



hospitality





## Hilton Worldwide Signs Agreement With SM Hotels And Conventions Corporation

Hilton Worldwide has signed a management agreement with SM Hotels and Conventions Corporation, a subsidiary of SM Investment Corporation, to manage Conrad Manila in the Philippines' capital city, Manila. Scheduled to open in mid 2015, the 350-room Conrad Manila is the first Conrad Hotels & Resorts branded property in the Philippines, and will be located along the Manila Bay front and in the heart of the 42-hectare SM Bay City development – home to the fourth largest shopping mall in the world.

The eight-storey Conrad Manila will incorporate two levels of retail and entertainment facilities on ground level. The luxury property which will offer a unique view of the famed Manila Bay sunset will also house one all-day dining restaurant, two specialty restaurants, a bar and lobby lounge. It will also have a business center, a fitness club, a swimming pool, a spa, a 1,446 square meter ballroom and other function and meeting spaces as well as a car park. **ha**

## All Keyed Up

Ibnu Amar Samsudin, Assistant Concierge Manager at Prince Hotel & Residence Kuala Lumpur was recently recognized as a Les Clefs d'Or Full Key Member by the Society of the Golden Keys Malaysia. Ibnu Amar has been serving as a Concierge member at the Prince Hotel & Residence Kuala Lumpur since 2002 and was accepted as Adherent Member of the society in year 2009.

He is the second Concierge member of Prince Hotel & Residence Kuala Lumpur who was recognized for his excellence in this field of service after Ragu Kumarasamy, Concierge Manager, who was recognized a Full Key Member in year 2001. Prince Hotel & Residence Kuala Lumpur is the first hotel in Malaysia with two Full Keys Members of Les Clefs d'Or. **ha**



## Hotel Maya Awarded Agoda Gold Circle

Hotel Maya Kuala Lumpur was once again selected to receive the prestigious 2012 Gold Circle Award by Agoda.com. This is the second consecutive year that Hotel Maya is recognized. Country Director of Agoda International (M) Sdn Bhd, Chan H Gee personally handed the acclaimed award to the General Manager, Danny Goh.

Gold Circle Award winners were chosen because of their outstanding performance on Agoda.com, a high number of positive customer reviews, and their utilization of Agoda.com's custom-built Yield Control System (YCS). This year, however, the bar has been raised a bit higher, and new judging criteria make the list even more exclusive. Agoda.com now also takes into account a greater amount of data, including aggregate scores for customer reviews, top-performing properties, competitive pricing, and for showing an understanding of the complex business dynamics that define the industry. **ha**

*Left: Chan H Gee (left) of Agoda presenting the Gold Circle Award to Hotel Maya General Manager Danny Goh.*

*Below: Ibnu Amar Samsudin (right) with Ragu Kumarasamy (left), make Prince Hotel & Residence Kuala Lumpur the first hotel in Malaysia with two Full Keys Members of Les Clefs d'Or.*

## Six Pentahotels To Open In Prague And UK Urban Centres In 2013

Pentahotels will open five new hotels in the UK and one in Prague this year, in addition to the previously announced pentahotel Hong Kong, Kowloon, opening summer 2013.

The total seven new properties mark 2013 as the highest growth period in the history of this neighbourhood lifestyle hotel brand. The portfolio will expand by more than 50 percent from the current 2,925 to 4,409 hotel rooms worldwide. The group currently operates hotels in Germany (11), England (one), Austria (one) and China (two.)

Strong brand growth is anticipated for the Asian region as well; in addition to pentahotel Hong Kong, Kowloon, pentahotels have been announced for 2014 openings in Guiyang (204 rooms) and Shenyang (384 rooms) in mainland China. **ha**



Above: W Retreat & Spa  
Maldives.

### JJW Hotels To Increase Online Bookings With RateTiger

JJW hotels have selected RateTiger by eRevMax as the channel manager of choice across 23 of its European hotels. The JJW Group now has access to RateTiger's new Allocation Management feature, enabling them to accurately distribute inventory from a controlled central pool to all sales channels.

The hotel chain will be able to update rates and inventory at property level through RateTiger's vast distribution network, whilst simultaneously optimizing the performance of available inventory from connected channels. Each property will be able to increase the effectiveness of all third party sales partners, thereby improving both bookings and revenue opportunities.

In addition, JJW Hotels will also benefit from real-time competitor rate data, allowing their hotels to appropriately manage rates with booking performance, in order to maintain the best market position. **ha**

### Hilton Worldwide Enters Myanmar

Hilton Worldwide marked its entry into the Burmese market with the signing of a management agreement with LP Holding Co., Ltd to manage Hilton Yangon in Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar. The first Hilton Worldwide property in Myanmar, the 300-room Hilton Yangon will also be the first Hilton Hotels & Resorts branded hotel and is scheduled to open in 2014. **ha**

### W Retreat & Spa Maldives Aces Award

W Retreat & Spa Maldives has been named "Best Hotel in the Maldives" by readers of DestinAsian magazine in their annual Readers' Choice Awards for 2013.

With a total of 2,909 respondents, W Hotels Worldwide has been recognized to provide consistent and unsurpassed standards in excellence and service with three awards which includes W Retreat & Spa Maldives, W Retreat & Spa Bali and W Taipei. **ha**

### Centara To Open Third Maldives Resort

Centara Hotels & Resorts will open its third resort in the Maldives during the latter half of 2014, following the signing of a management contract with Maldivian company RPI Private Ltd.

Centara Hudhufushi Resort & Spa is currently under design and planning, and will be to international four-star standards. The resort, which will have approximately 110 rooms, will be located on the east side of Lhaviyani Atoll, 25 minutes by seaplane from Male International Airport.

The contract signing took place on 14 September 2012, and the resort is being developed under an investment cost of USD36 million. **ha**



## Conrad Seoul Announces Support For 2013 Special Olympics

Conrad Seoul announced that it will donate 1 million Hilton HHonors points to the Special Olympics. This is in line with the global initiative of Hilton Worldwide, which is the official hotel sponsor of the Special Olympics from 2011 to 2014. Commencing January 21, 2013, 500 employees of Conrad Seoul are invited to sign the Special Olympics' Spread the Word to End the Word pledge – part of a global campaign to eliminate the use of derogatory language toward people with intellectual disabilities, and create a world of respect for all. Each signature will be worth 2000 Hilton HHonors points. With 500 employees signing up, the total Hilton HHonors points will amount to one million. These points are equivalent to 16 to 20 nights' stay at Conrad hotels worldwide.

Hilton HHonors members can participate by donating Hilton HHonors points, which will be converted into a cash donation to the organization. The minimum point redemption by Hilton HHonors members is 10,000 points, which equals to a US\$25 donation. Non Hilton HHonors members can also participate by advising their donation amount upon check-out. Their donation will then be charged to their room bill, and the amount channeled to the Special Olympics. **ha**

## Centara Goes Mobile With iPhone And Android Apps

Centara Hotels & Resorts has launched a mobile optimized website and iPhone and Android apps that will enable anyone to check room availability and book online using their smartphone.

The apps are available at Apple Apps Store for iPhone, and Google Play for Android. There is no fee for downloading the apps, which will enable anyone to browse the full range of Centara properties internationally. The mobile site apps will check the availability of rooms, allow easy online booking, and give access to all Centara news and promotions. **ha**



## Another Feather For Dorsett Hospitality International

Winnie Chiu, President and Executive Director of Dorsett Hospitality International received the coveted Best Small Cap Company award by Asiamoney under the Best Managed Company Awards-Hong Kong from Richard Morrow, Editor of Asiamoney recently.

Each year Asiamoney awards the standout companies and executive in each major regional country for strong management. The judging panel of the Award was made up of global professional investors, financial analysts, brokers and other investment communities.

Dorsett Hospitality International was accorded the prestigious award based on the group's 'Chinese Wallet' strategy in achieving a healthy return of investment. Headquartered in Hong Kong, Dorsett Hospitality International focuses on meeting the needs of Chinese visitors, and reported a 9.5 percent year-on-year increase in gross profit to HKD316.9 million (US\$40.89 million) for the six months to September 30 on the back of a 11.1 percent rise in revenues to HKD554.4 million.

Dorsett Hospitality International also scores highly on occupancy rate, one of the main benchmarks for measuring hotel success, with a 93 percent rate in Hong Kong which accounts for two thirds of its revenues. **ha**

*Above: Winnie Chiu, President and Executive Director of Dorsett Hospitality International receiving the Best Small Cap Award from Richard Morrow, Editor of Asiamoney.  
Below: Centara Hotels & Resorts' mobile application.*

## Gold Circle Award For Furama Bukit Bintang

Furama Bukit Bintang recently won the Gold Circle Award 2012 given by Agoda.com, Asia's leading hotel booking website. This award was presented under the Kuala Lumpur hotel category for achieving good customer reviews, top performing contribution with rates and value for pricing as determined in the award criteria. **ha**





Marina Bay Sands  
 Shangri-La Hotel  
 Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa Resort Singapore  
 Raffles Hotel Singapore  
 The Ritz Carlton, Millenia Singapore  
 Capella Singapore  
 Swissotel The Stamford  
 Fairmont Singapore  
 W Singapore – Sentosa Cove  
 Movenpick Heritage Hotel Sentosa  
 Grand Hyatt Singapore  
 Conrad Centennial Singapore  
 Goodwood Park Hotel  
 Marina Mandarin Singapore  
 Mandarin Orchard Singapore  
 Hilton Singapore Hotel  
 Park Regis  
 Swissotel Merchant Court Singapore  
 Traders Hotel

The Regent Singapore  
 Sheraton Towers Singapore  
 Crowne Plaza Hotel, Changi Airport  
 Furama Riverfront  
 Grand Park City Hall  
 Orchid Hotel  
 Rendezvous Hotel Singapore  
 Orchard Grand Court  
 Studio M Hotel  
 Carlton Hotel Singapore  
 York Hotel  
 Gallery Hotel  
 Ibis Singapore on Bencoolen  
 Strand Hotel  
 Hotel Royal  
 Classique Hotel  
 Broadway Hotel

