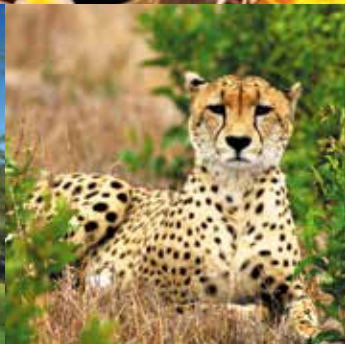
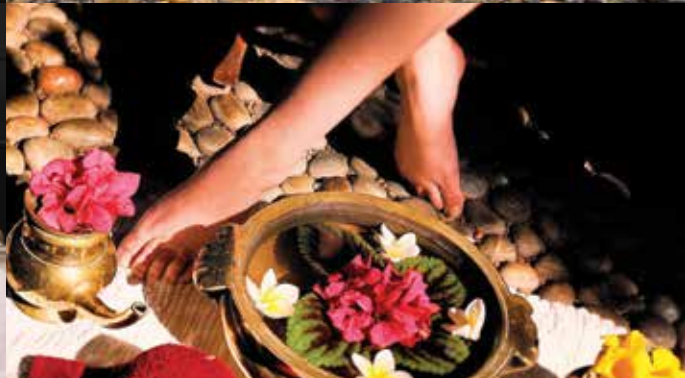




TRAVEL, GOLF & SPA





MYANMAR – JAPAN TIE UP

Myanmar Airways International (MAI) recently signed a MOU to establish Myanmar Airways International Japan with Hama Inc, a Japanese company which handles a range of businesses including travel and tours. The collaboration was mainly to attract the increasing number of Japanese travellers to Myanmar. In 2013, Japanese visitors to Myanmar numbered 66,772 making it the second largest Asian source market after Thailand.

Under the agreement, MIA will open an office in Osaka followed by another in Tokyo. These offices will offer different services (from MAI in Myanmar) such as charter flights to Myanmar and ticketing. Direct flights are expected to be launched between Yangon and Tokyo by June 2014. MAI's direct services to Siem Reap and Phnom Penh will make it more convenient for Japanese travellers to combine Cambodia with Myanmar. MAI currently operates charter flights to Japan. Other destinations in its network include Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Guangzhou, Gaya, Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

www.maiair.com



Photo courtesy of James Morgan

TIGER MAKES IT EASIER TO SCOOT THROUGH

Singapore-based budget airlines, Scoot and Tigerair, have signed an alliance agreement to further align their commercial activities and provide smarter choices and flexibility for passengers. Subject to regulatory approval, plans are afoot to build upon their existing interline cooperation which currently enables passengers from outside Singapore to purchase itineraries involving the services of both airlines. The present cooperation mainly benefits passengers living outside Singapore but the proposed enhancements will serve the interests of Singapore residents as well. They could potentially include the joint operation, sales and marketing of parallel routes, which will offer customers increased flexibility and flight options. It could also include alignment of policies, conditions, pricing and scheduling to pave the way for the seamless integration of systems and improved connectivity. The airlines have mostly complementary networks side-by-side at Changi Terminal 2. Our interline cooperation over the past year has revealed strong demand for joint itineraries from passengers outside Singapore. www.flyscoot.com and www.tigerair.com

SILENCE IS NO LONGER GOLDEN

Smartphones and similar devices are now allowed by Lufthansa on the majority of its flights from. The number of routes on which Lufthansa passengers can use their Smartphones, notebooks, tablets and other electronic devices uninterrupted for their entire time on board is expected to increase significantly. Prior to this, all devices had to be completely switched off during take-off and landing but since January 2014 passengers have been able to employ electronic devices in flight mode on Boeing 747-8s from gate to gate. Lufthansa's Airbus fleet now joins the Boeing fleet to bring the total coverage to almost 250 Lufthansa aircraft. As a consideration to other passengers, telephone calls are still not be allowed during the flight but phones and mobile-enabled tablets can remain on with a deactivated mobile signal (switched to flight mode). On long haul flights, Lufthansa offers a high-speed internet connection (FlyNet) as well as mobile access, allowing passengers to use text messaging and data services such as SMS and email. www.lufthansa.com

SYDNEY LOSES ITS VIRGINITY

Sydney is a virgin no more with the announcement that flights between Hong Kong and Sydney on Virgin Atlantic are being cut from May 5 as part of the airline's cost cutting efforts. This brings Virgin's ten year dalliance with Australia to an end. Virgin cites rising costs and the challenging economic environment as making the route unprofitable although Virgin Atlantic will maintain the daily Airbus A340 Hong Kong to Heathrow sector of the route.

www.virgin-atlantic.com

QATAR TAKES CARE OF BUSINESS

In May, Qatar Airways will become the first airline to fly an all-Business Class service from Heathrow Airport, London. The new daily flight will operate to Doha using an Airbus A319 configured with just 40 seats. Other all-Business Class operations from Heathrow have failed in the past but British Airways currently operates from London City via Shannon to New York. Qatar will operate a 2+2 configuration on its A319 and just 32 seats on the smaller A318. This exclusive arrangement will be placed next to Qatar's own Boeing 777 and Boeing 787 services and its new Airbus A380. Qatar Airways currently operates five daily flights from Heathrow and the additional sixth all-Business Class daily service will provide a night flight to connect with services from Doha and eastward in the morning. The Oneworld Alliance airline will see its weekly services increase from 35 to 42. www.qatarairways.com



WORLD CUP WOES

Brazil's Civil Aviation Authority isn't prepared to come to the party for the June 2014 FIFA World Cup saying that the runway at the country's largest airport is not wide enough to accommodate the Airbus A380. According to the regulator, Sao Paulo International Airport does not meet the minimum and essential safety requirements in terms of minimum runway width for take-offs and landings. The decision was made after Air France had sought permission to use its A380 aircraft. A380 aircraft have a wingspan of almost 80m as opposed to 71m for the Boeing 747-400. www.airfrance.com



NEW CHANGI USER PAY LOUNGE

Worldwide Flight Services has just opened the only pay-per-use lounge called The Haven by JetQuay located outside the transit zone at Singapore's Changi Airport. Situated in the Arrival Hall, Level 1 in Terminal 3, the new lounge offers a range of services to cater to passengers including business travellers as well as families with children. The Haven is accessible to passengers in transit, arriving passengers who have cleared customs as well as departing passengers prior to checking-in with their airline. The Haven provides shower and nap facilities as well as meeting rooms, lounge, a self-service food and beverage facilities and a business centre. Customers will enjoy the freedom of movement and access to those restaurants and shops outside the immigration zone. www.thehaven.com.sg

US AIRWAYS CHANGES TEAM

US AIRWAYS recently left Star Alliance and joined Oneworld following the completion of its merger with the Star Alliance's founding member, American Airlines. All its regional affiliates operating under the US Airways Express brand also joined Oneworld at the same time. The new combined airline retains the American Airlines name. The tie-up of both airlines had initially been blocked by a lawsuit filed by the US Justice Department on fears that domestic routes would be concentrated in the hands of the two heavyweights. The decision to proceed was made after both airlines agreed to make concessions to ensure more competitiveness in the US market.

