

hospitality



Elephant riding lessons and nature walks with a native guide are the new things to try in Thailand and Malaysia's Langkawi island. And if you're the kind of person who wants to pack poochie with your holiday Pucci print dress, there is now an option for canine guests in some X2 properties. Malaysia's first truly green hotel is featured in Impressions, while some of the cornerstones of the hospitality industry also get a share of voice; with Australia getting special attention in our first country focus.





The F&B team at Golden Sands Resort, Penang celebrates the receipt of the HACCP certification

Raise The Roof

Anantara Seminyak Resort & Spa has launched its one-of-a-kind rooftop Penthouse suite as the ultimate party venue.

Throughout the impressive Penthouse residence, the height of contemporary interior design is complemented by sweeping views of the jet setter Seminyak Beach scene down below, while an ingenious layout and imaginatively luxurious amenities present multiple dining and entertaining options, culminating in a private sanctuary that raises the bar for super cool events.

Savour the spice of life in a richly flavoursome Indian buffet, or tour the culinary world with a decadent international buffet including live cooking stations of sensational land and sea creations to tempt every preference and palate. While adding to the Penthouse facility and service repertoire, a personal wine sommelier plus private vintage wine cellar embellish the gastronomic possibilities. **h&a**

Strictly Hygienic

Golden Sands Resort, Penang by Shangri-La recently received the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point System (HACCP) certification by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA). The Batu Feringgi family beach resort is only the second hotel in Penang, after its sister property, Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort and Spa, Penang, to receive LRQA's highly sought-after food safety accreditation. The preparation for HACCP certification at the Golden Sands Resort, Penang started in May 2010 and culminated with audit sessions by HACCP consultants in October and November 2010. Through the certification programme, the consultants work closely with the resort's food and beverage team as well as the kitchen team to understand, assess and enhance operations and food safety practices. Golden Sands Resort, Penang is the sixth Shangri-La property in Malaysia to be HACCP certified, and 48 other Shangri-La resorts and hotels worldwide have received certification. **h&a**

Catering Associations Opens In Singapore

Recently founded is the Association of Catering Professionals (ACP) Singapore which was set up to overlook and strengthen the entire catering industry in Singapore. Part of the association's main missions are to serve as an authoritative and representative platform for the catering industry, to work towards making the catering industry one that is professional and well-regarded and to serve as a resource centre for manpower, training and business networking for caterers in Singapore. So far, the management committee has organized two successful meetings with its members where agendas such as role appointments, membership schemes and partnerships were discussed. **h&a**



Berjaya UCH Chief Operating Officer, Mae Ho accepting the Brand Laureate Best Brands in Education – Tourism, Hospitality, Culinary and Retail Management Award, presented by H.E. Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Patron of the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation and the President of the Brandlaureate, Dr. KK Johan

Berjaya UCH Receives Brand Laureate-SMEs Chapter Awards

BERJAYA University College of Hospitality (BERJAYA UCH), the premier education institution specializing in Hospitality, Tourism, Culinary, Retail and Events Management, is proud to be at the forefront of the hospitality education industry in Malaysia by recently accepting the Brand Laureate-SMEs Chapter Awards 2010 for the 'Best Brands in Education-Tourism, Hospitality, Culinary & Retail Education.' BERJAYA UCH believes that it is the people working together behind its brand that has brought them to accomplish many awards, recognitions and medals since its doors opened two years ago. With a qualified team of staff and academicians effectively coordinating strengths to build a strong brand strategy, culture, and innovation in its organization, it has indeed seen the rewards of its labour. **h&a**



Association of Catering Professionals (ACP) Singapore members

“With **PestBusters** It Makes a Difference”

Broadway Hotel
 Classique Hotel
 Crowne Plaza Hotel, Changi Airport
 Carlton Hotel
 Furama Riverfront Singapore
 Grand Mercure Roxy Hotel
 Grand Hyatt Singapore
 Goodwood Park Hotel
 Gallery Hotel
 Hilton Singapore
 Hotel Royal
 Hotel Rendezvous
 Holiday Inn Atrium
 Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre
 Hotel ibis Singapore on Bencoolen
 InterContinental Singapore



