticework. The architecture and choice of materials for the resort allow for fresh air circulation, keeping the interiors cool during hotter months.

Its restaurant cuts food waste by directing leftover food to local farmers, who return the favour by providing a roast pig for the annual staff Christmas party. Composting is also practiced, with the presence of an organic herb and vegetable garden; harvested ingredients find their way into the kitchen.

Elsewhere on the resort, rooftop solar panels heat water, while recycled rainwater is used for flushing. There is also a reed filtration wastewater treatment in place, where filtered water is used on garden plants and in the kitchen.

Other efforts include the hiring of locals as resort staff, obtaining a supply of soap and shampoo from local artisans, alongside the creation of a 15-hectare marine sanctuary by the resort’s owner.

SINGAPORE By Pamela Chow

Fairmont Singapore and Swissôtel The Stamford

In November 2019, the dual-hotel complex launched the industry’s first urban aquaponics farm. The 450m² farm supplies various outlets in the hotel complex some 30 per cent of vegetable and 10 per cent of fresh fish needs. Aquaponics combines the cultivation of aquatic fauna (aquaculture) and flora without soil (hydroponics) in a sustainable, pesticide-free solution that requires less water, space and labour.

By using an AI system to analyse and minimise food waste, an Eco-Wiz food digester system converts leftover food into water and compost, and through a food waste reduction programme – in collaboration with waste management firm Good For Food – the complex reduces its food waste sent to landfills.

Additionally, Fairmont Singapore’s new South Tower rooms and suites are fitted with Swisspro fresh water taps in place of single-use plastic bottled water.

The complex also sources for sustainable produce and avoid serving endangered fish and sharks’ fin. The hotels work with local oyster farmers to serve oysters at SKAI’s brunch, and finally, unconsumed bread from breakfast service is given daily to local charity, Food from the Heart, which supports families in need.

Grand Park City Hall

During its major refurbishment in 2018, Grand Park City Hall retained 90 per cent of its existing building structure to minimise construction waste.

During the overhaul, the property was fitted with specialised equipment and technology, including a rainwater harvesting system, water- and energy-efficient fixtures, a centralised chilled water system, a high performance air-to-water heat pump and mechanical ventilation fans. These installations contributed to a reduction in water consumption by 61.9 per cent, energy consumption by 58.2 per cent and carbon emission by 58.2 per cent.

Guests can drink from in-room filtered tap that

▼ From left: Chickens and turkeys are reared at The Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa; Fairmont Singapore and Swissôtel The Stamford launched the industry’s first urban aquaponics farm; and Jetwing Lake’s onsite Biogas Digester



replaces plastic water bottles, and use zero-waste bath amenities handmade with organic ingredients as well as grooming kits made of sustainable materials.

In February this year, Park Hotel Group was awarded a S\$237 (US\$167) million green loan from United Overseas Bank (UOB) to refinance the hotel's refurbishment. A first for Park Hotel Group, the green loan is the largest obtained for any hotel in Singapore from a single financial institution, and was issued under the UOB Real Estate Sustainable Finance Framework.

SRI LANKA By Feizal Samath

Jetwing Lake

Located in Dambulla, over 70 per cent of the energy requirement of 94-key Jetwing Lake resort comes from renewable energy sources.

The property is home to one of the largest solar installations in a Sri Lankan hotel – a 300kW photovoltaic system which comprises a 125kW roof-mounted and 175kW ground-mounted installation – generating more than 40 per cent of the hotel's daily electricity requirements.

During the day, water is heated through solar panels, while at night it is heated through steam generated by the biomass boiler. Operating on responsibly harvested cinnamon wood, the biomass boiler also provides steam for the laundry, and powers the vapour absorption chiller (VAC). Utilising deionised water as the refrigerant rather than ozone depleting gases in its cooling process, the VAC caters to 100 per cent of the hotel's air conditioning requirement.

An onsite effluent treatment plant treats 100 per cent of the hotel's wastewater using a series of biological processes, which is then used as flushing water, while treated black water is used to irrigate the hotel gardens and farm.

Its farm is home to an organically grown a selection of regional fruits, vegetables and herbs for the hotel's use. Only compost from the composting unit and slurry from the biogas digester is added as a crop fertiliser.



All garden waste is composted and placed back in the gardens as a nutrient-rich soil enhancer, while food waste is added to a biogas digester – which not only serves as an effective solution for food waste treatment, but produces the methane-rich gas which is substituted for liquid petroleum gas in the staff cafeteria.

Aside from replacing single-use plastic items with reusable or biodegradable alternatives, Jetwing Lake also prioritises local employment and local sourcing, investing in livelihood development programmes and building sustainable supply chains.

Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort

The 152-key resort in southern Sri Lanka partners with neighbours and local government institutions to keep the area in pristine condition.

For starters, the property has a sprawling plot to grow its own rice, vegetables, herbs and spices. The rice paddy field is tended to with traditional planting methods, cultivating two local varieties of rice that keep indigenous farming heritage alive. The rice is served to guests, minimising the resort's carbon footprint. The local community and team members come together to plant and harvest the rice, with a traditional blessing ceremony that guests are invited to join.