WI-FI FOR ANA

The latest airline to offer wi-fi is Japan's All Nippon Airways (ANA) which recently introduced the service on its international routes (all class of selected international flights flown by Boeing 777-300ER and Boeing 767-300ER aircraft). The airline charges for the service but not by the hour but rather the download capacity. Passengers are now able to use their own devices, such as Smartphone or tablet, to surf the web, access email and update social networks including Facebook and Twitter. It is provided in partnership with JSAT Mobile Communications which supports the 'OnAir' programme. www.ana.com

BOOSTING AIR LINKS FIRST STEP IN RE-IMAGING KUCHING

The re-imaging of Kuching as a destination was part of the Five Year Tourism Industry Transformation Programme which began in 2010. The aim is to improve the visitor experience and to position Sarawak as a home for adventure with elements of culture and nature. Sarawak has a major accessibility challenge and the Sarawak Tourism Board is taking steps to make it easier to get there. This means working with airline operating from hub airports such as Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to increase air connectivity to Kuching as well as Sibu, Miri and Bintulu. AirAsia has developed direct flights between Kuching and Miri with Penang, Kota Bahru, Kuala Terengganu, Johor Bahru and Langkawi. Xpress Air and MASWings operate between Kuching and Pontianak in Indonesian Kalimantan. The second phase is to engage Malaysia Airlines, AirAsia, Silk Air and Malindo to operate more frequencies. Sarawak has identified opportunities with Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. New hotels are being planned to add between 1,500 to 2,000 extra rooms by 2016. www.sarawaktourism.com



Dato Rashid Khan CEO Sarawak Tourism Board



SKYTEAM WELCOMES GARUDA INDONESIA

SkyTeam, the global airline alliance, recently welcomed Garuda Indonesia as its 20th member. The national airline of Indonesia, Garuda became SkyTeam's second member from South East Asia. Garuda Indonesia's membership of SkyTeam now facilitates travel to Indonesia for passengers around the globe. SkyTeam brings more than 1,020 global destinations and 530 lounges to Garuda passengers. Joining SkyTeam is an important part of Garuda's strategic expansion programme in making the airline a global player. SkyTeam is a global airline alliance providing access to a global network of 1,000 destinations in 187 countries. Garuda Indonesia operates 131 aircraft serving 39 domestic and 20 international destinations. www.garuda-indonesia.com



BRUSSELS ON NEW ITINERARY

The iconic Venice Simplon-Orient-Express has added a new destination to its schedule. Brussels Belgium, the birthplace of luxury trains has been added. Departures to and from Brussels are available from Venice, Vienna and Budapest while five new itineraries from one to four nights have been added to the season's timetable. Starting with a Venice to Brussels departure passengers are able to enjoy new routes through the famed German, Austrian and Swiss countryside. On selected journeys between Venice to London and London to Venice guests can choose to stopover en route in Brussels. Belgium plays a pivotal role in the train's history. Not only was its most memorable detective Hercule Poirot born in Belgium but the concept of luxury train travel has its roots there. www.vsoe.com



SERENE SEASIDE SETTING

Parkroyal Penang Resort stands out along Penang's Batu Ferringhi beachfront. This well-established property offers deluxe seaview rooms set amongst lush tropical gardens. There is a comprehensive range of leisure activities, restaurants, bars, children's club and spa.

PARKROYAL PENANG RESORT, PENANG, MALAYSIA
 Batu Ferringhi Beach, 11100 Penang.
 Contact: +604 881 1133 www.parkroyalhotels.com



CLUB ROOM RENDEZVOUS

Far East Hospitality has unveiled the transformation of Rendezvous Hotel Singapore after injecting art-inspired elements across multiple experiential points for guests. The 298-room property is located at the heart of Singapore's art and cultural district. The art-centric lobby is dominated by an enormous palm tree light that changes colours during the day. Hotel management envisages the hotel becoming an epicentre of art through its collaboration with professional artists from Singapore and around the globe. Under the hotel's 'Far More Perks' programme, guests who book Club Floor Rooms not only enjoy the privacy of the Club Lounge, premium rooms, breakfast and evening cocktails and canapés but also two-hour Airport Lounge access at Changi Airport for one guest and guaranteed early check-in from 10am or check-out until 4pm.

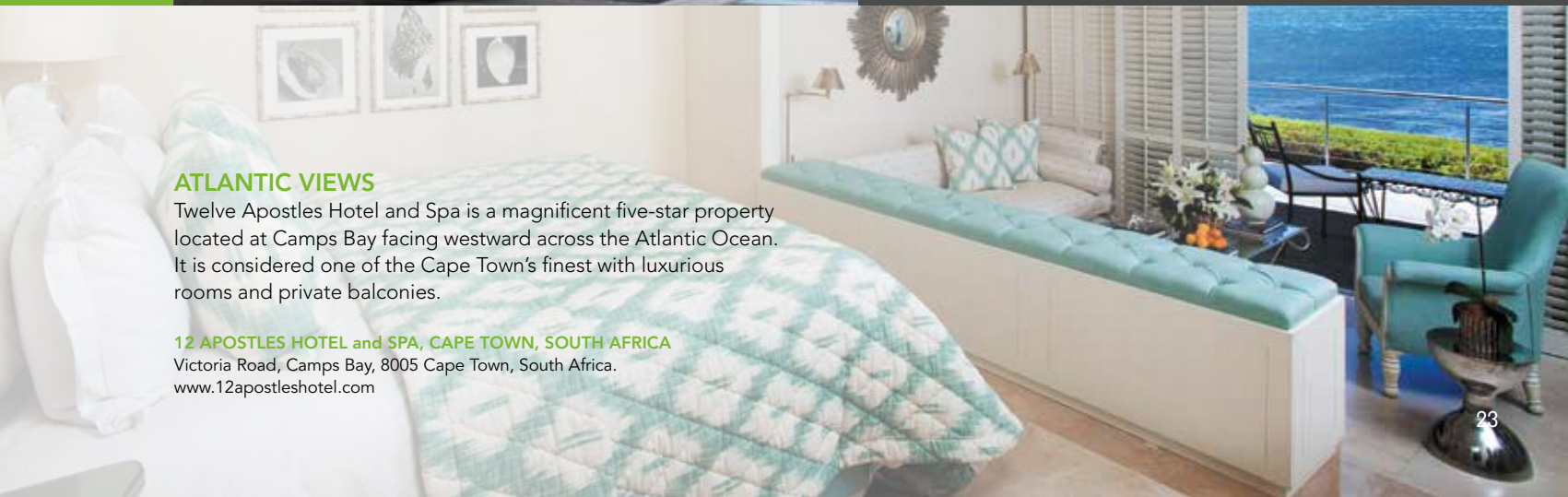
RENDEZVOUS HOTEL SINGAPORE
 9 Bras Basah Road, 189559 Singapore.
 Contact: +65 6336 0220 www.rendevoushotels.com