Mandarin Orchard Singapore
 Marina Bay Sands Singapore
 Meritus Marina Mandarin Hotel
 Orchard Grand Court
 Pan Pacific at Orchard
 Fairmont Singapore
 Raffles Hotel Singapore
 Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa Resort Singapore
 Regent Singapore
 Park Regis
 Shangri-La Hotel
 Sheraton Towers Singapore
 Strand Hotel
 Traders Hotel
 The Fullerton Singapore
 York Hotel

Hotel Istana Kuala Lumpur
 hotel maya Kuala Lumpur
 Shangri-La Hotel Kuala Lumpur
 Holiday Villa Subang
 Traders Hotel Kuala Lumpur (By Shangri-La)
 Concorde Hotel Kuala Lumpur
 Crowne Plaza Mutiara Kuala Lumpur
 Colmar Tropicale – Berjaya Hills
 The Chateau Spa and Organic Wellness Resort, Pahang
 Pullman Putrajaya Lakeside
 Riverside Majestic Hotel
 Grand Margherita Hotel
 Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa Kota Kinabalu
 Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort Kota Kinabalu
 Hilton Kuching Hotel
 Batang Ai Longhouse Resort, Kuching



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Softbrands Acquires PMS Division of Amadeus

SoftBrands, an affiliate of Infor, the leading provider of business software for mid-market companies, recently acquired the Property Management Systems (PMS) division of Amadeus IT Group SA. Through this acquisition of a leading EMEA PMS provider, SoftBrands is now the second largest provider of hospitality software worldwide, with an installed base of more than 9,700 properties in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific. SoftBrands will

support and maintain all existing Amadeus PMS applications, providing customers the choice to continue to benefit from their existing software investments.

Additionally, customers will have access to an array of complementary applications and the latest technology.

"The strength of Amadeus Property Management Systems presence in EMEA and reach into other markets, significantly enhances our ability to support global customers, and perfectly complements our existing footprint, allowing us to deliver our portfolio of solutions to the worldwide hospitality market,"

said Tracy Flynn, General Manager, Hospitality Solutions. **h3**



X2 Koh Samui's Pool Villas are a hit on the island which is seeing an increased demand for luxury pool villas

Luxury Pool Villas A Trend On Samui

Samui has passed through several stages in its development since backpackers first discovered the island a generation ago, and with the latest trend towards pool villa resorts Samui is now firmly part of the luxury end of the tourism market.

One of the latest pool villa resorts to open on Samui is X2 Samui Villas By Design, which comes under the Centara Boutique Collection and is located at Hua Tanon Beach, a quiet area on the southeast side of the island which is best known for its fishing village and fleet of picturesque fishing boats.

X2 (the pronunciation is "cross-to") has just 27 villas, each with their own private pool or garden areas, set in five acres of mature gardens with direct access to the beach.

The entry-level Garden Villas have an area of 85sqm, making them suitable for a couple of adults or a small family. The majority of the units are however the Deluxe Pool Villas, with 162sqm of area and each featuring their own pool. The largest accommodation available is the Royal Villa with an area of 230sqm that includes two king-bed rooms and a living room. **h3**



Lady mahout and Pumpui the elephant

Big Ride

There are no rear lights, no windshield wipers and you won't get much in the trunk except water, but at northern Thailand's luxurious Anantara Golden Triangle Resort & Spa, guests can pass their driving test in just three days – on the back of an elephant.

The three-day mahout (elephant 'driver') training course takes place at the resort's on-site Elephant Camp, which was set up in conjunction with Thailand's National Elephant Institute and its Elephant Conservation Centre in Lampang. Anantara's 160 acres of bamboo forest, nature trails and river banks provide an ideal habitat for the 32 elephants, all of whom have been rescued from the streets of Bangkok and other major cities in Thailand to participate in the resort's eco-tourism programme. The resort's resident elephants are all experienced mahout trainers – and full of personality.