Guests are also able to join a guided walk to harvest their own ingredients, while learning about the resort's various farming efforts. The walk extends through mangroves to the coast, home to endangered sea turtles that the resort helps in their conservation, in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Meanwhile, degradable waste is composted at the garden, which is used to fertilise the gardens and rice field. The team shares compost with local farmers in partnership with the Agriculture Department of Sri Lanka, and in turn purchase produce from them.

THAILAND By Anne Somanas

Suan Sampran

Located on a 20-hectare plot by the Ta Chine river in Nakhon Pathom province, is Suan Sampran, an eco-culture destination – and third-generation family business – comprising the Patom Organic Village and Farm, a four-star, 140-key hotel, spa, restaurants and meeting rooms.

Third-generation heir, Arus Nawarach, managing director of Suan Sampran, is credited with transforming the business into a vessel for change.

In 2009, Suan Sampran debuted its sustainable food





system initiative under the Sampran Model, a supply cycle that highlights principles of inclusive business development. The Sookjai Foundation was established to initiate the Sampran Model by supporting 15 groups of 170 farmers to practice organic agriculture and directly link them with businesses and consumers.

Today, the farmers supply numerous restaurants and hotels such as Sampran Riverside, which purchases around 15,000kg per month or about 70 per cent of all its food ingredients from the collective.

Around 0.4 hectares has also been allocated for the Sookjai Farmers' Market where organic farmers in the Sampran Model network can engage directly with consumers. A champion of circular economy, the learning destination has banned agrochemicals, recycles oil, and trains all staff in managing food waste and fostering sustainable practices.

Soneva Kiri

The 36 massive villas on the Thai island of Koh Kood have all been constructed from local timber, driftwood and bamboo. Most of the villa's living spaces, and common spaces like the yoga pavilion, are open-air, with only air conditioning available in bedrooms.

Years ago, close to Soneva Kiri's founding in 2008, the Soneva chain was one of the world's first to ban imported bottled water. As such, only glass bottles can be found at Soneva Kiri, filled with water treated and pumped in their own facility.

Electrical needs are powered by the likes of wind turbines, solar panels and water recycling, while vegetables are grown on-site, alongside the production of biofuel. Other green initiatives include a water reservoir to harvest rainwater, and upcycling discarded plastics. The brand also has a Thai Host programme in places, which aims to train local hospitality professionals.

There is also an environmental levy of two per cent of room revenue on each guest's stay, which goes into the UK-registered Soneva Foundation. The funds are then invested in projects such as providing energy to people in Darfur and Myanmar; supporting indigenous communities through projects such as teaching Maldivian children to swim safely in the ocean; and providing safe drinking water to 750,000 people around the world.

VIETNAM By Marissa Carruthers

Mai Chau Ecolodge

Sitting atop a hill in Na Phon village in north-western Vietnam, Mai Chau Ecolodge places locals and the environment at the heart of its operations.

To ensure it keeps with the natural landscape, the ecolodge's 21 rustic villas were built using natural resources that leave minimum impact on the environment. There is no single-use plastic onsite and organic waste is used in the resort's gardens.

Mai Chau Ecolodge regularly organises community clean ups and social events throughout the valley, and 90 per cent of its staff are trained and recruited locally. To additionally support the locals – predominantly indigenous hill tribes – food produce and property décor are bought from them.

To spread its eco-forward mindset to guests, a Green Team organises a variety of sustainable projects.

Neighbouring communities also provide authentic tours and experiences for guests, providing the tribes with an additional source of income. These range from planting or harvesting crops with farmers, and village hikes led by locals. Various projects to improve the livelihood of villagers are also conducted throughout the year, such as the installation of water pipes.

Six Senses Con Dao

Located in a national marine park on Con Dao island, the resort has transformed the stretch of beach it sits on into a safe haven for sea turtles.

Six Senses Con Dao has ensured endangered sea turtles have prime places to lay their eggs when they head to the island's beaches between May and October. In collaboration with national park authorities, it has also created an incubation enclosure to monitor and protect eggs to help boost the population. In 2018, a total of 2,904 endangered sea turtles successfully hatched and were released into the wild under the programme.

The 52-villa resort also works closely with the island's communities, carrying out educational programmes with villages. It provides clean water systems, computers and mattresses to schools, holds English classes thrice a week for children aged three to 14, and runs monthly environmental workshops with kindergarten kids and life-skills activities for villagers.

On top of this, the property features an onsite reverse osmosis plant that provides the resort with still and sparkling water, and sources all materials and ingredients locally.

▼ Mai Chau Ecolodge helps to construct pipelines which supply water for Na Thia village



Green is the new black



Aside from pushing sustainability initiatives at the hotel level, Marriott shows how it can be incorporated into meetings to make life greener. By [Rachel AJ Lee](#)

Hot idea

Learning about sustainability can easily be incorporated into meetings either on property, or through offsite CSR visits.