Shangri-La Hotel Kuala Lumpur  
 Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa Kota Kinabalu  
 Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort Kota Kinabalu  
 Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa Penang  
 Traders Hotel Kuala Lumpur (By Shangri-La)  
 Hotel Istana Kuala Lumpur  
 Crowne Plaza Mutiara Kuala Lumpur  
 Intercontinental Kuala Lumpur  
 Concorde Hotel Kuala Lumpur  
 Grand Millennium Kuala Lumpur  
 Hotel Maya Kuala Lumpur  
 Hilton Petaling Jaya Hotel  
 Hilton Kuching Hotel  
 Batang Ai Longhouse Resort, Managed by Hilton  
 Holiday Villa Hotel & Suites, Subang  
 Riverside Majestic Hotel  
 Grand Margherita Hotel  
 Furama Bukit Bintang  
 Park Royal Serviced Suites, Kuala Lumpur



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### Firing On All Cylinders

Sunway Putra Hotel, Kuala Lumpur carried out a fire evacuation drill in March. The drill cum evacuation, which lasted about forty-five minutes, was aimed at providing experience, knowledge and training to the hotel's associates, as well as to empower them to calmly face and handle all circumstances that might arise during emergencies, especially fire. The drill also served to evaluate whether the hotel's emergency plans were in place, accessing the Hotel's ERT (Emergency Response Team) members, who formed the backup for the fire brigade and ambulance, as well as the correct way of using various fire-fighting equipment. **ha**

### Jones Lang LaSalle Launches App For Hotel Real Estate

Jones Lang LaSalle's Hotels & Hospitality Group has announced the launch of its Hotels & Hospitality iPhone® application which is the first comprehensive, all-encompassing hotel real estate app on the market. The app enables users to access the firm's full inventory of global research and market intelligence and is available as a free download from the Apple iTunes app store. The Hotels & Hospitality app caters to the growing hotel real estate industry's demand for reliable investment information delivered in an efficient, easy to use format. The app provides on-the-go access to city profiles which include critical economic highlights, investment profiles, and hotel supply and performance trends. Additionally, it features properties the firm has on the market, services, direct contact information for Jones Lang LaSalle experts and access to research reports. Information is categorized by geography and date, and most can be downloaded directly, saving time for its users. **ha**

### Ramada And Days Hotel Singapore Succeed In Recruiting Local Talent

Ramada and Days Hotel Singapore at Zhongshan Park, the first properties in Singapore to be managed by Wyndham Hotel Group, announced that they have successfully filled 80 per cent of the necessary staff strength as of the start of 2013 of which 70 per cent are Singaporeans or permanent residents. The success in talent recruitment has been down to the hotels' strategy to focus on new talent entering the workforce, as well as its targeted approach on mature and experienced candidates. New talent has a choice to be enrolled in the hotels' ME Leap! Programme, a career development plan that offers structured training at both operations and business levels, as well as career advancement opportunities. All staff or associates known as "Master of Experience" (ME) will be trained and assessed on the fundamentals of front office management and food and beverage operations, progressing to undertake advanced tasks in the functional roles of their choice. MEs will also be tasked to role-shadow a member of the senior management team and understudy on the area of business management. The comprehensive development of skill set that MEs receive has attracted the enrolment of university graduates from across a diverse background, such as National University of Singapore (NUS) graduates in Japanese Studies, Nanyang Technology University (NTU) graduates in Economics, as well as Monash University and University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) graduates. **ha**

### Eco Award For Philea

Environmentally friendly hotels have sprung up across the world in recent years, offering guests a greener getaway. Agoda.com, Asia's leading hotel booking site, announced its annual shortlist of eco-friendly hotels from its international network and it was once again a proud moment for Philea Resort and Spa to be named in the Top Ten Eco-Friendly Hotels 2012. Malaysia is one of two countries that have more than one hotel in the list. **ha**

*Above: A fire engine putting out a simulated fire at Sunway Putra Hotel.*

*Below: Philea Resort & Spa staff rejoice at being a Top 10 Eco-Friendly Hotel.*



### From Boarding Passes To Notebooks

Passengers of Lufthansa German Airlines who checked in fully paperless via mobile boarding passes on their smart phones have helped to save the paper equivalent to 2.5 million printout boarding passes during the period of December 2012 to end of January 2013. Lufthansa now is donating the paper to schoolchildren in need worldwide and will purchase 50,000 exercise books, 30,000 of which will be distributed in the Asia/Pacific region where the airline supports projects in India, Thailand and Sri Lanka via the charity of Lufthansa staff "Help Alliance". 20,000 notebooks will be donated to projects in South America and Africa. Lufthansa introduced mobile check in procedures for smart phone users in 2008 and strongly promotes this new technology as it is customer friendly, efficient and helps to save paper resources. The mobile boarding pass is an individual secure bar code that can be received via e-mail, text-message or downloaded directly on smart phone devices. **ha**



### Holiday Inn Kuala Lumpur In Top 25

Holiday Inn Kuala Lumpur Glenmarie was chosen as one of the Top 25 Hotels for Service in Malaysia and one of the Top 25 Top Hotels in Malaysia by TripAdvisor in its 2013 Travelers' Choice® awards. Now in its eleventh year, the annual TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice awards honour the world's best hotels, earning their distinction from those who know them best – real travellers. Unlike any other hotel honors, TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice winners are based on millions of valuable reviews and opinions from travelers around the world. **ha**

### KLGCC Lauded

Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club (KLGCC) was recently named the winner of 'Best Course in Malaysia' for its championship West Course and the first runner-up for 'Best Clubhouse in Asia Pacific' by 2012 Asian Golf Monthly Awards.

The West Course is celebrated for its pristine playing conditions with exceptional attention to detail. The demanding and challenging layout truly demands the importance of player strategy. The course is the home of the internationally-renowned Maybank Malaysian Open for four consecutive years that has attracted some of the world best players such as Martin Kaymer, Charl Schwartzel, Louis Oosthuizen, Rory McIlroy, Alvaro Quiros, Thongchai Jaidee and Matteo Manassero. **ha**

*Above: The team of Holiday Inn Kuala Lumpur Glenmarie with the Traveler's Choice Award  
Below: Proud recipients Mohd Nizam Othman, Golf Course Superintendent (left) and Steven A. Thielke, General Manager (right) of KLGCC.*



### Starwood Asia Pacific Recruitment Day

The Westin Resort Nusa Dua, Bali participated in the Starwood Asia Pacific Recruitment Day on 6 March 2013. This innovative event also took place simultaneously in more than 85 key cities throughout the region. It was a division-wide initiative aimed at encouraging young and dynamic candidates to explore the range of career opportunities currently available in Starwood properties across Asia Pacific.

The day was entitled 'Come, Grow with Starwood!' and it was promoted for several weeks through all social media outlets to generate local awareness. It attracted over 500 hospitality graduates as well as seasoned hoteliers all looking for a chance to join one of the world's leading hotel and leisure companies.

The programme introduced the General Managers for Starwood properties around Bali, highlighted Starwood Cares, a brand endeavour that focuses not only on the wellbeing of its associates but also the community and the environment, as well as Starwood Career, Starwood Asia Pacific's holistic Talent Development & Management Programs. A session of career talks conducted by several Bali-based associates provided a personal insight into how Starwood nurtures local talent and supports growth within the workplace and their personal experience and pride of growing with Starwood. **ha**

## Gurgaon Emerges As RevPAR Leader In India's Luxury Hotel Segment

Gurgaon, New Delhi's flourishing satellite city, is today one of the country's most promising hospitality markets. Currently, Gurgaon's existing branded inventory stands at above 4,000 rooms, with a planned pipeline of over 4,500 rooms. Of these, over 50 percent are mid-scale and budget supply. Virtually all domestic and international hotel operators aspire for representation in Gurgaon, if they are not already present.

Backed by a strong corporate and industrial base, the Gurgaon hospitality market has consistently demonstrated strong performance. It has gradually emerged as an independent micro-market from New Delhi. As per STR Global, the Gurgaon hotel market has emerged as a RevPAR (revenue per available room) leader in the five star segment of India for 2012.

Gurgaon posted a RevPAR of INR 7,200, which is 22 percent and 27 percent higher than the five star segments in Mumbai and Bangalore respectively. It is one of the few hotel markets in the country that did not see a dramatic performance decline during the economic downturn.

Gurgaon's branded four and five star hotels saw significantly increased occupancy levels in 2012, reflecting growing demand levels and resulting in an overall strengthening of RevPAR levels from INR 6,000 in 2011 to INR 6,100 in 2012, as per STR Global. Adding to the room/night business is the strong F&B demand from Gurgaon's corporate and residential communities. **ha**

## Accor Unveils Strong Ambitions For The Luxury Segment

Accor has announced an ambitious strategy to grow its network of luxury and upscale hotels.

Accor intends to expand its footprint in these segments to 400 hotels by 2015, from a current network of 300 hotels (65,000 rooms worldwide).

As part of this strategy, Accor launched Grand Mercure Maha Cipta, an upscale brand tailor-made for Indonesia.

Accor has adopted a different approach to luxury, based on its French origins, that places boldness at the heart of hospitality. In a highly segmented market, each of Accor's four luxury and upscale brands is carefully positioned to meet the whole range of clients' and owners' needs.

With strong leadership positions in Latin America, Middle East Africa and Asia-Pacific, Accor is very well positioned to capture the new and rapidly growing demand from emerging market clients, in search of a different experience of luxury and high-end hospitality.



*Above: Red Sky at Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld.*

Currently, 42 percent of the Group's luxury/upscale hotels are located in Asia-Pacific and 35 percent are in key European cities. Development will continue to follow an "asset light" model with a prominence of management contracts, the Group's preferred model in the luxury/upscale segment. Going forward, Accor will focus on developing its emerging markets, including Latin America, Middle East and Asia-Pacific which, on its own, accounts for over 60 percent of the current pipeline (key countries include China, Vietnam and Indonesia). The segment's gross revenue grew by 15 percent in 2012. **ha**

## Centara Grand At CentralWorld Named Best Hotel For Business Events

Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld has won an award as Best Hotel for Business Events in a reader survey published by CEI Asia, the region's premier magazine for the conferences, events and incentives industry. The hotel is the only fully integrated five-star hotel, convention centre and lifestyle complex in the centre of Bangkok.