GOLD COAST APARTMENT LIVING

Peppers is renowned for gracious hospitality and its Broadbeach property offers sophisticated, contemporary, five-star luxury with unsurpassable views of the glittering Gold Coast. This all-suite hotel offers apartment living with full kitchen, open living area and panoramic windows.

PEPPERS BROADBEACH
 21 Elizabeth Avenue, Broadbeach, 4218 Queensland, Australia.
 Contact: +61 7 56351000 www.peppers.com.au



ATLANTIC VIEWS

Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa is a magnificent five-star property located at Camps Bay facing westward across the Atlantic Ocean. It is considered one of the Cape Town's finest with luxurious rooms and private balconies.

12 APOSTLES HOTEL and SPA, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
 Victoria Road, Camps Bay, 8005 Cape Town, South Africa.
 www.12apostleshotel.com

David Bowden checks in to properties around the region to give a first-hand perspective on 'the experience' during his stay.

New Territory for Accor

Accor will replace InterContinental Hotels Group in managing the renowned Crocodile Hotel and Cooina Lodge in Australia's Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory and put greater emphasis on the indigenous tourism experience. The hotel operator has signed an MOU with the owners of both properties to take over management duties effective from April 1 this year. Both the 110-room Crocodile Hotel and 48-room Cooina Lodge were the first major tourism properties developed by an indigenous organisation in Australia. Kakadu is one of the world's most significant tourism destinations and there is vast potential to grow visitation from both overseas and locally. www.accor.com

Orient-Express Morphs to Belmond

Orient-Express Hotels Ltd, owners and operators of 45 luxury hotel and travel experiences in some of the world's most inspiring destinations, has announced that it is now marketing its collection under a new brand, Belmond. The March launch of the Belmond brand has heightened awareness of the Company's exceptional collection of hotels, trains, safaris, and river cruises amongst existing and potential new guests by making it easier to recognise, navigate, and explore. Each of its iconic and one-of-a-kind luxury experiences evokes strong customer loyalty. The new brand enables a fresh opportunity to tell the story from romantic journeys across Europe in authentically restored carriages of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, to cruising along the undiscovered rivers of Myanmar on the river cruiser, Orcaella as well as sunset cocktails on the terrace of the newest hotel El Encanto. A sizable investment of US\$15 million in enhanced promotional and marketing initiatives has been allocated to include new websites, social media and our first ever large-scale advertising campaign. www.belmond.com



Phuket Welcomes Anantara

Phuket Layan Resort and Spa opened on the world famous resort island of Phuket, in January 2014. Situated on Phuket's northwest coast in a quiet part the island, the resort is located on Layan Beach at the far end of Bang Tao Bay. This splendid new resort offers nine different room types across 77 luxurious suites and villas. With direct beach access, a private pool and extensive outdoor areas of more than 200m², the signature Anantara Pool Villa is a spacious tropical island retreat, accommodating up to six adults. The 47 villas each include a private pool and all villas have round the clock access to a personal villa host. Another unique experience is the slumber guru who ensures guests enjoy their best night's rest ever and awaken completely reinvigorated to greet yet another perfect tropical day. Guests at Anantara Phuket Layan are spoilt for choice when it comes to wining and dining with a host of venues, each offering a distinctive setting, menu and ambience. At Anantara Phuket Layan wedding celebrations are redefined by a destination of natural exclusivity and perfected in Anantara's signature style with an idyllic choice of settings - from a unique cliff edge open chapel where a spectacular ocean backdrop promises magical photo opportunities, to a tropical beachfront bliss with the Andaman's waves as the wedding march. www.anantara.com



Clockwise from the bottom: Australia's Kakadu National Park; Pool La Residence d'Angkor Siem Reap; The Beachfront Pool Villa, Phuket Layan Resort and Spa.



Clockwise from the top left: yoo2 Taksim Square's designer rooms; Overview of the pool at W Retreat Koh Samui; Pool view at Coco Palace Resort Phuket.



Phuket's Coco Palace Under New Management

Coco Palace Resort Phuket is now under new management. The resort is ideally located in the popular and busy southern part of Phuket. The boutique-styled resort is a short distance from Nai Harn Beach and offers forest vistas from all rooms. Resort villas have been constructed along traditional Balinese lines and a large pool dominates the landscaped gardens. There are two jacuzzi's with one in a cave built onto the side of the pool. All rooms have full resort amenities including newly fitted 40" flat-screen televisions and kitchenette with cooking facilities and fridge.

Unique traditional wooden baths are a feature of all bathrooms. A new restaurant/café is being constructed and will feature a coffee farm/roasting shop to provide premium coffees made from beans grown in the mountains around Chiang Mai. Guests can relax in the cinema room and enjoy a true cinematic experience from a selection of DVD's. Complimentary wi-fi is available and bicycles are provided for guests to explore Phuket. Breakfast is included and BBQ facilities are available day and night. Coco Palace also has a unique relaxation area called The Beach by the beach with sun lounges under shade and an MP3 attachable sound system for relaxing.