Brief

Ahead of Marriott International's second anniversary of Serve 360 – the company's sustainability and social impact platform – the global hospitality giant invited members of the media from over Asia-Pacific for a media fam in Thailand.

The fam trip spotlighted Bangkok, one of the world's most popular tourism destinations, and showed how Marriott hotels there were reducing their operational footprint by addressing environmental challenges in the communities where they do business.

Highlights

On the first evening, the group was taken on a behind-the-scenes tour of Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park. We were first brought to The Cube rooftop garden, where I was delighted to find a bee colony, several free-range chickens roaming around, and the cultivation of various vegetables alongside herbs such as basil, rosemary and tarragon. There was also a second garden outside Goji Kitchen+Bar, which mainly grows mint, local herbs and bean sprouts.

We were also introduced to a movable Hydroponic Garden on the seventh floor. The rocket leaves grown here are used in dishes at M Club Lounge, and during Green Meetings. Aside from being served salads at meetings, an interesting meeting idea is that event planners can arrange for

participants to pluck their own rocket leaves as one of the activities, and make their own rocket salad on the spot.

Dinner on the first-night was a very unique experience, because the food was not prepared for us. Instead, we had to pitch in and help prepare our meal alongside the property's executive chef Michael Vincent Hogan and senior executive sous chef Daniel Bucher.

We chopped up carrots and zucchinis for a grilled vegetable dish, sliced tomatoes harvested from the hotel farm and topped it with burrata cheese, and fashioned leftover brownies and croissants from the buffet spread into a cake of sorts that also included peanuts, whipped cream and peanut butter. Some of these ingredients came from the hotel's Second Love campaign, a practice that makes dishes out of perfectly fresh – but unsightly – items that would otherwise be sent to the landfill. Our feast also included a melted brie dip, grilled free-range chicken and sausages, all of which were sourced from local farmers.

This can also be arranged as part of a meeting, where participants will get to earn about the hotel's sustainable practices, speak with the chefs individually, as well as whip up a sumptuous meal together at The Apartment on level nine (the hotel's take on meeting rooms).

Another highlight was visiting community partner SOS Headquarters, and Mercy Centre, on the second day. Corporate groups may also arrange with the property to visit these locations.

Founded in 1973, Mercy Centre is located in Bangkok's Klong Toei district – widely considered the city's most impoverished slum. The complex is home to five orphanages, a hospice, a home for mothers and children with HIV/AIDs, and a 400-student kindergarten. It also functions as a community space and a shelter for street children.

Croissants and bottles of yogurt, brought from the Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park, were given to the children for their breakfast. Meanwhile, produce such as vegetables and fruits were turned into lunches for the children. Should there be any excess, the children would also get to bring the food home.

Challenges

Members of the media all arrived on different flights from various countries, requiring a fair bit of coordination. In order to reduce the impact on the environment and not send individual cars for 12, transport was arranged for pairs and threes where flight arrivals were closely timed. During the fam trip, the group also travelled by BTS where possible, as taking public transport is one way to help reduce one's carbon footprint.

FAST FACTS

Event
Marriott International
Asia Pacific Sustainable
Hotel Operations Media Fam

Organiser
Marriott International

Venue
Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's
Park and The Athenee Hotel, a
Luxury Collection Hotel, Bangkok

Date
October 23-25, 2019

Attendance
11 members of the media

Thailand powers up

Thailand is diversifying its support for business events, while operators take groups ever deeper into the heart of local communities. By [Anne Somanas](#)



▲ An Akha woman hosts the Local Aroi experience, where guests are served a Thai meal inside a local community

As a well-known destination with a mature travel industry and a geographical advantage, Thailand has consistently worked towards improving itself when it comes to business events.

Take for example the country's involvement in developing both the ASEAN MICE Venue Standard and Thailand Mice Venue Standard – the latter certifying 453 of its own venues – as a benchmark for the industry.

Before Covid-19 happened, TCEB was targeting 4Ms, or four meetings categories for 2020: groups travelling to potential cities (Meet Now); large-sized groups (Meet Mega); groups that conform to Thailand's 4.0 policy (Meet Smart); and groups with sustainable activities (Meet Sustainable 2020) in 12 key industries ranging from Medical & Wellness Tourism to Smart Electronics.

The country is ready to hand out special perks and privileges, such as a dedicated MICE Lane at the airport, cultural performances, souvenirs and a conditional supporting budget of up to one million baht (US\$30,497).

For the incentives market, Thailand released the APAC MaxiMICE in partnership with THAI Air and THAI Smile at the end of 2019.

Exhibitions are not forgotten, as Thailand has also trained its eye on the sector through its Exhibition Redefined; 360 Exhibition Success programme, with TCEB bidding for 18 conventions by 2026.

Despite events getting the boot due to the coronavirus outbreak, Thai CVBs and DMCs are optimistic their sector will be one of the first in the travel industry to bounce back, and that Thailand will continue on its previously buoyant trajectory once the situation is back to normal.