The hotel has 505 rooms and suites, including nine executive floors and the World Executive Club, which occupies the entire 51st floor. Amongst the selection of food and beverage outlets are Fifty Five and RedSky, two rooftop restaurants that provide a memorable setting for business and incentives events. The brand-new M23 meetings suite on the 23rd floor offers four function rooms with a capacity ranging from 18 to 50 persons, and natural lighting, a dedicated lobby and kitchen, and an outdoor terrace. The Convention Hall seats 6,000 guests theatre-style, the World Ballroom seats 800 for a banquet, while Lotus Suites 1-15 will seat between 10 and 400 persons. **ha**



## Global Investors Circle Four Seasons Hotel Sydney

Whilst initial bids for the luxury five star Four Seasons Hotel Sydney were not yet due, a range of investors from across the globe are circling the landmark asset, which is being jointly marketed by Jones Lang LaSalle – Hotels & Hospitality Group, and boutique agency firm, McVay Real Estate.

Craig Collins, CEO – Australasia, Jones Lang LaSalle – Hotels & Hospitality Group said, "We have received substantial enquiry from across the globe, however interest has been strongest from South-east Asia, China, Korea and the Middle East. It is very encouraging for the Australian hotel market that this campaign has caught the attention of not only traditional hotel investors but also a number of new groups that have not previously considered investing in this sector."

Collins added, "This range of offshore interest is not unexpected, given that offshore entities accounted for 72 percent of the AU\$1.44 billion worth of hotels sold in Australia last year. Hong Kong investors were the top buyers of Australian hotels in 2012 followed by investors from Malaysia, Australia, Singapore and China. For this year, we have adjusted our forecast for total hotel transaction volume in 2013 from AU\$1 billion to AU\$1.2 billion.

Overlooking the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House from its exceptional location in the Circular Quay precinct of the CBD, the world-renowned hotel is being sold following an extensive \$44.5 million refurbishment program over the past few years.

The 35 level property features 531 guest rooms, four food & beverage outlets, substantial conference & meeting facilities, health spa, numerous retail tenancies, underground car parking and an off-site commercial laundry. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts – a brand synonymous with luxury hotels world-wide, operates the hotel under a management agreement until 2026. **ha**

## Apple Tree Group Set To Debut Luxury Lodge In Bagan

Apple Tree Group is targeting April 15 for the soft opening of the highly anticipated tented luxury lodge located in the heart of historic Bagan.

Located near the eastern shore of the legendary Irrawaddy River, the property offers 85 air-conditioned rooms in three classes of accommodation, ranging from 261 square meters for the Courtyard Suite, to 72 sq m for the Deluxe Tented Rooms. The hotel's design aesthetic melds classic Burmese brick design with contemporary flourishes and tented roofs.

Its principal restaurant, the Tiffin Box, delivers a range of culinary fare from authentic Burmese to western cuisine. Afternoon tea is served in the Lobby Lounge, and the Pool Bar offers up snacks and cocktails. Beyond the restaurant, the Lodge features a spa, a 20-metre pool and travel desk for guests to book local excursions and onward flights. **ha**

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[www.medklinn.com](http://www.medklinn.com).

He looks like any other dyed-in-the-wool Italian hotelier: impeccably cut dove grey suit, requisite statement watch, just a hint of personality showing through via his choice of art deco cufflinks, but Mondi Mecja, General Manager of Berjaya Times Square Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia has taken a different path to his destination at the helm of one of the city's biggest hotels.

# The Importance Of Being Earnest



**T**he 38-year-old Mecja first came to Malaysia in 1998 as part of a one-year project by Malaysia Airlines to bring chefs from all the countries in the Commonwealth of Nations to cater to the athletes at the 1998 XVI Commonwealth Games which were held in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia was the first Asian country to act as host to the Games.

Post-Commonwealth Games, Mecja, who is a Public Relations graduate, joined Asian Overland Services, dealing with travel agents and specializing in the

MICE segment. In his three years with the company, he was part of the bid to secure the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) conference in 2006. Billed as Malaysia's biggest conference, FIGO welcomed 8,000 participants for the 18th triennial congress.

A chance meeting with a hotelier from the Shangri-La led him to the Sunway group where he began his hospitality career. "I specialized in the MICE segment, but this time I was on the other side of the fence. I was a supplier now, in charge of accounts which booked a hundred

rooms and above. It was the same scope of work as Asian Overland, but I had the advantage of knowing how it worked from behind the scenes. Malaysia was a very young hospitality market at the end of the Nineties. It was easy to communicate in Malaysia because English was the language of business, but there were few hotels and the hospitality industry was young," reminisced Mecja.

He spent three years with Sunway and then was approached to join Starwood Hotels & Resorts which had just taken over the Le Meridien Kuala Lumpur. As Director of Sales, he was part of the second team at the property and worked towards setting Starwood systems and structures into place for the Sales department. Three years later, he was offered a posting in either Langkawi or China, but the need to be with and near his three children as they grew, made him demur. Friends in the business speak in admiration of Mecja's dedication to his children, and he says that they are the reason he has decided to remain in Malaysia and in the capital.

"This industry is very hard for families. Separation is very usual, but I did not want that. I wanted to be a real father to my children. They needed to have me present in their lives every day and so, when the offer to become the Director of Sales and Marketing at Berjaya Times Square Hotel came up, I took it with no hesitation. Eighty percent of my clients asked me why I would even consider such a move.



My travel agent friends placed bets to see how long I would last. Three months, tops, was the hot favourite, however I have been here for four years now," he laughs.

"A local hotel chain does not have the structure of a Starwood, but that is what I liked about this challenge. When there are fewer levels of reporting in place, it is easier for a person to build in a structure which works and which is applicable for a property of this size. In my first year as DOSM I brought in 42 new corporate accounts, which included Exxon, Technip and Standard Chartered. Occupancy rates went from the 60s to near 80s," he says with natural pride.

He had scarcely completed a year in the position when the owners of the hotel, taken with his success, promoted him to Group Director of Sales and Marketing. In January 2010 Mecja had ten properties placed under his purview. "Tan Sri Vincent Tan, our founder and owner interviewed me himself. He asked about the languages I spoke and my thoughts on how to drive business for the group, especially internet business. I found out that in 2010 our e-business only accounted for 14 percent of our business. The industry average was 30 percent. We revamped our website, we made them more booking friendly and now we get around 32-35 percent of our Hotels & Resort business from the e-sites."



Successful as he was in this area, Mecja early on had focused on one goal: to be General Manager of a hotel. When the General Manager of Berjaya Times Square Hotel left, Mecja petitioned for the post. His superiors told the hotelier he'd have to take on the General Managership without relinquishing his Group DOSM role. Mecja continues to balance both portfolios since May 2012.

In his Group capacity he made Berjaya the first local hotel to cluster its sales team. Mecja cut the 42-strong sales team to a 25-person National Sales Office, saving RM800,000 a year. "We close more business when one team sells all the properties. In the past if a client a Berjaya Times Square hotel sales associate went to see was interested in the Langkawi property, the sales associate would have to link the client with the Langkawi sales team. Now, we sell across the board and it works a lot more efficiently and generates more desirable results."

Branding was another essential component of the sales process which Mecja took in hand. "Our two big revenue drivers are Berjaya Times Square and Berjaya Langkawi Resort. We refurbished Langkawi last year with a view that we were not going to be fighting against properties like The Datai and Andaman. Everything we did was to build a great four-star family resort which people want to go back to." The direction was an evident success, with the Resort's average room rate topping that of Sheraton Langkawi. A look at Tripadvisor sees Berjaya Langkawi Resort ranked at number nine out of 93 hotels in Langkawi. Reviewers have called it 'the most complete resort' on the island, and indeed, Mecja, with his fully present and accounted for fatherhood certificate tucked neatly under his belt, ensured that the resort features a Little Monkeys Club for kids which is an outdoor and indoor recreation facility with full child minder services for free so that parents can explore and enjoy while their progeny did things most appealing to their interests. The RM30 million refurbishment will see pools added to the water chalets, resulting in a mix of high-end water chalets and family land suites.

This year Berjaya Times Square will be under the microscope. Mecja is setting his house further in order by focusing on the back of house. "I want to bring my passion for sales to the hotel operation team. I



want all my staff to bring their passion to work. To do this I spent six months increasing employee satisfaction with their workplace. I have enhanced the staff canteen and made it more restaurant-style. We started a random focus group each month where staff members are chosen to represent their respective departments to share what can be done to make them happier. The stewarding department, for example, said that after their shift finished they were bored because they had time on their hands. They asked for a ping pong table and they got it. Our employee satisfaction index (ESI) has gone up. In December 2011 ESI stood at around 75 percent. In same period of 2012 ESI grew to 81 percent, which was an all time high for the hotel. If the staff are happy in their jobs, they become passionate about their guests and we all benefit."

Transiency is not something that has coloured his life, despite his choice of career. While rightly pleased with what he has been able to contribute, Mecja believes there is more in him. "I owe the owners more results for having shown a lot of trust in me. I made this the first year ever the hotel met their budget and I am focused on giving back more and driving more results for the property and the group," resolves Mecja, showing off the fiery stubbornness so well-known of his countrymen. **ha**



## Silk And Steel

Asian hospitality has a new front woman and she wears heels as lofty as her ambitions. There is no mistaking the air of ability in Winnie Chiu, President and Executive Director of Dorsett Hospitality International. As young as she is multifaceted, the 33-year-old has already made a name for herself as a canny businesswoman and a savvy hotelier. Under her leadership Dorsett Hospitality International was named the Best Small Cap Company by Asiamoney under the Best Managed Company Awards - Hong Kong.

**D**orsett Hospitality International was accorded the award based on the group's 'Chinese Wallet' strategy in achieving a healthy return of investment. Headquartered in Hong Kong, Dorsett Hospitality International focuses on meeting the needs of Chinese visitors, and reported a 9.5 percent year-on-year increase in gross profit to HKD316.9 million (US\$40.89 million) for the six months to September 30 on the back of a 11.1 percent rise in revenue to HKD554.4 million.

Dorsett Hospitality International also scores highly on occupancy rate, one of the main benchmarks for measuring hotel success, with a 93 percent rate in Hong Kong which accounts for two thirds of its revenues.