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www.coco-palace.com

yoo Hotels Opens yoo2 in Istanbul

yoo Hotels announce the opening of its first yoo2 hotel. yoo2 Taksim Square, Istanbul, Turkey, is an innovative new offering for design-led travellers seeking original experiences. yoo2 is an innovative departure from the traditions of its sister-brand yoo, a global design brand, whose entire ethos is about creating extraordinary living spaces, and positions itself as a playful and vibrant mix of creative design locally tuned for a global trendsetting crowd. The fashion-conscious who lead the way in cultural change and creativity will find yoo2 very appealing. Commanding impressive views of the Bosphorus and directly positioned on the steps of leafy Gezi Park, the green lungs of the city's Beyoglu district, yoo2 Taksim Square is the latest in a steady stream of innovative cultural outposts surfacing in the Turkish capital. Just across the park from the hotel, guests will find Istanbul's busy maze of bazaars and the more historic core of the city, alongside a hub of contemporary boutiques and happening nightlife. As with all yoo2 hotels, the selection of the neighbourhood as a prime destination for cultured travellers is very important, and yoo2 Taksim Square is a reflection of its surroundings. Here, carefully curated design and innovative technology are combined with seamless guest service, offering a remarkable visitor-experience for guests staying in one of the 59 rooms and suites. As with each yoo2 hotel, rooms at yoo2 Taksim Square are designed with fine fabrics and contemporary furniture, creating a comfortable, imaginative and vibrant environment from which to rest and refresh. The hotel restaurant opens around the clock and serves traditional and modern Turkish dishes as well as international favourites. A globally recognised design brand, yoo Hotels is owned by Philippe Starck and John Hitchcox. The culture of each location is essential for both yoo Hotels with yoo2 offering an aspirational yet accessible experience. www.yoo.com

WOW Koh Samui

W Retreat Koh Samui recently introduced to the tropical island paradise, its newest room category: a four-bedroom 'Seascape Escape Villa'. Guests can now splurge in W Retreat Koh Samui's new four-bedroom retreat. Unparalleled Gulf of Thailand views provide the setting for lazing in a bathtub or unwinding in a private 15m infinity-edge swimming pool. Enclosed in an expansive 2,058m² space means guests have endless ways to relax and unwind, from sharing freshly-prepared dishes and board-games to watching movies and partying by the pool. All four bedrooms villas have their own private entrances to guarantee privacy. W Retreat Koh Samui is located between Maenam and Bo Phut Beaches and the 74 all-private pool retreats offer all the ultimate in indulgence and luxury. www.wretreatkohsamui.com

Sofitel Bases Marketing in Singapore

Sofitel Luxury Hotels has announced its move to a new geography-based organisation, based on five key regions worldwide. Inside this new organisation, Sofitel, part of the Accor Group and formerly a standalone brand, is now part of a newly created luxury and upscale segment including Accor hotel brands Pullman, MGallery, Grand Mercure and The Sebel. These organisational changes further reinforce the Group's support of Sofitel's luxury approach and enable Accor to leverage Sofitel's expertise and best practices. As part of this realignment, the Accor luxury and upscale segment marketing and design functions relocated to Singapore in the first quarter of 2014.

With its marketing and design divisions based in Singapore, Sofitel will harness the dynamism of the region that has a high luxury demand, blending it with a touch of French elegance as only Sofitel can do. This reinforces Sofitel's core mission: to be the symbol of French elegance in luxury hospitality around the world.

www.sofitel.com

Clockwise from the bottom: Sofitel's French Polynesia concept, The Azuri development sits on the unspoiled northeast coast of Mauritius, alongside a superb beach; The Lobby at Marriott Osaka Miyako.

Second Centara Opens in Mauritius

Thailand's Centara Hotels and Resorts have opened its second property in Mauritius. Centara Grand Azuri Resort and Spa Mauritius is a five-star resort located directly on the beach at the new Azuri Oceanfront Village Complex on the northeast coast of the Indian Ocean island. Along with the hotel property, Centara will be managing luxury residences in the same complex under the company's Centara Grand Residence and Suites brand. Centara's first resort property on the island, Centara Poste Lafayette Resort and Spa Mauritius opened in December 2012 and the premier five-star brand complements the first property. Centara Grand Azuri Resort and Spa Mauritius is part of a 168ha development that is home to luxury residences, retail outlets and sports and marine services. The resort enjoys a beachfront setting, with a lagoon for swimming and watersports. Accommodation is a combination of 100 rooms and thatched villas, including sculpted garden view rooms and ocean facing rooms and villas with the latter each having its own private plunge pool.

www.centarahotelsandresorts.com



Marriott International Opens Osaka's First Marriott Hotel

Osaka Marriott Miyako Hotel located on the top floors of Japan's tallest building recently opened as the fourth hotel for the brand in Japan. Marriott Hotels has partnered with Miyako Hotels and Resorts, a subsidiary of the Kintetsu Corporation, to create the new co-branded hotel in Kintetsu's 'Abeno Harukas', a brand new 300m high-rise complex with 60 storeys making it the tallest building in Japan. All 360 guestrooms and the hotel's signature ZK Restaurant are located on the top floors of the building. The property offers the highest international hospitality standards combined with Japanese flair. Offering spectacular city views of the city, the hotel's 360 spacious rooms (average of 38m²) are located on the 38th to 55th floors, and include six suites and 33 premium rooms. www.marriott.com





RENDEZVOUS
HOTEL
SINGAPORE

BY FAR EAST HOSPITALITY

WELCOME TO THE NEW CLUB ROOM EXPERIENCE

ROOM RATE fr\$308++

Complimentary access to the new Club Rendezvous lounge and other privileges



Limousine transfer service
min. 2-night stay



Access to
airport lounge



Guaranteed early check-in
or late check-out



High speed Internet



All-day comfort
food



Deals with exclusive
lifestyle partners



Pressing and shoe
polishing services



CHIC-CHOCS MOUNTAIN LODGE, CANADA

Skiers will struggle to find a wilderness ski lodge to match Chic-Chocs in Quebec, Canada. With just 18 luxurious rooms, privacy is assured. Large balconies open onto mountain views, waterfalls and pristine forests.

www.chic-chocs.com



POUSADA UACARI, BRAZIL

Explore the mighty Amazon from Uacari Lodge located one hour by plane from Manaus or 40 hours by slow boat. The lodge walks the eco talk in offering comfortable floating lodges and providing access to amazing wildlife including the endangered bald uuari monkey.

www.pousadauacari.com.br

Wilderness Retreats

Many travellers want to get away from it all and discover the world's great wilderness areas. Escaping need not mean hardship with many wilderness retreats offering the finest facilities and services imaginable. Others provide the basics but offer memorable wilderness encounters. Here are several wilderness retreats to check into on your next global getaway.