"Before Covid-19, we had a fantastic pick up on Thailand's inbound business events performance throughout 2019. We were actually expecting 2020 to exceed what we had achieved for 2019 as we had already secured a few events in 2020. We were also receiving enquiries on 2020 events even before 2019 had ended," shared Max Boontawee Jantasawan, founding CEO of Events Travel Asia Group and president, SITE

Thailand Chapter.

Anthony Lark, president of Phuket Hotels Association also described Phuket's inbound business events as growing well, particularly for the Indian market due to an increase of direct flights. There is also strong demand from major markets like China and Australia.

"We expect this to continue after travel restrictions are lifted," he noted, adding that Phuket hotels have been increasing the capacity of their event venues to cope with the influx.

Nooch Homrossukhon, director, meetings and incentives, TCEB, shared that TCEB – in conjunction with SITE and other local organisations such as PHA – is working on new marketing messages to help the market recover faster post-crisis, buoyed by the Thai government's 200 million baht (US\$6.1 million) relief funding for the business events sector.

The main target will remain Thailand's primary markets – corporate travellers from ASEAN + 6 group (China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand) and the US, with Europe remaining as a secondary market.

Nooch also shared that a reduction of Thailand's reliance on China's meetings and incentives market has led the bureau to invest more in India, and diversify to roadshows in tier-two and tier-three Indian cities such as Hyderabad and Jayapura.

An expanding Thai MICE Cities network

Previously, Thailand was heavily promoting the former secondary MICE Cities of Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Khon Kaen and Phuket alongside Bangkok. In total, these cities welcomed around 34.7 million domestic and international MICE travellers in 2018.



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During the Thai MICE Forum in August 2019, TCEB president Chiruit Isarakun Na Ayuthaya shared new second-tier MICE destinations will include Chiang Rai, Phitsanulok, Udon Thani, Hua Hin, Cha-am, Rayong, Songkhla, Nakhon Ratchasima and Surat Thani.

Max sees this as a positive development for the industry, stating: “This is one of the developments we are most excited about. An incentive is about experiences, so more development and promotion of (new) cities will (lead to us being able to offer) more products and destinations (to groups).”

Sustainable horizons

In early 2019, TCEB introduced 25 new routes for delegates visiting the country’s top five destinations, Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket, Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen.

Working closely with the public and private sectors, as well as educational institutions, the new routes enhance travel experiences through the bureau’s Thailand 7 MICE Magnificent Themes. TCEB has also joined with entrepreneurs in the above-mentioned five cities to campaign for zero plastic events, aiming to turn them into environmentally sustainable cities by cutting waste volume by 50 per cent.

Grassroots connections

In recent years, local operators and hotels have committed to injecting local flavour into business event experiences.

One innovative example is Local Aroi in Bangkok, which hosts eight-course fine-dining events with menus featuring local cuisine and served by local communities of different regions of Thailand, including hilltribes.

There is also a cooking, garland-making and market hunt for up to 150 people. Hosted by Market Experience, participants can learn to cook authentic Thai dishes overlooking the Pak Khlong Talad Flower Market, and enjoy their own culinary creations by the riverside at the nearby Mango Tree.

In the north, HiveSters showcases disappearing culture at Huen Chom Chan, a cultural space and school for art and folk music, by enlisting local masters to teach guests how to write the Lanna alphabet. Guests may also learn about soap nut tree carvings, try their hand at cooking local dishes, and visit the Tham Luang-Khun Nam Nang Non Forest Park.

Several local operators also offer more customisable CSR projects. For instance, Trunk Travel enlists corporate volunteers to help build camps for rescued elephants to retire in. Volunteers also get to reside in a homestay and partake in cooking, and tribal arts and craft classes.



PROTECTION-C

P A C K A G E



With the outbreak of COVID-19, we know that travel and meetings are put off but we want you to know that the safety of your guests and associates is our highest priority. We are carefully monitoring news from the World Health Organization (WHO) and local health agencies for the latest developments related to COVID-19 and following the guidelines of government and public health officials. We understand that your business must continue to operate and some meetings are still essential. We remain committed to helping you achieve your business objectives. We identify your important concerns and find ways to mitigate them. Royal Cliff remains the most efficient and secure solution to your meetings and events need at this time!



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- This package is available for all meeting rooms within the Royal Cliff Hotels Group excluding PEACH.



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- The minimum group size is 35 people.

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The wheels keep turning



Much work is needed to rebuild the MICE sector once Covid-19 blows over. [Rosa Ocampo](#) shares what event planners can look forward to

While the future is still hazy – as of press time – as to how the Covid-19 crisis will be resolved, the post-pandemic scenario for Philippine’s business events sector can be divined based on its performance – or non-performance – earlier this year.

Orly Ballesteros, business events organiser at Ex-Link Events, placed losses at a “conservative” 500 million pesos (US\$9.8 million) for the January to March period for PACEOS’ (Philippine Association of Conference/Exhibition Organizers and Suppliers) members alone.