The group's focus is not limited to Hong Kong. Recently rebranded from Kosmopolito Hotels International, the group is also actively pursuing the Chinese wallet strategy abroad. Its first venture beyond Asia is the Dorsett London which is scheduled to open in 2014; to be followed by a second London property in Aldgate which will be converted into a hotel.

Dorsett Hospitality International is a spin-off from Far East Consortium Limited. The group currently owns and manages 17 hotels in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Malaysia; with eight more opening within the next 12 to 24 months in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore and United Kingdom under three brands of different tiers ranging from up-scale to mid-scale and value-led. The three brands are

d.Collection featuring a series of boutique hotels; Dorsett Hotels & Resorts comprising up-scale Dorsett Grand and mid-scale Dorsett; and value-led Silka Hotels.

Chiu shares her beginnings in hospitality by saying, "My love for hospitality developed gradually from a love of people and my passion for the development of people. It is so rewarding that in the hospitality industry someone can begin his career as a butler, and finally end up as a General Manager. People are a big part of our core values of Inspiration, Innovation, Integrity and Initiative, and I personally take great pleasure in putting people in the right places so that they benefit, and we, as a company, benefit too."

Although she now is the front woman for one of Asia's fastest expanding



hospitality concerns, Chiu did not go to hotel school. A business management graduate from London's King's College, she distinguished herself at Credit Suisse to the point she was offered the management of the Shanghai office. She returned to the family fold, joining Malaysia Land Properties, which belongs to her father, before joining Far East Consortium (where her grandfather is Chairman) as Director of Property Development. When the hospitality business was spun off in 2010, Chiu took charge of Dorsett Hospitality and was made President in 2011.

Her pedigree makes her a formidable strategist and investor, but there is also an endearing vivaciousness about Chiu that is refreshingly down to earth. She speaks earnestly about her love of empowering people, and how she makes volunteer appearances in Hong Kong high schools to talk about life after school and the importance of correct conduct at job interviews. She also stars in the short film *The Power Of Advice*, presented by HVS Executive Search (find it on Vimeo) where she speaks animatedly on the importance of mentorship, listening skills, empathy and objectivity when giving and receiving advice.

She makes no apologies about her family ties, and does not shy away from questions about how it feels working for the family corporate. "My father, Tan Sri David Chiu, is a visionary. He took up the challenge of making the second generation successful and I feel I have a responsibility to make the third generation sustainable and not to lose the DNA of who we are as a company or a business. Right now we are still small enough (24 hotels) that I can handpick my General Managers and Directors of Sales and Marketing. I still face the music if I make wrong decisions; I am accountable to my board of directors and I report to the board regularly," she stresses.

The growth rate of Dorsett Hospitality International has been nothing short of phenomenal. Chiu explains, "If we don't grow, how do we make more jobs available? How do we reward our staff? If we don't grow we limit the exposure of our staff and decrease their chances of moving on to other properties. My



objective as we expand is scalability – to be able to repeat the same model over and over, because growth is defensive. It helps create economies of scale. I always see opportunity in everything, it's my character."

As important as expansion and building new hotels is to Chiu, she displays the clinical side of her when it comes to divesting some of the group's properties. In September 2012 Dorsett Hospitality International sold the Dorsett Regency Hong Kong for HK\$800 million. The group gained approximately HK\$450 million after off-setting the hotel book cost, and went

on to acquire The Matrix in London. Located at 9 Aldgate High Street, London, The Matrix is an existing office building situated immediately east of the junction of Fenchurch Street and Leadenhall Street in the heart of the insurance and shipping district of the City of London; and above the Aldgate tube station. Dorsett Hospitality International will re-develop The Matrix into a nine-storey hotel by adding three additional floors to the existing structure. Upon completion of the redevelopment, the hotel is expected to have approximately 260 guestrooms. The Matrix will be Dorsett Hospitality International's second hotel in London.

"We consider the United Kingdom as one of the most popular destinations to tourists and business travellers around the world. Major European countries including the United Kingdom are attracting an unprecedented number of Chinese tourists. In alignment with our development and 'Chinese wallet' strategy, we entered the UK hotel market with the successful acquisition of Dorsett London located at Shepherd's Bush in August last year. We are eagerly looking forward to the opening of this 322-room hotel which is scheduled to be operational in 2014. With the addition of the group's latest acquisition of The Matrix, Dorsett Hospitality International will reinforce its presence in the UK market and position with a total combined room inventory of close to 600," shares Chiu.

And where will the group find the right people to staff their new hotels? Chiu is very frank when she confides that, "There is no strategy. People attract people. In an organization, everyone's energy rubs off against everyone else's. I do not believe in having to impress potential associates. We have to be natural. At the end of the day, it's a career. You either like me and want to join me, or you don't. The hospitality industry works long hours, and it's going to be bad for anyone if they don't like their colleagues or worse, their boss! I find dealing with politics painful and I prefer to get down to work. If I have to say no to something, I will, but on smaller issues, I am open to agreeing to disagree." And thus speaks the new Iron Butterfly. **ha**



## Time And Tide

There is quietude about Gulab Mahatam Rai. It is akin to the pleasant silence of the pre-dawn, or the restful quiet that comes over the land as the sun dips into the sea heralding rest from a day of frantic fun in the sun. The Resort Manager of The Taaras Beach & Spa Resort on Malaysia's Redang island is a tall man, but he does not command from the mere force of personality. This is an individual of quiet action, a thinker and strategist even though he can quickly turn on the bonhomie.

**L**ike many Malaysian hoteliers Gulab entered the world of hospitality right after his O Levels, joining Awana Genting Highlands as a receptionist after a walk-in interview. "You know what got me excited about this field? It was the look of people in suits, ties and blazers. It felt so polished, so professional," he shared with a wry laugh. Gulab was to go on to make a name for himself as a strong Operations man, with keen Front Office acumen – one of the reasons he was constantly called

upon to be part of pre-opening teams for the Awana brand as it expanded to Terengganu (Awana Kijal) and Langkawi (Awana Porto Malai). "In 1988 everything was still run manually. It was only in 1993 that Awana set up a computer system, and I was part of making sure that system preformed effectively for both bookings and management control," he shared.

A man content with life, Gulab would have stayed willingly at his first post, but after 14 years, the need to advance and learn pushed him to leave Awana. "It was

difficult to take that first step. I wondered if I was equipped enough to survive outside my comfort zone of established contacts and business network," he confessed. He was to go on to distinguish himself as Rooms Division Manager at A'Famosa Resort, Melaka, where he also headed sponsorships and joint promotions. His time at the resort saw A'Famosa hosting the first Formula One party to be held out of the capital city, as well as one of the country's largest turn outs for a Father's Day run.



Positions at Bukit Tinggi Resort, Pahang (Group Front Office Manager, Resort Operations Manager, Resident Manager, Director of Sales and Marketing) rounded out Gulab's competencies and made him a point man when other properties in the Berjaya family needed management infusion. He has been Resort Operations Manager of Berjaya Tioman, Deputy General Manager of Berjaya Times Square, and pre and post opening General Manager of Ancient Village Long Beach by Berjaya Hotels & Resorts, Phu Quoc island, Vietnam.

introduce the property to the local and international tourist markets, even as he set up individual department operations. "In a strange country, in challenging situations, I had to depend a lot on what I knew, and how best to fit in the knowledge to what I had on hand."

Motivated by how much experienced is to be gained, Gulab is refreshingly unperturbed that he is at The Taaras as Resort Manager. "Titles are not a big thing for me. It is the learning that I get out of every position that matters. No matter the position, the most important thing for me is to do all I can to make any property I am entrusted with better than before I came on board," he said.

He has certainly done it at The Taaras. The resort is a five-star, award-winning

have also made a name for ourselves as a spa destination," he shared.

Little wonder, as The Taaras Spa is in a class by itself. From basic massage treatments, to super luxurious Taaras Signature Packages, the spa boasts a level of service and personalized attention unrivalled by any other spa on the island. "Our spa offerings are very comprehensive, but we are always looking to improve in any way we can. Our spa therapists are always continually assessed and we will soon have a yoga master from India joining us, which will mean that we can offer yoga on the beach and meditation classes," Gulab enthused.

Will the Resort Manager be taking part in the meditation classes? Gulab, as always, is open to new experiences. "Everything



On his first away assignment, Gulab shared, "Vietnam is a challenge for any hotelier. It is a country where the hospitality culture is still new. Basic infrastructure is lacking, and there is a lack of local talent who speak English, let alone English-speaking personnel with any experience whatsoever in the hospitality industry. To someone who is away from home ground, and with a limited network of resources, it was a big challenge." It was one which he met. Gulab opened the four-star resort within time frame and budget, translating all SOPs into Vietnamese for the benefit of the employees. He was personally involved in the A&P efforts to

luxury beach hotel, and it stands head and shoulders over its closest competitor. Since his appointment in March 2012, Gulab has put cost-saving measures in place. His suggestion to outsource the staff cafeteria and his re-negotiation with diesel suppliers have saved a million Ringgit. He has maintained a profit margin of 39.1 percent for the resort's F&B department and a 79.3 percent overall profit.

"The Taaras is a very special property. Our guests are more from the mid and upper income range, and they prefer to stay in the resort. They dine, have fun, enjoy the spa and are able to do this because The Taaras is truly an all-inclusive resort. We

you do, every new thing that happens to you, every challenge you face – it all becomes part of you, and one day, you will draw from these experiences and be glad you had them." **ha**



# When Only The Best Will Do

Amr Essa, Executive Assistant Manager of Cyberview Resort & Spa, Malaysia believes that hotels and resorts should always use highly recommended and well-known companies to support their operations, as having the latest knowledge and techniques on how to prevent incidents related to incorrect handling of Food and Beverage can help establishments steer away from any pitfalls. He backs up his stand by hiring what he feels is the best pest management company so that their professional trainers can use a variety of teaching methods and exercises to facilitate learning amongst the hotel employees.

## **Are there particular issues with hygiene and sanitation which are specific to your properties?**

No, we never had any issues with hygiene and sanitation. However, being a resort with huge landscaping and being surrounded by lush green vegetation, it's always been a challenge to deal with mosquitoes and other insects that naturally thrive in this type of environment and weather.