LITTLE KULALA, NAMIBIA

Little Kulala is a 37,000ha private wilderness reserve within Kulala Wilderness that protects the spectacular Sossusvlei sand dunes. Privacy is assured with just 11 thatched chalets, a plunge pool and rooftop skybed for stargazing.

www.wilderness-safaris.com



GAIDA CAMP, NEPAL

Gaída Camp is one of seven wildlife camps in Nepal's famous Chitwan National Park. Guests stay in modest park accommodation and take elephant rides to see endangered wildlife such as the one-horned Asian rhino.

www.gaidawildlife.com



BORNEO RAINFOREST LODGE, SABAH

Located in the 44,000ha Danum Valley Conservation Area the lodge is surrounded by pristine lowland dipterocarp forest. See some 340 bird species, explore the rainforest canopy and relax in comfortable lodges.

www.borneonaturetours.com



TOILOGT GER CAMP, MONGOLIA

Enjoy the Mongolian wilderness in this comfortable but not lavish camp. Stay in tee-pees, yurts or wooden huts beside Lake Khovsgol which gets frozen over in winter. In summer, kayak, canoe or take a horse ride.

www.mongoliagercamps.net



EARTH LODGE, SABI SABI, KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Earth Lodge is an intimate lodge offering luxurious facilities and wildlife like cheetahs, lions, rhinos, leopards and elephants close by. With just 13 villas, it's just you and the animals on the near-empty bushveld. Facilities include souvenir shop, pool, spa, bar and library.

www.sabisabi.com



SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE, KANGAROO ISLAND

From the windows of this lodge off the South Australian coastline, the next landfall is Antarctica thousands of kilometres southwards. This remote and luxurious lodge opens onto a dramatic seascape with the island's seal colony and other wildlife being as wild as Australia gets.

www.southernoceanlodge.com.au



David Bowden checks in to hotels and resorts around the region to give a personal perspective on what's on offer and what makes each one special. On this journey, he heads off to the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius to lay back and relax in several beachside resorts.

Mesmerising Mauritius

Dreamy resorts, mountainous interior, adventurous activities, locally-produced rum and a culturally diverse population provide a mesmerising charm to this Indian Ocean island. Watersports and activities feature on many tourism itineraries. One of the first things that tourists notice when they arrive is the rolling rumble of the waves breaking on the distance coral reefs surrounding the island. Sugar cane is grown over much of the island and some of this is used to produce the rum for which the island is famous.

AMBRE RESORT MAURITIUS

The 297-room, Ambre Resort has just had a very innovative refurbishment that makes it look brand new in its shimmering all-white colour scheme with additional splashes of orange, lime and red. Moving into the couples market, the resort is now an all-inclusive proposition with all meals included in the tariff. This means dining in restaurants such as Indigo (Creole, Indian and Chinese) and Dolce Vita (Italian) to one's content. Enjoy pre and post dinner cocktails in the stylish Coral Bar where the rose mojitos aren't to be missed. There's a spa and many watersports along the wide beachfront and shallow waters off the resort.

Verdict: A recent makeover has added renewed vigour and life to this smart and contemporary resort. The rooms are spacious, breezy and airy with the floor to ceiling white enlivened by bright colourful furnishings. www.ambremauritius.com



check-in
hospitality
asa



LE MÉRIDIDIEN ILE MAURICE HOTEL

Le Méridien Ile Maurice is a large international resort on the far northwestern side of the island near Grand Baie. It offers uninterrupted seaviews, a spa and several dining options. Check in here and you won't want to leave with the array of activities and dining options. Enjoy seafood at Shells, Cumin (Indian), La Faya (fine beachside dining) and themed buffets at 180 Degrees. Chill out with cool cocktails at Bois Cheri and party into the wee hours at the Bayview Bar. Cultural shows are performed along with nightly live music in the Bayview Bar. There are many complimentary watersports such as water skiing and glass bottom boat rides.

Verdict: Le Méridien provides a little piece of French flair on the island where French is spoken by most. Despite being a resort, the rooms are a little business like and there's an extensive array of facilities and activities. www.lemeridien-mauritius.com



JALSA BEACH HOTEL AND SPA

Jalsa Beach Hotel and Spa is a delightful boutique property on a near-deserted stretch of white sand on the east coast of Mauritius. Guests will enjoy the spacious, functional and shaded verandahs off each room. What it lacks in size it makes up with friendly island hospitality and is the perfect retreat for those seeking peace and quiet. While not located immediately on the beach, the resort's restaurant is refreshingly cooled by gentle sea breezes. Most guests are content to relax by the pool or under a shaded coconut palm.

Verdict: Jalsa is a small and intimate resort that is perfect for couples. Its remoteness adds to its Robinson Crusoe feel. This is a place to check in and forget about the rest of the world for awhile. www.jalsabeach.com

THE GRAND MAURITIAN RESORT AND SPA

The guest experience from start to finish is incomparable. Classic and modern rooms are equipped with a balcony and comfortable outdoor furniture. Spacious bathrooms come with a separate bathtub and shower. There are several dining options with the fine dining poolside restaurant called Reflections being as good as the island gets. Many complimentary watersports from kayaking, paddle boards and snorkelling are laid on. The resort is located on the northwest coastline not far from the capital Port Louis.

Verdict: Another perfect honeymooners location with dreamy rooms that many may not want to leave apart from checking into Mandara Spa for some restorative treatments. www.thegrandmauritian.com

CENTARA POSTE LAFAYETTE RESORT AND SPA

Centara Poste Lafayette Resort and Spa located on the northeastern coast is a new beachside resort of just 100 rooms all with picturesque seaviews. It is perfect for families but the contemporary rooms and Thai-inspired spa broadens the appeal. Excellent restaurants serve a selection of local and international favourites in casual surroundings. This is a place to kick off your shoes and walk bare-footed for the remainder of your holiday.

Verdict: Thai hotel group Centara has established a fine name and takes the concept to Mauritius with this excellent, mid-scale resort, on the beach. www.centarahotelsresorts.com





OUTRAGEOUS MITSUBISHI ATTRAGE

Fuel efficiency is at the centre of the success of this car. While not the most powerful in its class this three-cylinder eco-sedan is light on fuel and good on the pocket. A claimed 21km/litre is a good performance by any reckoning. As a sedan, this vehicle offers decent boot space which is larger than the hatch version of this car (the Mirage). Little touches such as leather-covered seats, keyless entry plus engine push-start ignition and Kenwood entertainment system make this a trendy little vehicle. One-year free maintenance and a three-year or 100,000km warranty are included.

www.mitsubishicars.com



VOLKSWAGEN MPV

The VW Touran TDI is a turbo-diesel, seven-seater that is now available throughout the region. Powered by a 1,598cc, four-cylinder turbo-diesel, it provides a smooth yet lively drive with a top speed of 180km/hour. It has good pick up and being a seven-seater, it also makes a good pick up vehicle along the lines of a minivan. This energetic vehicle with seven-speed dual-clutch and manual override, acts more like a hatchback than a MPV so will appeal to a broad cross-section of motorists especially with diesel being cheaper than petrol. www.vw.com

NEW GOLF ON THE BALL

The Golf GTI Mk7 has been available now for some months. The Golf has a loyal following among those who appreciate its looks and its performance.