Events were cancelled, and business was rudely interrupted, bringing about massive accumulated losses. Philippines was eventually placed on complete lockdown in mid-March.

“The MICE and tourism industry stakeholders (and their staff) need financial aid from the government. Most of the industry players are small and medium

▲ Covid-19 has damaged the MICE industry but there are plans to lure groups back when travel restrictions are lifted; Manila’s skyline pictured

enterprises that have limited funds and have been affected by the current pandemic”, Ballesteros said.

He is reaching for help in higher places, by speaking with various government agencies such as PACEOS and the Tourism Congress of the Philippines to provide financial aid to cushion the impact of the pandemic. But whether the assistance recommended comes through remains to be seen.

Short of cash subventions, also envisaged are perks and sweeteners to resurrect numerous business events that were put on hold this year, and lure more foreign corporate groups in the meantime.

Former tourism secretary and events organiser Mina Gabor proposed adding value for event organisers – such as upgrading participants to five-star hotels, throwing in experiential post-event tours, or providing well-thought out souvenirs – for events scheduled to take place in 2H2020 and 2021.

A second look at Philippines’ MICE Roadmap 2020-2030 is also on the cards.

“If you really want to tap the MICE market and the roadmap specifies targeting Asia and the Middle East, we need to develop these markets. We need to look at how far we have gone in meeting the goals and timeline,” said Angel Ramos Bognot, owner of Afro Asian World Events.

And once Covid-19 blows over, the task of rebuilding the sectors falls on the shoulders of Tourism

Promotions Board's new chief operating officer, Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones, who assumed the plum post in early February. However, as the lawyer and public servant is inexperienced in tourism, marketing and promotions, it would be interesting to see how Allones tackles the worst global crisis in years.

Heritage attractions

The heart of Manila is its heritage, which pre-Covid-19, was revamped considerably. Top of the list is the Walled City of Intramuros – seat of the Spanish colonial government for three centuries – which now has extended opening hours till 23.00. The attraction is now well-lit, and safer for tourists to stroll alongside its arched gates, gardens and fountains.

Meanwhile, new attractions in the area include the Dungeons of Fort Santiago where 600 were tortured and killed during the WWII; Museo Filipino for a glimpse of pre-colonial Philippines and little-known heroes; and last but not least, play a round of golf at the 18-hole Club Intramuros, from 15.00 to midnight.

To experience old and new Manila, hop on an air-conditioned ferry. The Pasig River Cruise starts from the Guadalupe ferry station in Makati, and the 45-minute cruise will pass by attractions such as the Malacanang – the presidential palace, before arriving at the end-point, Escolta in old Manila.

Rejuvenate in Rizal

Bucolic and unpolluted Rizal Province just a few hours overland from Manila beckons with its arts offerings and multifaceted landscape.

Pinto Art Museum in Antipolo is a feast for the senses with its display of paintings, sculptures and other worthy pieces of contemporary Philippine artists. The place is whimsy and quirky, while the meandering gardens and outdoor spaces are delightful and refreshing.

Another artsy area is Angono, home to some of the country's art luminaries, art museums and art galleries, and the Gigantes Festival – a parade of towering papier-mache giants.

From modern to stone age art, cadge a detour to the Angono Petroglyphs of 127 human and animal figures carved in rock walls. They're the oldest work of art in the Philippines dating to the late stone age.



▲ Taal Volcano's previous eruptions have resulted in the lush landscape one sees today

The highlight at Rizal is a vista of the Sierra Mountain ranges, ravines and waterfalls, jungles, rivers and unusual rock formations. But the trip won't be complete without a stop at the vast Masungi Georeserve in Baras for some trekking or climbing. Teambuilding activities can be arranged, alongside a fine-dining experience at the Silayan Dining Room.

Opened last year for corporate groups, the dining room was built to blend with its surroundings and serves up seasonal and organic produce from the area.

Tagaytay and Batangas post-eruption

For the adventurous, head off to Tagaytay to see how the destination is doing after the eruption of Taal Volcano earlier in January.

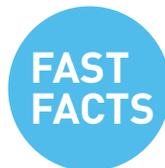
While the main island which the volcano sits on has changed physically and is now strictly off limits, Tagaytay's beauty is unmarred, while areas where volcanic ash fell have been cleaned. Some of the country's best restaurants and boutique hotels are here.

From Tagaytay, it's just a short drive to Batangas province where one can laze on the many beaches that dot the province's endless shorelines, join heritage tours, visit pilgrimage sites, and splurge in luxury farm stays and wellness treats.



and promote ASEAN destinations for tourism and business events.