## **Were you using other pest control services? If so, why the change to PestBusters? Has there been a big difference?**

Yes, we had other companies working with us before, however, we did not see much improvement and we still had complaints all the time. PestBusters work very closely with us, consistently asking for feedback. They regularly update us with whatever challenge they face in the resort in order for us to assist them and work as one team. Yes, we feel the difference now and we managed to reduce guest complaints from the rooms and also from our outlets.

## **How did you learn about PestBusters?**

We came to know about Pest Busters through other hotels and recommendation by a lot of people.

## **What made you buy in to PestBusters services? What was their differentiation factor?**

PestBusters have quite a good reputation in the market. They are different because they are well organized, working with a strong plan and excellent communication procedure.

## **What kind of improvements did you see?**

There has been a lot of improvement so far because PestBusters are so efficient. They also conducted training sessions for our associates to have a better understanding about what Pest Busters really do and how our hotel and colleagues can benefit from this process.

## **How long did the real benefits take to kick in?**

After approximately one month, we started to see the big difference.


## **Would you say that there is a need for the hospitality industry to place bigger emphasis on hygiene and sanitation?**

Absolutely! We think hygiene is one of the most important aspects in the hospitality Industry. If you run a foodservice operation, you already

know how important it is to maintain safe food handling practices in your establishment. You just can't afford to have your customers be exposed to food borne illness. This could cost thousands of dollars, or even put you out of business. To do this properly from the very beginning, the hotel needs to come up with a programme to control F&B safety in all aspects and apply the latest techniques available. The Purchasing Department must guarantee that they are receiving only the best quality of the products available.

In-house Hygiene & Sanitation teams will do specific controls and analysis on all food and beverage preparation like paying special attention to food and beverage storage, temperature defrosting process, staff hygiene and practices, critical analysis of F&B stock rotation, recommendations in water purification, industrial safety programs in F&B preparation and equipment cleaning controls, including our own kitchen disposals and proper storage.

## **PestBusters' service cost five to six times more on average to other pest control companies. Was your investment worth it?**

Yes, our investment was worth it. 



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Malaysia is a hot investment ticket now, as far as global hospitality brands are concerned. Nary a week goes by without one brand or other announcing new hotels to be built. Best Western International has gone on record with their intent to grow its Malaysian portfolio from the current five hotels to 20 properties by 2015, with the additional hotels being apportioned into six new Best Western Premier hotels, eight under the Best Western Plus brand and six carrying the Best Western brand. The hotel chain's most recent opening in Malaysia was the 364-room Best Western Premier Dua Sentral in Kuala Lumpur in July 2012. The next property to come on-line from the group will be the Best Western Premier The Haven in Ipoh, Perak, an area now seeing accelerated hospitality development on the heels of Sunway Group's luxury wellness retreat, The Banjaran Hotsprings Retreat.

## Field Of Dreams

**F**rench hospitality group Accor, as early as the final quarter of 2011, announced its plan to expand its hotel network in Malaysia. By the end of 2014, an expected ten new Accor hotels will be operational in Malaysia. Currently the brand is represented by Novotel Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Pullman Putrajaya Lakeside, Pullman Kuching, and Novotel Kota Kinabalu 1Borneo in East Malaysia. Ibis Styles in Fraser Business Park and Cheras in Kuala Lumpur have already been launched. The economy brand will take the lion's share of the development pie, with six Ibis Styles planned, along with two Pullmans, and two Novotels.

*Starwood-managed Aloft  
opened in Kuala Lumpur in  
March.*

The newest big-name properties to open in the capital were the 455-room Grand Hyatt and YTL's 300-room Majestic Hotel, both which debuted at the end of 2012. The highest profile hotel launch in 2013 so far has been that of the 482-room Aloft, managed by Starwood.

Although hotel occupancy in Kuala Lumpur increased 1.4 percent to 74.3 percent during 2012, with ADR growing by 4.5 percent to about RM354.52 according to STR Global, overall hotel performance is not looking meteoric, simply because the city's hotel inventory will continue to grow by 5.5 percent through 2014.







With the sizeable increase in the number of rooms in the city, the race is now down to attracting the best kind of customer for each hotel. In this aspect, it is brands with very clear personalities which have an edge.

Chuck Abbott, Regional Vice-President, Starwood Hotels & Resorts South East Asia shares what goes into the building of a great hotel. "Starwood is very specific about the brand requirements of every hotel we manage. Three-and-a-half years before we started developing Aloft, we were already speaking to the developer, owner and designers about the specifications needed to achieve the direction we wanted. What you see today is the collaboration between the owner and operator and the right consultants. The owner needed to believe in the specialness of the property because Aloft is truly a lifestyle brand. It is very different from any other hotel and we needed the confidence from the developer that it would be successful. Aloft will change the hotel landscape in KL."

In Malaysia, Aloft is owned and developed by Aseana Properties Limited and project managed by Ireka Development Management Sdn Bhd. Aseana is an associate company of Ireka Corporation Berhad.

Lai Voon Hon, President and Chief Executive Officer of Ireka Development Management Sdn Bhd has a long and happy history with Starwood. Even before The Westin Kuala Lumpur, which Ireka Corporation Berhad developed, owned and managed, (and sold for a record price of approximately RM1 million per room), Lai, who was then a practicing architect, had an established working relationship with the NYSE-listed global hotel management group.

"Kuala Lumpur Sentral Sdn Bhd, the developer for the development of Kuala Lumpur Sentral, is a consortium led by Malaysian Resources Corporation Berhad (MRCB). MRCB had in their master plan two more hotels for KL Sentral. The St Regis was already



in progress and we suggested a design-led hotel. At which they asked, 'what's that?' I already had Aloft in mind," recalls Lai.

"Alofts are usually fairly small hotels. To build this one, we had to translate what an Aloft was to 482 rooms. It could not be just a select service hotel, this Aloft needed to be full service. It was a great location, but I had to convince Starwood, who were shocked about the size, but came in to the discussions with open minds," remembers Lai.

Starwood is evidently pleased with how it turned out. "All the components are here. It's very on-brand – sassy, savvy, very unique, with locally created artwork, and the WXYZ Bar. There has been no compromise of brand standards, despite it being the biggest Aloft in the world," says Abbott.

To make the property come alive, the design team focused on key elements. "Aloft is fun, cool, hip. It's a place to mingle, no matter the scale or the number of rooms it has. The essence is one of socializing.

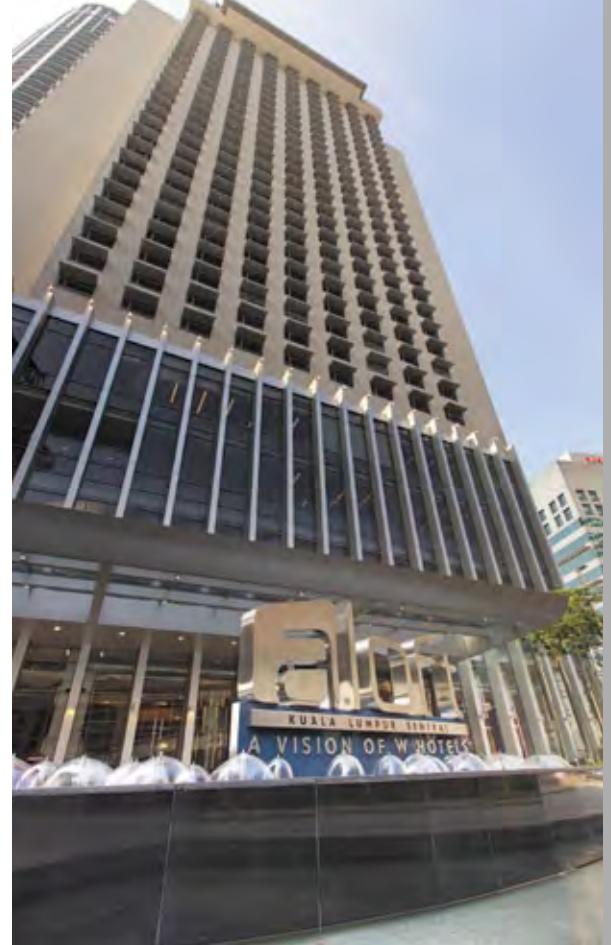
*At the top (left to right): Chuck Abbott in front of the WXYZ bar, an Aloft staple, Lai Voon Hong of Ireka Development Management Sdn Bhd. Above: Wxyz Bar.*

The design was successful because we brought the right people in to design it. We had to work with certain defined design palettes which are Aloft, but we mixed things around and created spaces to make the hotel look cozy. There are a lot of Aloft elements, but we put them together in new ways, and so broke new ground for Aloft," enthuses Lai.

Infused with the DNA of W Hotels, Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral caters to the modern traveller seeking a unique experience. All guestrooms feature loft-like decor with soaring eleven-foot ceilings, Aloft's signature platform beds, oversized showerheads, and Bliss Spa products. Designed with the digital generation in mind, the hotel provides free wireless internet access throughout the property, including all guest rooms. Each room is also equipped with a unique plug-and-play connectivity solution that connects most electronic devices to the 42" flat-screen LCD TV, turning the room into a high-tech office as well as an entertainment centre.

Incorporating industrial design elements throughout the hotel, Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral offers vibrant public spaces where guests can mix and mingle, read the paper, work on laptops, play a game of pool, or grab a drink with friends.

*Right and below: The Aloft was designed around socializing, so spaces are open and inviting. The pool table where Abbott and Lai are racking it up is an Aloft fixture.*





### The Truth Is Out There

David Mizan Hashim, Principal Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Veritas Design Group sees a particular trend in the way hotels are being designed. "Markets used to be very clear. Hotels used to be clearly defined for business or for pleasure. It's no longer the case. Of course there are still the pure leisure hotels on remote beaches, but now city hotels cannot position themselves one way or another. When I am on holiday I am still checking my emails, still using Whatsapp, and tourist hotels know that, so they have Wi-Fi. The challenge to designers is to make city hotels look resort-ish, and they do that by removing walls between the bathroom and the bedroom, but there is still a desk for the businessman, because while the wife is in the bath tub, the men are on their laptops," shares David, who undoubtedly speaks from experience.