In addition to its sporty performance it also has the capacity of other sedans to carry a car full of passengers. While the car's profile remains the same as previous models, the Mk7 GTI is slightly wider and edgier. Motoring enthusiasts will love the car's interior and how it performs on the road, especially on the open road. With a two-litre turbocharged engine, the car produces an abundance of torque. A five-year warranty programme says a lot for the faith Volkswagen has in the Golf GTI Mk7. www.vw.com





MINI MEE

Apart from the Volkswagen Beetle there are few other cars apart from the Mini that are as timeless or memorable in shape and outline. The third generation Mini Cooper and Mini Cooper S have just been released. These sporty hatchbacks have the same basic shape as the original Mini but new distinguishing features keep the car contemporary and fashionable. New turbocharged, three and four-cylinder engines provide the torque that everyone is talking about. The new Mini is bigger with a wider wheelbase than previous editions. This ensures a more comfortable ride and improved cornering agility. The Mini Cooper S is the sportier of the two versions.

www.mini.co.uk

AUDI ADVANTAGE

The new Audi A4 1.8 TFSI features the 46cm cast aluminium wheels, improved interior styling with aluminium trigon inlays, Bang and Olufsen sound system and comfort key for convenient vehicle entry and start-up. It delivers 5.8 litres/100kms from its efficient four-cylinder petrol engine. All engines are turbocharged direct-injection systems with start-stop system and the recuperation system as standard. The A4 series also presents the latest state of the art in petrol engine technology. A new highlight of the TFSI family is the new 1.8-litre engine. www.audi.com.my



MAZDA CROSSOVER SUV

The all new, fully imported Mazda CX-9 takes this crossover SUV to a more sophisticated and sporty level. Drawing on Mazda's 'Soul in Motion' design theme gives form to motion. The interior is very comfortable with a full leather design and a BOSE sound system to 'lift' the roof if need be. A three-year warranty provides great peace of mind. www.mazda.com



PEUGEOT PURRS

The new diesel-driven Peugeot 508 purrs smoothly and not like the rough, noisy oil burners that old diesel motors were best known for. This petrol-driven, 2,179cc turbo-assisted motor helps the car purr perfectly to give the impression that it has very little to do with a diesel vehicle. The interior is sleek too and includes six airbags, electronically-adjusted leather seating, push button start/stop USB and Bluetooth connectivity and a JBL audio system that pounds and purrs as required. A six-speed transmission is the perfect fit for the car. All this adds up to a car that looks very smart and handles very well indeed. www.peugeot.com





The Scoop on Scoot

Scoot, the Singapore-based, low-cost, long-haul airline has made a huge impact in less than two years of operation. Chief Executive Officer, Campbell Wilson discusses the airline and its future with the soon-to-arrive fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliners.



While the skies are crowded with airlines, Scoot CEO Campbell Wilson is enthusiastic about the airline delivering a product that passengers want at the right price point. Obviously, the travelling public likes the Scoot product for in its short history it flies to 13 destinations in eight countries. It carried its first million passengers within its first operational year. Along with network partners TigerAir and TigerAir Mandala, Scoot's destinations increase to 47 cities.

This is some achievement considering the airline was only mooted by parent company, Singapore Airlines in May 2011. Wilson, who hails from New Zealand, was appointed in July 2011 and its first service flew from Singapore to Sydney on June 4, 2012.

Scoot is a low-cost carrier that mostly flies to destinations more than four hours from its Singapore base. This doesn't preclude it from flying to closer destinations to maximise aircraft utilisation and connectivity, with Bangkok an example.

Scoot is currently offering these services on wide-body Boeing 777 aircraft but this will change with the progressive introduction of a new fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliner from November 2014 and the retirement of its 777 fleet by mid 2015.

Wilson attributes Scoot's early success to several factors but importantly to offering value for money and to differentiating itself from

the competition. He claims, "While passengers often want more for less, fare alone isn't the only criteria by which people choose one airline over others. While operating an airline is a very serious matter, and we never scrimp on safety or security-related matters, we have intentionally taken a light-hearted approach to many service elements so that we remain memorable with passengers. We like to be quirky, personable, fun and engaging – an attitude we call Scootitude."

Wilson continued, "We encourage all our staff (called Scootees) but especially the cabin crew to be engaging and interactive. Scoot is also about value adding so while we're a low-cost carrier, we want to provide services that go beyond what most expect. So we offer an entertainment, ScooTV, which streams movies to passengers' own devices or via one of Scoot's rentable iPads."

"We think our service gives passengers the power to choose the level of frills they require. Therefore, we offer a comprehensive selection of chargeable food and beverage items, duty free items and Scoot merchandise. Scoot offers a premium class (ScootBiz) with 38" legroom, 8" reclineable leather seating, complimentary baggage, movies, meal and extra cabin luggage. Another initiative is ScootInSilence from



Photos courtesy of James Morgan

rows 21 to 25 with extra legroom, wider seats and no children under 12 to ensure tranquillity", comments Wilson.

Scoot is well positioned to grow especially with its new fleet starting to arrive later in the year. Wilson said that preparing for the introduction of the new fleet, and subsequent phase of renewed expansion was one of Scoot's main focuses, as well as the startup of a new Thai medium haul, low-cost airline.

On this latter point, Thailand's Nok Air and Scoot have signed an MOU to establish a new Bangkok-based low-cost airline. The planned new airline will be named NokScoot. It will operate wide body aircraft on medium and long-haul international routes. Wilson commented: "Its establishment is still subject to regulatory approvals, but work is progressing well. Details about its fleet, products and route network will be announced later."



JADE DRAGON SNOW MOUNTAIN GOLF CLUB
Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, Lijiang, Yunnan Province, China
www.ljxsgolf.com

LONGEST HOLE IN THE WORLD

It's hard not to be impressed by Jade Dragon Snow Mountain Golf Club on Lijiang's northern outskirts in China's Yunnan Province. From the clubhouse, snow-capped Jade Mountain towers overhead and in the foreground is the world's longest golf course at 8,548m off the championship tees. Then there is the world's longest hole; the par five, fifth at 711m. If that's not enough, the historic city of Lijiang is an impressive heritage destination with a rich history.