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183,000

The number of participants initially expected to grace WorldBex 2020 (Philippine Building and Construction Exposition) in Manila; but the show has been rescheduled to March 2021

41.4

The percentage drop in foreign arrivals in the Philippines in February this year, down from 766,865 in February 2019

2

The number of major convention centres in metro Manila – Philippine International Convention Center and SMX Convention Center – that are undergoing expansion to cater to the growing number of big events exceeding 5,000 pax

Practically Perth-fect



The sleepy city of Perth has awoken armed with fresh MICE offerings, and is poised to welcome more business groups into the city, writes [Adelaine Ng](#)

Perth was once talked about as the city where a restaurant could charge A\$50 (US\$35) for a humble plate of fish and chips. Thankfully, the economy that reflected that market has since disappeared and so has extravagant pricing in the city's hospitality and tourism sector.

No longer same-same, plenty has become different for corporate events in Perth. It's not even a secret anymore, with Tourism Australia effectively shining a prominent spotlight on the city when it decided Perth should host not one, but all three of its main trade events last year.

Perth has undergone a surprising transformation. The West Australian (WA) capital has spent A\$10 billion in new infrastructure and accommodation over the past five years to improve its tourist offering at an "unprecedented" level.

"There's never been a better time to bring delegates to Perth," said Business Events Perth's CEO Gareth Martin. "The capability of our events has really

changed with a 40 per cent increase in internal meeting space in the city alone".

Fresh infrastructure developments

Some developments that have recently come online include the Elizabeth Quay mixed-use waterfront precinct along the Swan River, boasting at its doorstep Australia's first Ritz-Carlton which opened last November. There's also the 60,000-seater Optus Stadium, which won last year's Prix Versailles Architecture Award for the Most Beautiful Stadium in the World.

Travel into Perth is getting more efficient too, with more than A\$1 billion invested into an expansion for Perth Airport. An MoU was also signed to create a A\$510 million Australian Biome Project at the airport, comprising five high-tech domes showcasing WA's unique climates and environments in the vast state, and local indigenous culture and art. It's believed the 15-hectare project will become a major attraction for international visitors.

A new airport link which will get passengers to the CBD in 18 minutes, is also scheduled for completion by 2021.

Before Covid-19 happened, more routes were on the cards. Singapore Airlines launched a fifth daily flight last year, while in January 2020, China Eastern Airlines trialled a new direct flight from Shanghai to Perth three times a week, with the intent of make it permanent. This would connect WA to about 25

▲ Elizabeth Quay Carousel and Spanda Sculpture juxtaposed against Perth's gleaming CBD

million people in Shanghai, which could potentially translate into an additional A\$40 million in tourism spend for the state's economy.

Meanwhile, WA's key tourist location of Fremantle is undergoing a A\$270 million once-in-a-generation redevelopment to be completed this year. Known as Kings Square Fremantle Renewal, the project is designed to transform the port area into a vibrant retail, commercial, hospitality and community space complete with sustainably-built building and designs, and free Wi-Fi throughout the precinct.

These products and more were given the front stage at Tourism Australia's key trade events –the Australian Tourism Exchange, Corroboree West, and Dreamtime in April, October and December respectively.

New luxurious digs

But what really excited event planners was the city's new accommodation offering.

Perth has seen a 45 per cent increase in four- and five-star accommodation over the last three years, bringing the total room offering to 13,800 and tourism organisers have promised the prices are pleasantly not what you might expect.

"Five years ago, accommodation rates were ridiculously expensive in Perth. That's changed dramatically for a number of reasons," said Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC)'s CEO Nigel Keen.

"For one, there was the initial investment in the mining sector where billions were spent with a lot of corporate travel which pushed the rates up and there wasn't enough accommodation supply. Once the investment cycle came off and they went into production, we found low occupancy. The rates improved (and) at the same time, we've had an influx of new accommodation," he continued.

The new product and pricing reality is the injection Perth needed to re-energise its tourism sector and become a viable international business events destination against its eastern competitors.

The glamorous Crown Towers Perth – which played function host at all three of Tourism Australia's earlier-mentioned trade events in Perth – has also seen increased international and domestic visitation. "This is (due) to the Optus Stadium and (better) flight access into Perth," said Crown Hotels Perth's director of sales, Scott Alderson.

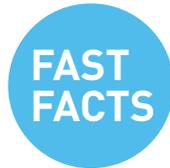
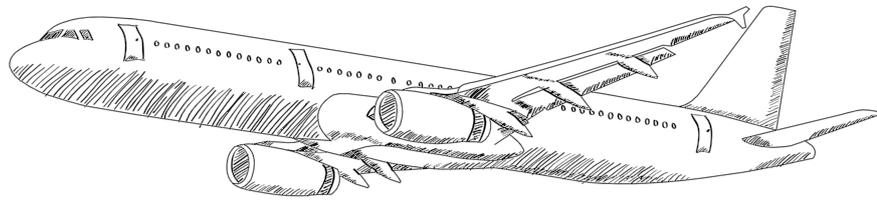
"There is more flexibility and variety in itineraries as we are connected more fluidly through air access, coach transport and now river access too. The whole state is more open and flexible to provide unique itineraries," he elaborated.

The future looks promising

WA tourism stakeholders including PCEC, The Westin, Crown Towers, Captain Cook Cruises and Sandalford Wines shared with *TTGmice* that business has been good.