Travel experience is not the only thing David has in spades. As founder of the second largest multi-disciplinary architecture, interior design, landscape design, planning and quantity surveying firm in Malaysia, Veritas has ridden the wave of development both in Kuala Lumpur (One Sentral, Digi, the AIG headquarters and ING building, Putrajaya Western Transport Terminal and the Ministry of Natural

Resources and Environment) and internationally (India, China, Vietnam, UAE, Maldives). The Group's latest hospitality project was Legoland in Johor's Iskandar region. Work is ongoing on the W, a Starwood hotel, in Kuala Lumpur's Jalan Ampang, as well as the new low-cost carrier terminal in Sepang, KLIA 2.

Another trend David sees is the growing consciousness of the power of a brand. "The W Residences are link-branded to the W hotel, leveraging on the W being in a mixed hotel and

*Below: David Hashim of Veritas Design Group. Bottom (clockwise from the left): Veritas designed 1Mont Kiara and Menara Binjai, Menara Binjai has dual green building certification and was designed from inception as a green building.*





residential development. Many of the hotels we are talking to all have the same kind of thinking. No one can wait 20 years for return on investment on a hotel, so it is the residences linked to the projects that bring in the money for the developers," he shares.

As head of a practice specializing in the design of innovative buildings, spaces and environments, David is passionate about environmental sustainability in both residential and hospitality projects, but he says wryly that an eco-friendly house may be as much for bragging rights as for true conservation. Where hotels are concerned, he believes that guests are aware of green washing versus real sustainability.

"Sustainability is more than just a card in the bathroom asking you to reuse the towels. Malaysian operator brands are starting to raise their game and make their mark when it comes to sustainability. The Shangri-La and the YTL hotels, even a smaller brand like the Everly in Putrajaya, are taking steps to become more environmentally friendly. However, green technology has been on a bit of a backburner in Malaysia for the past ten years where hotels and resort developments are concerned. I have also noticed that leisure travellers are more aware of green innovations than business travellers are. Leisure travellers look into the green sustainability aspect of their stay, but business people don't seem to care," he says candidly.

*Below: Legoland Malaysia in Nusajaya, Johor was another Veritas project.*







Although a Veritas Environment exists within the Group, David says apathy from clients and end users make in-roads into green technology difficult. "There's not enough dedication. Clients don't see the need or the benefits and they don't sense the urgency of the necessity to go green. The initiatives you see in the industry are trivial. They do something small and talk about it for a year, but a fundamental change of mindset is what is needed. A building can't be retro-fitted with green technology. It is expensive and much less effective. If a property is truly meant to be a green building, it has to start from the

*Above: Desa Park International School comprises a series of linear blocks connected by an internal street atrium designed by Veritas Design Group.*

planning, right from the orientation of the building, down to the access it has to the public transport system. People talk about energy efficiency, but the solutions are not tried and tested. I can talk about a heat recovery system to a developer, but there are no engineers to do it. The fact is that one of the few people who can do it is with Veritas Environment!"

*Below: Doha Airport Catering Building, Qatar by Veritas Design Group.*



His shoot-from-the-hip diatribe is not without a leg to stand on, as Veritas Design Group has, for the last five years, established its own environmental conservation programme. The CARE (Conserve And Respond to the Environment) is a company-wide initiative which works towards reducing the carbon footprint of Veritas as a company, and its employees as individuals. Energy consumption per person is bench-marked, and everything that can be recycled, is. Employees who drive cars upward of 1.5 litres pay a surcharge or carbon tax fine that goes into a fund which is used to reward employees who walk, or take public transport to work. Pretty nifty, especially when Veritas is the only architectural practice with an ISO 1400 certificate for environmental management. Every project that Veritas undertakes also goes through an environmental audit.

When queried about architectural and design trends in Malaysia, David believes that the country is still 'quite sensible.' "In Dubai the buildings are getting more outrageous, everyone is in a bid to outdo the other with taller buildings, dancing buildings... Malaysians are not so outlandish. Our skyline is still a relatively beautiful one, and not a hodge podge. I think you will see a trend towards high performance glass; the double glazed variety, with vacuum seals, so that buildings don't look so heavy. We will also be seeing hotels as part of mixed used developments, with buildings going higher and then zoned into offices, condos or retail zones like the Grand Hyatt in Shanghai and The Shard in London. Vertical cities will be the way to go," he prophesises.





## Strong And Constant

While there is an increasing number of architects and interior designers who have made Malaysia proud with their work abroad, there still remains a battle unit of 'imported' (and important) talent who have worked in Malaysia longer than in their originally homelands. RDM Design Sdn Bhd is high on this list, having been designing luxury hotel interiors, public spaces and unique private residences since 1995.

RDM is led by England-trained Nic Proud (CNNA BA Degree, Manchester Interior Design), who has worked for the last 30 years as an interior designer in Europe, Middle East, New Zealand, Australia and Asia. His partner is Claudia Binder.

The firm counts Berjaya Times Square Suites Hotel, Sheraton Subang Hotel and Towers (now the Grand Dorsett Subang), IBT- a high end residential / office project in KL and the latest Empire Damansara among its Malaysian hospitality projects. They also had a hand in the Grand Hyatt Jakarta's business centre and conference facilities, Raffles City Waterfront Shopping Centre, Singapore, Swissotel Hotel, Sydney, Marriott Mayfair Apartments, Bangkok, Taj Wellington Mews Luxury Residences, Mumbai, India and Marco Polo Hotel, Jakarta.

Binder, who has been in Malaysia for 17 years, describes herself as the 'conceptualizing person who makes sure the thread is pulled through from sale to product delivery'. Like a proud mother who dismisses sibling rivalry amongst her children by telling them 'you're all the best', Binder and Proud clearly take pride and delight in each project they undertake.

"We enjoy being able to indulge in big spaces and expensive materials, but at the same time we enjoy working on projects where creativity and experience are the core of the task," enthuses Binder. "Being able to work on projects with different budgets is essential to making a name for ourselves and keeping our place in the industry," adds Proud. He goes on to say that the most difficult aspect in design is to marry clients' dreams with reality.

Oftentimes designers are stuck between dreams and operational reality. "Clients have dreams" says Proud, "And we like to help our clients to achieve them, regardless of budget or size of the project," he says, in his straight-talking English manner. "Sometimes dreams can't be achieved due to high material and application cost, but we always find a solution. Price consciousness is important these days, and as designers, we adapt to economic requirements. It's our responsibility to be clever with the budget and forego silly stuff," adds Binder. Stresses Strong, "We do not have a specific RDM style; we design what the client requires. Our strong and steady team of about 15 motivated individuals is used to working on different levels and with different style elements. It is fun when we all work on a big project together, as the aim is always to connect the dots together and that approach reflects in our teamwork as well. Our staff often get the opportunity to travel overseas to meet our clients and this really helps to identify oneself with the project and the whole team."



*Above: Briton Proud believes that clients look for continuity when choosing interior design firms.*

*Left: Binder is of the mind that that business and leisure travellers still remain in two very different segments.*



Above: *The View, G Tower, was an interiors job by RDM.*

The firm also finds it refreshing to work with the likes of The Taj Group which operates brands like Taj, Vivanta By Taj and Gateway Hotels. "With Taj, it is always about 'a sense of place.' Everything needs to have a sense of India in it. While I not always get the chance to be on a site of a new project, when I do, I always pick up stuff from the ground, or from the nearby local shops to see what I can incorporate in the look and feel. For five-star clients, structure is always the backbone, and our advice, when budget is an issue, is to equip like a three-star and then upgrade when the property makes money. Most of the time, the little things don't even come into question, because it is the price of the final product that makes the deal," says the gregarious German.

Admittedly, however, Binder sometimes has to fight the tendency towards frankness. "We've worked on some projects where we were requested to source the furniture from unknown suppliers who provided inexpensive solutions. Most of the time this ends in a nightmare when these items have to be replaced after six months of use because they were not fit for contract, but .....", she trails off in a Gaelic shrug. Yet, there are clients who insist on certain standards. "The Raffles or a Four Seasons would never buy a copy or replica piece of furniture. For properties like these, we either buy original pieces, or design something totally new," Binder says.

Proud is quite capable of doing the designing, but with time nearly always being a factor, the firm often calls upon their good working partnership with Kian, a total furniture solutions provider catering to the commercial and residential sectors since 1983. "Kian always comes in to save the world," bubbles Binder, gleefully. "They are so easy to work with and they love to cooperate with the designers; very great guys, and Peter is wonderful," she says, referring to Managing Director Peter Mikkelsen of Kian Interiors Sdn Bhd. Shares Binder, "We are currently working with Kian on a local hotel project for which they

will provide all the furniture and accessories for the rooms. They are very proactive and responsible, and we can't wait to see the results!"

Kian's dedication to innovation and good design has yielded a comprehensive range of award-winning furniture. Mikkelsen says, "We pride ourselves in our talent for transforming functionality into beauty, from standard products to custom-made furniture. Our designers are experts in innovation, offering insight into what's possible in terms of production, material, and techniques both now and in the future. We pride ourselves in being able to ease the burden of our industry partners. Our cutting edge design and capacity for large scale yet flexible manufacturing processes make this possible. It is really our privilege to build strong partnerships with architects, interior designers and contract installers through constant dialogue in understanding and fulfilling their needs."

Binder summarizes it when she says, "When working with Kian, we give Peter a brief and usually he comes back with recommendations for finishes and sometimes even sizes etc. Its experience they have and they know that they not only have to make us happy, but also the client. That is foresight, and that is what we need if we want to stay in business." When asked if Malaysian designers are holding their own locally, Proud says that there are some good individuals. "There really are people who want to create, but sometimes their knowledge is blinkered. While I have met some designers who are very design-aware, I have also seen some appalling work. The talent pool is limited, and sometimes people come into a mid-sized practice, learn what they can and move on to form their own companies, but they are bottom feeling."

Because of this, clients, says Proud, are glad of designers who can provide continuity. "This is one of the factors of making Malaysia our base. Cost effectiveness is also a factor, but the downside of it is that we are not as exposed."



RDM markets itself in a variety of ways. "We created a website and brochures a while ago as we thought it was time to catch up with everybody in terms of exposure, but we feel that our work still comes in through word of mouth. After more than 30 years, Nic is well known in this field and clients who know him appreciate his steady, honest and reliable approach to design and business and therefore recommend RDM. In Malaysia we got recently a lot of business through our high end show units at the Troika and Gita Bayu Bungalow Projects," says Binder.