Course content includes learning basic commands in order to drive an elephant, as well as river bathing and learning about the daily care of an elephant, their feeding requirements and a mahout's lifestyle. At the end of three days a short 'driving test' is administered, after which guests receive their certificate of mahout competence. **h3**

Natural Selection

The Datai Langkawi, Malaysia is surrounded by centuries-old virgin rainforest. As part of the hotel's contribution to the environment and its eco-surrounding, The Datai Langkawi offers morning and evening nature walks to resident guests in an effort to educate guests on the flora and fauna surrounding the hotel and island. This easy walk which takes about one and half hours from the hotel lobby is provided almost daily on a complimentary basis by a team of resident naturalists. **h3**



X2 Hua Hin Kui Buri Villas and Centara Chaan Talay Resort & Villas Trat now welcome canine guests

Barking Fantastic

People love their dogs, and dogs love to romp in wide open spaces, so why don't more people take their dogs on holiday with them?

The answer of course is that hotel operators usually ban dogs from their premises. There are good reasons for this, mainly consideration for other guests and issues of hygiene, but in a villa-style resort and with responsible owners taking care of their pets, then maybe a doggie holiday is possible.

That at least is the thinking of Centara Hotels & Resorts, Thailand's largest hotel operator, who are piloting a scheme to gauge market response to those guests wanting to travel on a vacation with their pet dogs.

The two resort hotels that have been selected are X2 Hua Hin Kui Buri Villas, which stands in four acres of mature beachfront gardens near to Hua Hin and features just 23 villas, and Centara Chaan Talay Resort & Villas Trat, occupying a pristine beachfront location with views across to Koh Chang.

Owners need to advise the resort during the booking process that they will be bringing their dogs, and the dog has to be shampooed before arrival. The dog has to be a small to medium sized breed, weighing no more than 20 kilos, and should be well-trained. Owners must not leave their dogs unattended in their rooms, and the animal has to be kept on a leash at all times while within the resort. Dogs are not allowed to enter any restaurant, spa or other resort venue.

A fully refundable deposit of 2,000 baht is payable in cash at check-in to cover any damage to the room, and the guest is responsible for cleaning up any "accidents" that occur within the resort grounds. **ha**



Michael Shindler, Executive VP of Hotels & Casinos, Hard Rock International, John Primmer, General Manager, Hard Rock Hotel Penang and Tan Sri Syed Yusof Syed Nasir with their award

Rock Rules

Hard Rock Hotel Penang was awarded "Brand Ambassador of the Year 2010" at the recent Hard Rock's 2011 Global Conference held during the grand opening of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Punta Cana.

At this award night, Hard Rock International announced the winners of its 2011 Awards in recognition of outstanding accomplishments and dedication of employees, franchisees and partners. Hard Rock selected the top "rock stars" from more than 171 Hard Rock locations in 52 countries and hundreds of partners worldwide. The much-anticipated awards were chosen based on financial performance, unique sales accomplishments, community contributions, creativity, strategic marketing, philanthropy, brand loyalty and leadership. **ha**

SurPRIZE at Accor Hotels In Malaysia

Accor hotels in Malaysia namely Pullman Putrajaya Lakeside, Pullman Kuching, Novotel Kuala Lumpur City Centre and Novotel Kota Kinabalu 1Borneo will be offering a 'Mystery SurPRIZE' package, where guests stand a chance to win a 3 nights stay in a mysterious location, lucky winners may even get a luxurious suite surprise!

The 'Mystery SurPRIZE' package priced from RM224++ per night is inclusive of buffet breakfast for two persons, complimentary 24 hours internet access and an attractive 50 percent discount on second night. Booking is available from 1 February 2011 to 30 April 2011. **ha**

New Wellness Concept Sprouts In Langkawi

As spas evolve from sanctuaries of physical relief to sanctums of mental restoration, one burgeoning wellness enterprise is anticipating the next progressive step with services and facilities that recalibrate the soul.

Scheduled to launch March 1 at The Andaman – a Luxury Collection Resort in the foliage-shrouded archipelago of Langkawi – V Integrated Wellness offers all the staples of a modern-day holistic centre, and then some.