COOL MOUNTAIN GOLF

What was long considered Vietnam's oldest and most prestigious golf was once the exclusive domain the last Vietnamese Emperor, Bao Dai. Dalat Palace has had a turbulent past but is now revitalised with the current 18-hole, 7,222 yard, par 72 course being renowned for its bent grass greens. The cool montane air makes this walking course refreshing. Facilities include a putting green, driving range, chipping area, and practice bunker. The preferred place to stay is the adjoining Hotel DuParc Dalat.

DALAT PALACE GOLF CLUB

Phu Dong Thien Vuong St, Dalat, Vietnam
Contact: +84 63 382-3507
www.dalatpalacegolf.vn



AUSTRIAN GOLF AND SPA RESORT

Reiters Resort in Austria is a real find for golfers as it includes an 18-hole championship course and an additional friendly, nine-holes that will appeal to those new to golf. Choose to stay in the adult's-only Supreme Hotel or the family-friendly Leading Family Avance Hotel and Resort. In summer, winter grasses spring to life to blanket the fairways and greens. Unlike some European courses, Reiters remains open for most of the year. Another attraction is the wellness facilities with the bad in Bad Tatzmannsdorf meaning spa. Relax in the Yin Yang Spa and enjoy a Swedish massage or the thermal spring waters spa.

REITERS GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

Am Golfplatz 2, 7431 Bad Tatzmannsdorf, Austria
Contact: +43 3353-8282
www.reitersgolfresort.at

BUG OFF BANDS

There's nothing like a pesky mosquito to spoil a good holiday but a range of colourful Paro 'Kito wristbands may just be the solution to bugs that bite in the night. These bands offer 24-hour protection by employing a unique combination of seven essential oils. Refill pellets means that the same wristband can be used time and time again. www.au.parakito.com



SWISS PRECISION BAGS

Obviously bags are an essential part of travel and having the right bag for the right occasion is important. The Swiss Army Knife is one of those essential pieces of travel equipment in everyone's check-in bag and the appropriate baggage is made by the same people; Victorinox. Those travelling with carry-on luggage will have to leave the Swiss Army Knife at home when travelling with the Victorinox Luggage Spectra Extra Capacity Carry-on Luggage. While lightweight it resists damage by being made with 100% bayer polycarbonate and comes with a lifetime guarantee.

www.victorinox.com



REVOLUTIONARY LUGGAGE

Avoid running the risk of valuables being damaged in transit with the TUMI Tegra-Lite luggage made from the revolutionary polypropylene thermoplastic composite material used in protective gear and even NASCAR race cars. These impact resistant bags come in a range of stylish colours including classic black and white but various other stand-out colours. Choose from two-wheel, four-wheel and carry-on.

www.tumi.com

KEEP COOL WITH HUGGAZ

An exciting range of bottle and can coolers solves the problem of drinks getting hot in the tropics. The cool new range of Huggaz Coolers made from 3.5mm to 5mm neoprene (wet-suit material); ensure that bottles, cans and drinks stay cool in the heat. These products are made from high quality durable material with really cool designs

to ensure they remain an essential fashion accessory for drinkers. They are environmentally-friendly in being reusable and washable. Huggaz are perfect for kids, picnics, athletes and party goers.

www.huggaz.com





Aotearoa Aro Hā

Aro Hā, just 40 minutes from the New Zealand South Island gateway of Queenstown is home to a newly opened wellness centre. Visitors live on-site self-sufficiently in simple luxury surrounded by magnificent alpine lakes and mountains. The spa features a cold plunge, hot tub, Finnish sauna, infrared sauna, cooling bed and massage facilities. Vinyasa yoga, meditation classes and alpine hikes are just some of the other activities available. Aro Hā supports the principles of vegetarian diets, exercise and meditation practices. Guests stay in wooden Zen-inspired eco accommodation. www.aro-ha.com



IHG Makeover for Rome's St. George Spa

St. George Spa in the Hotel Indigo Rome – St. George Hotel has recently seen Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG) take over the management of the spa and boutique hotel located within walking distance of many historic attractions including The Vatican. The St. George Spa with a large hot tub, sauna, Turkish bath and mini-gym is complimentary to all guests of the hotel. It provides a soothing atmosphere, enveloping essences and fine notes for guests to discover harmony and balance. Customised beauty and a range of massages are available. www.hotelindigo.com



Alpine Attitude

Innsbruck in southern Austria is best known as an alpine resort city with excellent access to surrounding snowfields. From late June onwards, Hotel Adlers in the centre of the historic city will offer a refuge for restorative recuperation after a day on the slopes. Rising from the 6th to the 13th floor, this new design hotel will feature a contemporary spa with full services and facilities. Located in the central part of the city, this modern styled building rises above the historic tiles roofs of the ancient city to offer excellent views of the snow-capped mountains from the spa, the rooms, the 12th floor restaurant and rooftop terrace. www.deradler.com





AWAY Spa Introduces Half-Day Programme

AWAY Spa at W Retreat Koh Samui has introduced a thoroughly revamped spa menu, featuring a wide selection of body and facial treatments. These feature the high-end spa products from Thémaé, a Parisian tea-based spa product brand available at leading spas worldwide. AWAY Spa has also introduced a new half-day programme called 'AWAY Spa and Energy Retreat' for in-house guests and visitors. The programme begins at 8am with a private yoga class or a tai chi session against a picturesque sea view at WET deck, followed by a de-stress session in a Thaimazcal herbal steam with a choice of body scrub and shower. After a breakfast, guests enjoy a 60-minute well delight massage followed by a hydration strategy facial treatment for another 60 minutes. Both treatments feature Thémae spa products that, together with techniques of the therapists, help de-stress tensions and revitalise body and facial skin. www.wretreatkohsamui.com



Mira Nails It

MiraSpa in The Mira Hong Kong, a member of the Design Hotels network, is the perfect setting for glamorous hen spa-ties with a spacious Nail Lounge Bar that is ideal for entertaining. Now women can luxuriate in style at Hong Kong's unique urban retreat choosing one of the three newly launched packages for future brides-to-be, or groups of friends craving for a private and lavish afternoon of pure indulgence. 'Girls Night Out', 'MiraSpa Glam n' Shine' and 'MiraSpa No Heels Allowed' are allowed with manicures and pedicures plus indulgent luxuries. Guest have access to the infinity pool, gym and heat facilities and can glam up the afternoon with Champagne, teatime delicacies, canapés and healthy smoothies. Hen Party packages at promotional prices are available until 30 June 2014 and advance reservations are required. MiraSpa is a metropolitan spa combining contemporary, Western design, with stylish, warming touches that deliver a sense of wellbeing and subtle stimulation. It features seven Spa Suites with private washroom and shower and two VIP Spa Suites with private sunken whirlpool bath, relaxation area, steam shower and vanity area. The oval-shaped Aura Room with soothing coloured light feature induces restful sleep. www.themirahotel.com