The Troika is a three-tower, luxury condominium development in Kuala Lumpur, developed by Malaysian property developer, Bandar Raya Developments Berhad and designed by Foster and Partners. The Troika feature three glass-clad towers of varying heights which surround a park in the middle. The Troika also features two double-volume glass-encased bridges connecting a sky lobby which spans the three towers at the 24th floor. "We approached the design to suit the given architecture which was done by Foster and Partners, and incorporated the architectural DNA into our interiors. Foster designed The Troika in such a way that the exterior walls wrap around the building and come inside to the living area. It was a challenge to keep this exterior element and still make the space feel comfortable. We decided to install a timber strip wall which still exposes the concrete coming in from the outside of the building to represent the tropical forest. The artwork in the dining living area also references our tropical environment, as the look and feel was supposed to be modern tropical, incorporating local accents in terms of fabrics, accessories and Indian, Chinese and Malay art. A little bit like 1 Malaysia," shares Binder.

Queried about how guests' preferences have changed upon becoming more design-aware, Binder is of the mind that business and leisure travellers still remain in two very different segments. "When I travel for business, I don't care what colour my room walls are or whether the curtain is 100 percent linen. As long as the mattress and the cushions are of high standard, and the water pressure in the shower is good and there is a plug in the wall for my laptop, phone and camera, I am fine. But if I am travelling on vacation, I can't stay in a three-star. I want luxury, comfort, and a good location. Nic sometimes likes to go off and sleep in the jungle for inspiration, where he drinks from cups he made out of bamboo, and where he can share a quiet meal with his dog, and swim in the natural waterfalls. I am usually extremely busy when asked to join," laughs Binder, merriment dancing in her expressive hazel eyes.

More seriously she says, "I see now that there is a trend to choosing hotels on the basis of best accessibility and best facilities, but I personally think that a hotel needs to reflect their country of business. I was in a five-star in Koh Samui, and even though everything was very nice, the property did not reflect the destination. If I am in Thailand, I want to feel like I am in Thailand," she exclaims, clearly put-off by the distinct lack of sense of place.

The lack of uptake for green technology in hotel construction and design disheartens both Binder and Proud. Binder puts it down to a lack of education, while Proud believes that people are interested, but are put off by the cost. "Green compliance is important for hotel groups. They may not realize it, but being green can have a lot of leverage with travellers who care about the environment," says Proud. **ha**

*Below: The Troika is a three-tower, luxury condominium development in Kuala Lumpur. RDM fitted out the living spaces.*



**Ulrich Hoffgen**  
General Manager  
Centara Ras Fushi Resort & Spa  
Maldives

Thirayuth Chirathivat, Chief Executive Officer of Centara Hotels & Resorts, has announced the appointment of Ulrich Hoffgen as General Manager of Centara Ras Fushi Resort & Spa Maldives.

Hoffgen is a German national and has 20 years of international hospitality industry experience gained from working in Europe, Oceania and Asia, including management roles at leading resorts and hotels in Asia and the Maldives.

He worked at Irufushi Beach & Spa Resort as F&B Director before joining Constance Halaveli Resort Maldives in the position of Executive Assistant Manager in 2009, where he was soon promoted to Resident Manager.

He was attached to Constance Halaveli for three years as Resident Manager prior to joining Centara Hotels & Resorts to head up the team at Centara Ras Fushi Resort & Spa Maldives as General Manager. **ha**



**Andy Kunz**  
General Manager  
The Chedi Chiang Mai, Thailand

Three years after joining GHM as Executive Assistant Manager at The Chedi Muscat, Andy Kunz is trading the sands of Arabia for a riverside perch in one of Thailand's most compelling destinations. Kunz succeeds Stefan Noll as General Manager of the GHM property.

Swiss-born Kunz began his career in his home country, studying for a diploma at the prestigious hospitality school Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne. After interning in Switzerland and St Bart's, Kunz joined the Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts Group. He has held leadership positions at properties in Jordan, Egypt, Palm Beach and Beverly Hills in the United States and Sydney in Australia.

Since its debut in July 2005, The Chedi Chiang Mai has won international acclaim on Condé Nast Traveler's Gold List and from regional media such as TTG (Best New Spa) and Smart Travel Asia (Top 25 Leisure Hotels/Resorts in Asia).

The 1913-built, former British consulate anchors the interior grounds of the 84-room riverside hotel, housing The Restaurant, Terrace Bar and Cigar Lounge. Teak, timber and rattan accents pay homage to the hotel's situation in northern Thailand. Each of the 52 rooms and 32 suites open on to balconies that overlook the gardens and the Mae Ping River. **ha**



**Axel de Boynes**  
General Manager  
Villa Maly and Kamu  
Lodge Experience,  
Laos

Luang Prabang's Villa Maly and its upstream sister property, Kamu Lodge Experience, welcomed a new General Manager as parent company Apple Tree Group put Axel de Boynes in charge of the group's Laotian hospitality properties from February 14.

Boynes has more than 16 years of hospitality experience with luxury properties in Europe, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. A graduate of the Francois-Rabelais University of Tours in his native France, Boynes began his career as Deputy Director of Guest Services at Le Meridien Etoile in Paris, before moving on to an Executive Housekeeper position at Le Meridien Beach Plaza in Monte Carlo.

After stints at five-star properties Le Touessrok in Mauritius and the Sheraton Doha in Qatar, Boynes relocated to Thailand to take on the role of Resident Manager at the Akyra Chura Samui, where he oversaw the resort's development and launch in June 2011.

Since arriving early in 2012 as Operations Manager for Apple Tree Group in Laos, Boynes has leveraged his considerable expertise toward raising the profile of the group's Laotian properties among travellers and within the industry. **ha**





### ▲ Steven A. Thielke

General Manager  
Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club,  
Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club (KLGCC) has recently appointed Steven A. Thielke as the new General Manager.

A South African national, Thielke takes up the reins of the award-winning KLGCC with two 18-hole championship courses which hosts the nation's two largest tournaments, Maybank Malaysian Open and the Sime Darby PGA Malaysia.

In his most recent role, he served as General Manager, Hotels & Golf Management at CITIC Pacific Limited in Hong Kong spearheading a stunning 36-hole golf destination in Hainan, China designed by Tom Weiskopf called The Dunes at Shenzhou Peninsula.

Prior to his tenure with CITIC Pacific Limited, he was General Manager in the renowned golfing and leisure resort called Fancourt Hotel and Country Club Estate in George, South Africa.

With a wealth of over 25 years of hospitality experience in hotel, golf and club industry, he was also the General Manager at Glendower Golf Club and Wanderers Golf Club in Johannesburg, South Africa and he has held senior positions at Mount Edgecombe Country Club in Durban, South Africa and Sun City including Gary Player Country Club and the opening of The Lost City Golf Course. **ha**

### ▼ Jennifer Buhr

General Manager  
W Maldives

W Maldives has appointed English-born Jennifer Buhr as the retreat's General Manager. With over 40 years of experience with Starwood Hotels & Resorts, she will oversee the operation of the brand's flagship retreat, W Retreat & Spa Maldives. Prior to her appointment in the Maldives, Buhr was the General Manager of Le Royal Meridien Chennai, India.

Buhr began her Starwood journey in 1972 at Sheraton Frankfurt Airport Hotel, Germany as a Reservations Agent; she has grown with the Sheraton brand working in various

operations positions and reached her goal of being one of the first female General Managers in 1991 at Sheraton Grand Edinburgh, Scotland. She continued her Starwood journey as General Manager for various hotels & resorts in different locations such as Botswana, Portugal, Gambia, Egypt and India. **ha**



### ◀ Phan Trong Minh

General Manager  
La Residence Hotel & Spa, Vietnam

Twenty years after Vietnam emerged from decades of war and privation, lighting up on the radar screens of travellers worldwide, maturation of the country's hospitality industry reached a new milestone as La Residence Hotel & Spa appointed Phan Trong Minh its new General Manager.

The Hue native succeeds a string of foreign General Managers and marks a turning point in Vietnam's hospitality industry.

Minh's journey to the top spot at La Residence began in the former Czechoslovakia, not as an hotelier but as an assembly line worker in a company that manufactured electric goods.

After six years in Europe, Minh returned to Vietnam and in 1993 started work as a waiter at the Century Hotel, then one of the city's top three hotels. Two years later, he transitioned to a job as a receptionist, and then on to work as a front office supervisor.

After 12 years at the riverside hotel, Minh worked two years in management at another top Hue hotel before joining La Residence in 2007 as the Front Office Manager.

Aside from his native Vietnamese, Minh is fluent in English and speaks basic French. He is certified in small hotel management, and as a trainer for human resources and front office operations with the Vietnam Tourism Certification Board.

Minh was born in the city he now represents as its leading hotelier. Like many from Hue, he is passionate about his city, and the role his family has played in its heritage, and the preservation of that heritage. One of his family members is a renowned historian and an aunt is the great-granddaughter of Emperor Dong Khanh. **ha**





◀ **Dominic Sherry**  
Head of Sales for Asia Pacific  
Hilton Worldwide

Hilton Worldwide announced the appointment of Dominic Sherry as Head of Sales for Asia Pacific. In this capacity, Sherry will lead the sales force, manage key partnerships with third-party intermediaries and drive initiatives to increase the corporate, MICE and leisure business at Hilton Worldwide's

98 operating hotels in Asia Pacific. Sherry will be based in the company's Asia Pacific office in Singapore.

A New Zealander by nationality, Sherry joins Hilton Worldwide from Marriott International, where he served in key leadership positions since 1992. He began his 21-year career with the company as the Director of Sales for United Kingdom, Ireland and Scandinavia and was subsequently appointed Director of Marketing at Sydney Marriott Hotel in 1997. From 1999 to 2008, Sherry held a number of senior sales and marketing roles and was responsible for driving revenue, corporate HQ initiatives, brand awareness and managing relationships with corporate & third-party intermediaries first for Australasia, then Asia & the South Pacific and ultimately the Caribbean and Latin America based in Florida, USA. In 2008, he was appointed Regional Vice President, Sales & Marketing for Asia Pacific and has since been providing leadership to the corporate sales and marketing team. He has successfully driven top line revenues by strategically aligning sales and marketing opportunities and best practices across the region.