Enter activities and amenities such as meditation retreats, guided nature walks, sunrise yoga classes and a food menu inspired by the "Tree of Life," a sacred symbol that serves as a metaphor for how the universe is connected – the basis of V Integrated Wellness' philosophy. A butterfly farm – an intimate relaxation garden within the confines of a 10-million-year-old rainforest – is in the works, too. **ha**

Taylor-made For Great Experiences

Strategically situated on 27 acres of tropical greenery in Subang Jaya, the Taylor's Lakeside Campus boasts modern architecture that draws on simple elements like glass, steel and white concrete. At the centre of this integrated campus is a revived 5.5 acre lake; lending the calming element of water to the existing components of earth and sky. In early 2007, the commencement for this 450 million ringgit project took place. It was a major milestone in the 40-year-old history of Taylor's, foretelling its continued commitment to self-development, where great strides have been made since 1969.

Under its shiny new roof, the Lakeside Campus is residence to all existing tertiary programmes. Students will find a comprehensive range of courses like Architecture, Biomedical Science and Biotechnology, Business, Communication, Computer Science and IT, Engineering, Graphic Communication Design, Interior Design and Multimedia Design, Hospitality Tourism and Culinary Arts, Language, Law, Medicine, Pharmacy and Quantity Surveying to select from.

Upon entry, the sunlit campus imbues a sense of warmth that comes from the combination of beautiful landscaping, water plants, trees and flowering shrubs - providing a rich and stimulating natural environment for the students. The grand

staircase from the main drop-off lobby leads to the University Square and Amphitheatre that are the most central and popular gathering spots. Neighbouring this area is the commercial block, residences and the boutique hotel which will be partly managed by the tourism and hospitality students.

Located on the other blocks are the Administration offices, Student Union and a Multi-Purpose Hall on the north and Academic Blocks on the east. Especially dedicated for plays, recitals and other performances is the Art Precinct formed by the Experimental Theatre, the 600-pax Auditorium, 300-pax Lecture Theatre and the outdoor Amphitheatre. The pride of the campus is undeniably the library, a splendid four-storey glass edifice that warrants panoramic views of the lake.

The exciting new Taylor's Lakeside Campus offers all the right conditions for a vibrant exchange among academic, commercial, social and leisure activities. More than just a home to the student population, this campus is the nurturing ground for an energetic and dynamic new community. Taylor's Lakeside Campus will be the vehicle for Taylor's to further enhance the delivery of its purpose, which is to educate the youth of the world to take their productive place as leaders in the global community. **h**

Bottom right: The façade of Taylor's as you enter its driveway

Below (from the top): Culinary suite four – one of the many kitchens where the culinary students get hands-on practice; The al fresco area adjacent to one of the on-campus restaurants



Streamline Operations with IP Communications

Simplifying guest check in. Personalizing service. Reducing operating costs. Today's communications systems are about a lot more than just the room phone.

When it comes to understanding the value of today's communications technologies, the "aha" moment for many hotel managers comes during the mini bar discussion: When they realize that a housekeeper, armed with a mobile phone, connected to the hotel's phone system (which in turn is connected to the hotel's property management system) can press a few keys and instantly update the guest bill for items consumed from the mini bar.

It's not just the simplicity of the transaction that hammers it home—a process that used to take several minutes now takes a few seconds. Nor is it the accountability—the system tracks which staff member entered the charge. It's the realization that if a communications system can do something like that, what else could it do for their hotel? What other kinds of efficiencies, service improvements and cost reductions could it provide?

Quite a lot actually. And the timing couldn't be better. As the industry continues to climb out of an historic downturn in travel, nearly all hotels are looking for innovative, cost-effective ways to enhance guest experiences and streamline operations. Traditionally, communications has not been a focus for hotel innovation—but now that is changing because of the new Internet Protocol (IP)-based communications systems.

Using Communications for ROI

Like the mini bar story, a few examples go a long way toward illuminating how the new IP-based communications can deliver value:

Converging network infrastructure and management: Older phone systems needed their own wiring and had to be administered separately. The newer communications systems run over data wiring (and some systems run over both). This can be a significant cost savings. The new IP-based solutions are also less costly to administer. And the management of

the communications can be integrated with whatever you are using for your data network

Centralized and Multiproperty efficiencies: For hoteliers with multiple properties, Avaya Aura™ offers an added bonus. Rather than operating and maintaining a communications server at each property, You can leverage a single instance of our Communications Manager at one property and link all the others to it via communications gateways for rich voice, data, video and Internet services. This is a much "greener," more cost-effective and efficient way to deploy today's communications advances while still taking advantage of many communications investments you've made in the past.