Oman Oasis

Spa Alila in the brand new Alila Jabal Akhdar Resort in Oman just welcomed its first guest. Located 2,000m above sea level in the untouched mountainous landscape of Green Mountain 150km from Muscat International Airport, Spa Alila follows the resort's minimalist styling enhanced by warm and colourful ethnic influences. Separate male and female treatment rooms provide local and Asian-inspired spa therapies dedicated to cleansing, relaxing, pampering and rejuvenating with treatments inspired by the healthy and beauty benefits of the region. Enjoy the intimacy of Spa Alila at this 86 all-suite resort.

www.alilahotels.com/jabalakhdar



Soothing Samui

Vana Belle, A Luxury Collection Resort is home to the exceptional and captivating Vana Spa. Vana Spa's tranquil setting invites guests to select from a menu of signature rituals and effective therapies performed with purifying, nourishing and aromatic products. Matthana treatment inspires passion and transformation. Skin-hydration using rose scent is one of the cornerstone treatments of Vana Spa. Uniting the resort's tropical setting with traditional Thai therapies, Vana Spa offers an enriching wellness experience that includes effective, nourishing beauty and body treatments performed with premium products, by experienced therapists. www.vanabellekohsamui.com



Metropolitan for Males

The award-winning Chuan Spa Hong Kong has elevated its range of men's grooming experiences with the launch of its new Metropolitan, designed to sculpt and restore inner tension. This 90-minute treatment includes a back scrub, mask, massage and facial experience. The energising and purifying facial is designed specifically for the male complexion and to relieve tension and fatigue while restoring strength and vitality to the skin. A warm algae mask deeply replenishes the skin with powerful healing ingredients combining plant extracts to repair and soothe any irritation. Male treatments along with all others at Chuan Spa also provide full complimentary access to Chuan Spa's health and wellbeing facilities including the panoramic Pulse fitness studio, Plunge rooftop pool and the private tri-bathing ritual areas with oriental hot tubs, saunas, and steam rooms. www.chuanspa.com



Smooth as Silk

Bangkok's Divana Divine Oriental Organic Spa recently launched its 3.5 hour-long Organic Golden Silk treatment to bring back moisture balance and subtle radiance. The treatment leaves the skin smooth, healthy and reinvigorated. It starts with the application of a powder containing skin-improving antiseptic properties. This is followed by the application of silk threads that improve circulation. Dead skin cells are then removed using a beehive-based scrub. Other therapies follow to ensure the skin is moist and firm. www.divana-dvn.com



MAGICAL MAURITIUS

SPA Cenvaree by the turquoise waters of Centara Poste Lafayette Resort and Spa on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius combines tropical charm with traditional Thai therapies; try the Naud Thai (Royal Thai Massage).

www.centarahotelsresorts.com



BEACHSIDE BLISS

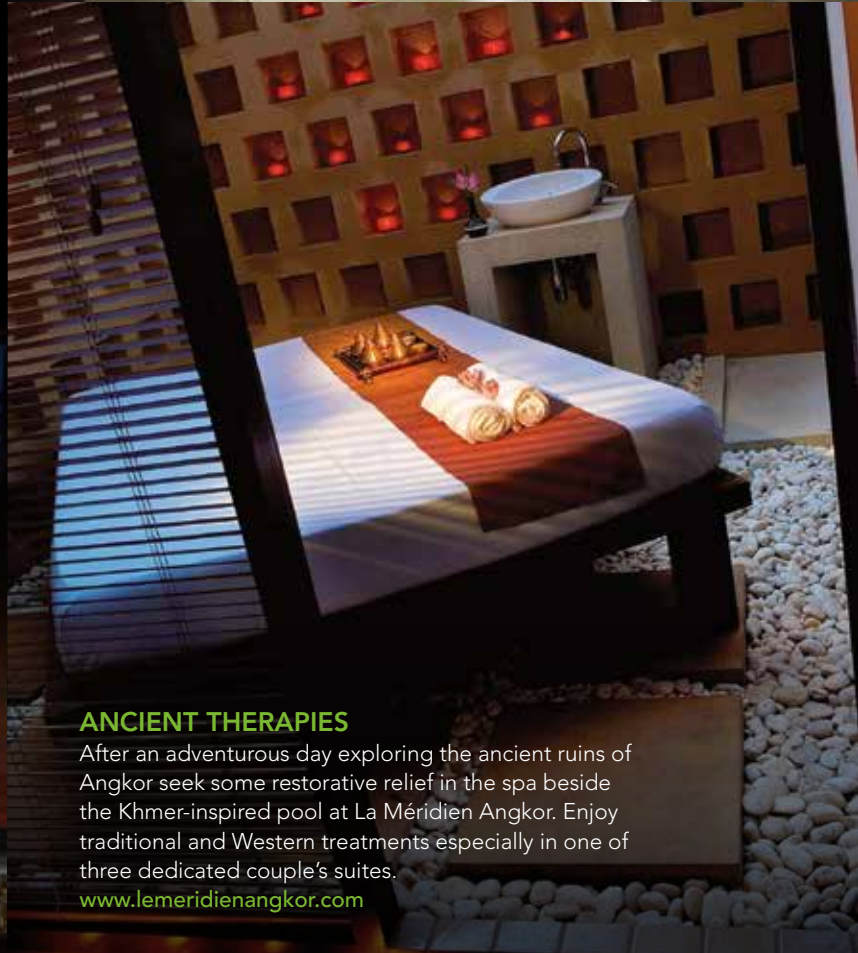
St. Gregory Spa at the Parkroyal Penang Resort offers a bounty of blissful beachside spa therapies and indulgences. Enjoy body massages, facials and therapeutic treatments such as a Thalgo marine facial and massage treatments. www.parkroyalhotels.com



RESTORATIVE RITZ

Located in the impeccable The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta spa treatments start with a signature foot ritual and then are followed by a long list of therapies such as a signature aromatherapy massage, herbal compress massage, foot reflexology or an expressive facial for deep state cleansing. The spa is open from 7am to midnight.

www.ritzcarlton.com



ANCIENT THERAPIES

After an adventurous day exploring the ancient ruins of Angkor seek some restorative relief in the spa beside the Khmer-inspired pool at La Méridien Angkor. Enjoy traditional and Western treatments especially in one of three dedicated couple's suites.

www.lemeridienangkor.com