"(We are) 180 years old but this financial year has been the most successful in the company's history," said Grant Brinklow, CEO of Sandalford Wines which served 200,000 paying guests last year.

"And that's due in no small part to the culmination of collective efforts by the (state) government, and significant additional investment by Sandalford and our proprietors in creating wine-related experiences."



18

The number of international airlines providing routes to Perth

4,088

The number of rooms in Perth's five-star hotels

2.8 million

The number of visitors to Western Australia in the last financial year



▲ Fremantle is undergoing a A\$270 million once-in-a-generation redevelopment

Returning from a day of incentive experiences in Perth during Dreamtime, director of Singapore-based MICE Matters, Melvyn Nonis, said he was convinced Perth deserved another look.

"This was a destination that was tired. People had visited Perth before and as MICE planners we discounted the place because of the high cost and lack of hotel availability.

"But I had a wonderful seafood lunch on a cruise with champagne, and sashimi lobster on the way to Rottnest Island where there are teambuilding possibilities. And there's a certain uniqueness to Perth so it's timely for us to introduce Perth to our incentive clients," he elaborated.

As for geographical markets, with Perth's isolation from Australia's bigger eastern cities and close proximity to its northern Asian neighbours, there's no question where the state will be focusing its efforts. Asia-Pacific already accounts for 90 per cent of incentive business for the state, with the largest source country coming from Malaysia, followed by China and Singapore.

But there is a gnawing fact. "In terms of Australia's total trade with China, WA accounts for 60 per cent of that total trade, yet only five per cent of Chinese visitors come here," said Martin. "So there's an imbalance around the importance of the relationship that WA has with China. And I think that our opportunity is immense."

Investments in diversity

The hospitality industry has welcomed more women into leadership roles in the past decade, with Accor setting an example as a company that invests in identifying and raising female leaders. [Rachel AJ Lee](#) finds out more

As the number of Accor's properties in Asia-Pacific grows, so has the number of female heads, as the company dedicates significant resources into helping them develop professionally.

The group is committed to having at least 35 per cent women general managers in its hotels by end-2020; it currently stands at 25 per cent. To date, out of 300,000 employees worldwide, 42 per cent department heads and 29 per cent of general managers are female. But there are still challenges women have to overcome, for instance, cultural perceptions and dated mindsets, in order to fix the gender imbalance present in the hospitality industry.

"Social norms in Asia-Pacific still place high expectations on females to be the main home carer for the family. This expectation makes it difficult for female leaders to balance family commitments and a career in hospitality," said Christine Rumble, chief talent & culture officer, Accor Asia Pacific.

Chidchanok Pasinpong, general manager of SO Sofitel Hua Hin, opined that the cultural shift can only happen when people stop assigning gender roles at a young age.

"We need to empower girls so that they know they can pursue their passion and excel in any field they choose when they grow up, be it a male-dominated role or not. On the flipside, there are departments such as human resources and housekeeping that are dominated by women. There needs to be a shift in thinking that these are women's jobs," she said.

Anne-Cecile Degenne, executive chef with Raffles & Fairmont Makati, believes that equality is crucial in any workplace, but "mentalities are difficult to change entirely" and there are still people who believe that "high positions belong to men".

The good news is, with more women performing well in their roles as compared to their male counterparts, perceptions are changing, suggested Jacqueline Poey, hotel manager of Fairmont Singapore and Swissotel The Stamford.

Poey told *TTGmice* that Accor has helped her develop professionally. She recalled: "I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to attend a leadership training session only meant for vice presi-

dents, high-potential general managers and corporate directors."

The opportunity to go for greater goals was not unique to Poey. After helping Hotel Des Arts win the 2016 World Luxury Hotel Awards, Accor sought Degenne's expertise to helm the kitchens at Raffles Makati and Fairmont Makati.

Meanwhile, Chidchanok is paying it forward by getting involved in RiiSE, Accor's diversity network, by supporting other female employees through mentoring and training programmes.

Riise aims to share knowledge of solidarity and combat stereotypes. Its membership stands at 14,000, and nearly half are men. Other Accor initiatives include the International Hospitality Management Programme and GM Pass to fast-track star talent to general manager roles; as well as specific learning paths in different areas of management. These do not have gender quotas, and all participants are evaluated based on merit.

Recognising that there is also inequality in the F&B departments, Accor has launched a new network WILD F&B – Women in Leadership Disrupting Food and Beverage to bring female F&B leaders together to challenge and support one another.

Although gender imbalance has definitely improved in recent times, there is still room for improvement.

Chidchanok said: "We are definitely heading in the right direction but I don't feel we have achieved a gender balance yet. On the property level, there's a healthy mix in the executive committee. In corporate offices across the hospitality industry though, a majority of the executive committee is made up of men."

As for Degenne, she hopes the call for female leaders in F&B be louder, as the strengths of a woman are usually compared to that of men. She wants to close the gap in gender inequality by sharing with fellow women her experiences as a woman and mother succeeding in the industry.