Prior to joining Marriott International, Sherry also worked for Continental Airlines in the United Kingdom, Hamilton Island Resort in Queensland, Australia as well as various travel agencies in New Zealand. **ha**

▼ **Julie Marie-Anne Bruley**  
Executive Assistant Manager  
Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi, Vietnam

The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi has appointed a new Executive Assistant Manager, hiring Julie Marie-Anne Bruley to head up its rooms division.

Bruley's post at the Metropole comes after a two-year sabbatical during which she achieved her Executive MBA from the European School ESCP. She complemented those studies with additional coursework at the University of Texas in Austin and Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Prior to these studies, she most recently worked from 2006 as Director of Operations at Hôtel Fouquet's Barrière, a 107-room hotel in Paris. Prior to that appointment, Bruley spent several years in management

at the Conrad Bangkok, a 392-room property in the Thai capital, and did a stint at the Sukhothai Bangkok hotel.

A native of France, Bruley started her career in Paris in 1997 and moved on to London before her first trip to Asia. She speaks French, English, some Spanish and some Thai. **ha**



► **Andrias Ananta**  
Executive Assistant Manager  
Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld, Thailand

Robert Maurer-Loeffler, General Manager of Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld, has announced the appointment of Andrias Ananta as Executive Assistant Manager in charge of Bangkok Convention Centre.

Andrias is an Indonesian national and has ten years of international hospitality industry experience in leading hotels and convention centres in Asia, including facilities in China, Singapore and Bali. Apart from Bahasa Indonesia, he is fluent in English and Mandarin.

Andrias started his career as a rooms division management trainee at the Bualu Village Hotel in Nusa Dua, Bali in 1996 before transferring to the rooms division at the Marina Mandarin Hotel Singapore, where he stayed until 1998. He was then appointed Sales Manager at Hard Rock Hotel Bali and was promoted to Senior Sales Manager and then Assistant Manager in 2004. Andrias transferred to be Meetings Manager at Crowne Plaza Park View Wuzhou Beijing in 2005, being promoted to Meetings Director in 2008 and working at the hotel for six years. He then became Director of Events Planning at China National Convention Centre (CNCC) in 2010, and from that property joins Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention. **ha**





**Anan Phongsuriyahchote**  
**Director of Sales – Leisure**  
**Absolute Hotel Services**  
**Group, Thailand**

Sirintorn Varatorn, Director of Sales – South East Asia is pleased to announce the appointment of Anan Phongsuriyahchote as Director of Sales – Leisure to Thailand's Absolute Hotel Services Group.

Anan, a Thai national, brings to Absolute Hotel Services more than 20 years of hospitality and sales experience. In his new role, Anan will oversee the sales strategies for the leisure market and travel agency market in Thailand in order to maximize the revenue of the properties within the Eastin Hotels & Residences and U Hotels and Resorts brands. He has very strong background in sales and hotel business in leading hotels such as Crowne Plaza Hotel Bangkok, Holiday Inn Bangkok Sliom, Meritus Suites State Tower, Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket and Furama Hotels International. Prior to joining, he was Assistant Director of Sales at FuramaXclusive Resort & Spa Koh Chang.

Absolute Hotel Services Group provides a unique range of hospitality services and consultancy on an a la carte basis that includes marketing/feasibility studies, owner representative services, master planning consultancy, pre-opening consultancy, brand creation/consultancy, training as well as the hotel management services from the technical services and pre-opening assistance to management contracts for U Hotels & Resorts, Eastin Hotels & Residences and Eastin Easy, the hotel brands of Absolute Hotel Services as well as non-branded hotels and resorts. **ha**



**Debby Thio**  
**Director of Sales and Marketing**  
**Regent Bali, Indonesia**

Regent Bali, a premium 94-suite seaside resort opening June 2013, has announced the appointment of Debby Thio as Director of Sales and Marketing. Originally from Indonesia, Thio has over 20 years' experience in international hospitality.

Prior to joining Regent Bali, Thio was Area Director of Sales and Marketing for Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts. During her tenure, she oversaw the 2012 opening of the Banyan Tree Lang Co in Central Vietnam, managed PR and advertising for the brand throughout Southeast Asia, and expanded the sales network in Vietnam. A graduate of the University of Amsterdam where she earned a Master's Degree in Economics and Marketing, Thio first gained insight into the international travel scene in the Netherlands before moving to Asia in 1996.

Throughout her career Thio has held senior positions at such prestigious regional properties as Raffles Grand d'Angkor Hotel Siem Reap, COMO Hotels and Resorts Singapore, and Four Seasons Hotel Jakarta. Familiar with hotel launches, Thio was appointed Director of Marketing at The Metropolitan, Bangkok, and was part of the hotel's pre-opening team. Her responsibilities included crafting the positioning strategy, recruiting and mentoring a marketing team, creating product and service concepts and overseeing the pre-opening marketing plan. **ha**

**▲ Wee Chee Jiuan**  
**Director of Sales**  
**Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral,**  
**Malaysia**

Wee Chee Jiuan, or more fondly known as CJ, has 14 years of Sales experience in the hospitality industry under her belt. CJ was recently appointed the Director of Sales for Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral, the newest Aloft hotel to open in the world.

CJ started off in the hospitality industry as a Sales Coordinator in an international five-star hotel in Kuala Lumpur for three years before hopping to another five star hotel in Kuala Lumpur as Sales Manager. CJ joined the pre-opening team of The Westin Kuala Lumpur in November 2002 and was promoted twice during her tenure with The Westin Kuala Lumpur. CJ then left for another international five-star hotel in Kuala Lumpur as Director of Sales before joining the group's National Sales Team. Making a comeback to the Starwood family, CJ now heads the Sales & Marketing teams at the vibrant 482-room Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral. **ha**



### **Katharina Kustos**

Director of Sales and Marketing  
The Chedi Club Tanah Gajah and The  
Legian on Bali, Indonesia

Upscale hotel management group GHM has reinforced its sales and marketing foundation by adding a seasoned industry professional to the mix.

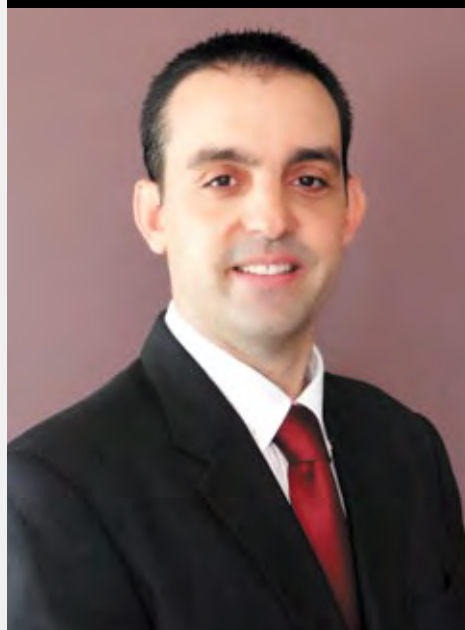
Katharina Kustos recently assumed the role of Director of Sales and Marketing for both The Chedi Club Tanah Gajah and The Legian on Bali.

Kustos, who grew up in Germany and holds a masters degree in Tourism Studies from the University of Dortmund, moves to Indonesia from Dubai, where she spent six years working in sales positions for the Jumeirah Group and, most recently, Park Hyatt Dubai.

Kustos will focus on strengthening the positioning of GHM's Bali properties, which are already among the most reputable retreats on an island that attracted a record 2.9 million foreign tourists last year.

The Chedi Club Tanah Gajah in mountainous Ubud has tallied a number of accolades since appearing on Condé Nast Traveller's annual 'Hot List' in 2005, including the current top spot on TripAdvisor's list of the best hotels on Bali.

The Legian on Seminyak Beach, with its 68 sea-facing suites and singular three-bedroom Beach House, recently won one of eight 'Commitment to Quality' awards from the Leading Hotels of the World, a collection of more than 430 of the world's finest hotels, resorts and spas. **ha**



### **Alexandre Glauser**

Cluster General Manager  
Centara Hotels & Resorts Sri Lanka

Thirayuth Chirathivat, Chief Executive Officer of Centara Hotels & Resorts, has announced the transfer and promotion of Alexandre Glauser to Sri Lanka as Cluster General Manager of Centara Hotels & Resorts Sri Lanka.

Glauser will be responsible initially for two managed resorts, namely Centara Ceysands Resort & Spa Sri Lanka and Centara Passikudah Resort & Spa Sri Lanka. A third project is currently under development on the east coast. He will be based at Centara Ceysands Resort & Spa Sri Lanka.

Glauser, whose career with Centara spans 11 years, was previously General Manager of Centara Villas Phuket and Centara Kata Resort Phuket.

A Swiss national from Geneva, he studied at Geneva Hotel Management School, and prior to joining the hotel industry worked in the airline industry. In 1998 he was appointed Assistant Food and Beverage Manager with Minor Hotels in Hua Hin, and two years later became Food and Beverage Manager at Hilton International in Hurgada, in Egypt.

Glauser began his career with Centara Hotels & Resorts as Executive Assistant Manager at Central Samui Beach Resort, Koh Samui (now rebranded as Centara Grand Beach Resort Samui) in 2001. He subsequently became General Manager of Central Karon Village (now Centara Villas Phuket), and Central Waterfront Suites, Phuket (now Waterfront Suites Phuket). **ha**

### **Hugo Gerritsen**

Area General Manager  
Dorsett Grand Subang and  
Dorsett Grand Labuan, Malay

Dorsett Hospitality International is pleased to announce the appointment of Hugo Gerritsen as Area General Manager of Dorsett Grand Subang and Dorsett Grand Labuan.

Among his career milestones, Gerritsen had worked in various reputable hotel chains in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East such as the ITT Sheraton, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Movenpick Hotels & Resorts and GoldenLeaves Hotels and Resorts. Prior to joining Dorsett Hospitality International, he was a Chief Operating Officer at Katara Hospitality in Qatar.

Gerritsen graduated with a Diploma from the Hotel School in Arnhem, Netherlands and completed his professional education with Certification in Advanced Operational Analysis from Cornell University.

Throughout his 30 years in the industry, Gerritsen has led various divisions including operations, property development, pre-opening and finance in which he had gained remarkable competency in leadership and management. **ha**





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