"Men and women are different and this needs to be recognised and celebrated. We need all types of people in our team – different gender, age and nationality. Diversity encourages everyone to perform better, by challenging status quo," Rumble concluded.



◀ From left: Anne-Cecile Degenne, Chidchanok Pasinpong and Jacqueline Poey

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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

Travel Services Awards

- Best Airport
- Best Airport Lounge Operator
- Best NTO (National Tourism Organisation)
- Best Tour Operator
- Best Theme Attraction
- Best Cruise Line
- Best Luxury Cruise Line
- Best River Cruise Line
- Best Car Rental Company
- Best Travel Technology Provider

3. Outstanding Achievement Awards

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

- Travel Personality of the Year
- Destination 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 (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)
- Harbour Plaza Hotels & Resorts (2020)
- Phoenix Tours International Inc. (2020)

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 2020 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 2020.

4. Voting Form Submission

Completed voting forms are to be returned to:

SINGAPORE

Delia Ng (TTG Travel Awards 2020)
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 2020)
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: Company:

Job title:

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 2020

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

55. Best Airport Lounge Operator

56. Best NTO (National Tourism Organisation)

57. Best Tour Operator

58. Best Theme Attraction

59. Best Cruise Line

60. Best Luxury Cruise Line

61. Best River Cruise Line

62. Best Car Rental Company

63. Best Travel Technology Provider

VOTER INFORMATION

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Job title: _____ Company: _____
Address: _____
Country: _____
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VOTING CLOSSES
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Catch up: Martyn Cox

Informa Markets Singapore's event director, hospitality and F&B, shares what he loves about his job and his dislike of cotton wool

How did you get into business events?

In 2010, as part of a year-long internship in Dubai, I had the opportunity to be involved as an exhibitor at a major oil and gas show. What followed was a year of backpacking. I returned to the UK in early 2012, and upon moving to London, I found myself in a less than enjoyable role in forex and became determined to forge a career in trade events.

What are the best and worst aspects of your job?

Interacting with colleagues, clients and industry partners continues to be a highlight; the personalities you meet in this industry are fantastic.

I would say that the worst part of the job has to be submitting expenses! It is a tedious part of any business role.

How do you motivate yourself daily?

I seek to maintain good work-life balance by making time for regular exercise, social activities, family time, as well



as reading for personal development.

There are ups and downs in every aspect of running an event, and having a positive mind as a result of work-life balance allows me to ensure the team is motivated, which is my top priority.

What is the highlight of your career thus far?

The launch of Food & Hotel Myanmar in 2014 was an important milestone for me. Local support was fantastic and the people were a joy to work alongside.

It was a relatively small event compared to two other events under Informa Markets' belt, FHA-HoReCa (Hotel, Restaurant and Café) and FHA-Food & Beverage. However, at the time, it was one of the first international exhibition brands to enter Myanmar, a market which had just opened up.

What do your friends think you do for a living?

That is a great question and one with many different answers! My role has been likened to anything from a conference producer to a wedding planner.

I would say though, that most of my friends probably put me in the bracket of a consultant.

Tell us something that most people may not know about you.

Most people expect me to have studied events at one point or other. In fact, I majored in Forensic Science.

Another thing that many may not know about me is that I cannot stand the texture of cotton wool. As you might expect, that became even more marked during my studies and served to make some of its practical aspects rather uncomfortable!

– Rachel AJ Lee

Appointments



Cheong Hai Poh



Lina Abdullah



Matthias Al-Amiry



Sherona Lau

Bryan Gabriel

Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas has appointed Bryan Gabriel as CCO. He was most recently the head of commercial for America at InterContinental Hotels Group.

Cheong Hai Poh

Pan Pacific Yangon has appointed Cheong Hai Poh as its general manager. Cheong has 30 years of hospitality experience, and was most recently general manager of operations and asset optimisation at Stamford Land Corporation.

Lina Abdullah

Oakwood has promoted Lina Abdullah to the role of regional general manager for Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand; in

addition to her current position as general manager of Oakwood Hotel & Residence Sri Racha in Chonburi, Thailand. She first joined the company in March 2015.

Matthias Al-Amiry

The German has taken on a dual role with the Kempinski Hotels group – managing director of The Capitol Kempinski Hotel Singapore, and regional vice president South-east Asia for the Kempinski Hotels group.

Mike Williamson

Mike Williamson has been appointed general manager for Conrad Singapore. The Brit has more than 36 years of hospitality experience, of which he spent 24 with Hilton.

Ori Lahav

Ori Lahav, vice president, clients and operations, Kenes Group has been elected president of the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers during the organisation's Annual General Assembly in Vancouver. He takes over from outgoing president Mathias Posch for a two-year term.

Sherona Lau

Capella Singapore has named Sherona Lau as executive assistant manager, sales and marketing. She was previously vice president and partner at Shanghai Yu Ji Hospitality Consulting Company, where she advised luxury hospitality companies on their practices.

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