Mobility: In the typical hotel, managers and staff are rarely in fixed locations (i.e., an office)—they are out and about tending to guest needs. What makes the "mobility" capabilities in today's new IP solutions particularly valuable in hospitality is that, the phone systems can be programmed to "find you"—the system automatically redirects incoming calls to an office phone, mobile, home phone, etc. You can pre-program the system to try different "find-me" patterns based on your schedule. When the call is returned, only the number of your office extension appears. For Hotel Management that is concerned with propriety of giving out personal numbers, this can be very appealing

Reservations and Guest Services: How your front-desk and contact center staff manages guest communications can be the difference between loyal customers and missed opportunities. How your contact center and guest services staff handles queries from multiple medias, be it from voice, email, fax, Web and instant messaging to more sophisticated computer telephony integration and social media. Avaya works with hospitality groups around the world to help them use

communications to differentiate their properties in today's expanding, competitive marketplace.

RE-INVENTING THE HOTEL ROOM PHONE

As hoteliers seek more sophisticated and stylish guest amenities that deliver real value, the room phone is getting a close look.



At Maxim's Tower, a all-suite luxury hotel in Resorts World Manila, every room comes with a Guest Media Hub, a large, color, touch-screen device guests can use to make calls, check the weather, make restaurant reservations, etc. Recently introduced by Avaya, the Guest Media Hub is typical of the new kind of multimedia device that can now be used with phone systems "The Avaya Guest Media Hub simplifies and streamlines communications and gives the guest a fun device to use," said Daryl Page, managing director of global hospitality solutions at Avaya. The device makes it easier for guests to get information, access hotel services, and make it possible to go "green" by eliminating the need for a guest compendium—the book used in hotel rooms for menus, hotel directory, etc

DOWNLOAD: Avaya Guest Media Hub for Hospitality Brochure
Get a more in-depth look at how today's new communication system can benefit hotels. Go to <http://www.avaya.com/usa/service/guest-media-hub?view=resources>



Vision And Heart

He is the man millions of Malaysians have to thank for their first fast food experience; but Tan Sri Dato' Seri Vincent Tan Chee Yioun is also the far-sighted developer who gave Malaysians a taste of home-grown hospitality in well-chosen locations.

These hands have worked hard to be where they now are. The knobbed hands on the polished wood of his boardroom table is testament to a young lad's non-privileged upbringing, his astute sense of market demand and his love of sharing new experiences. Famed for being the visionary who planted McDonald's golden arches in Malaysian soil, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Vincent Tan Chee Yioun continues to bring new experiences to his fellow Malaysians.

His latest Malaysian endeavour is the world's first wholly integrated organic spa and wellness resort in the French-themed Colmar Tropicale in Berjaya Hills. As he tells it, "Colmar was awarded a mini casino license which was revoked by the previous administration. This delayed the opening of The Chateau, as we had to re-strategize the attraction. We then came up with the concept of an organic resort, which I thought was a good idea. It will be one of our unique products, with a lot of effort put into it to make it work."

“I was impressed with what I saw and hired a French architect to fulfill the wish of Tun Dr Mahathir to bring a bit of France to Malaysia. He is someone I have the highest respect for”

Part of the total French village concept of Berjaya Hills, Colmar Tropicale was an idea mooted by former premier Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, who suggested Tan Sri Vincent visit Colmar in north Alsace, France. “I was impressed with what I saw and hired a French architect to fulfill the wish of Tun Dr Mahathir to bring a bit of France to Malaysia. He is someone I have the highest respect for,” shares Tan Sri Vincent.

The tycoon is also aware of the less than level playing field he has embarked on. “The hospitality industry in Malaysia faces many challenges from the region. Our good people go to Macau and Singapore and those who are left can’t speak good English. The change in the education system has caused proficiency in English to decline a lot. This is something that the government needs to take steps to address. Malaysia on a whole needs to improve its software. Service with a smile, gentle service – these can be taught, like anything else is taught, but it needs dedicated effort and focus. Players in the industry must be willing to pay this price, even if it is costly to train and then lose the person to Singapore. It is a good thing that our Malaysians are able to do better for themselves, but it is hard on the industry when that happens.”

Fittingly for the man whose local properties opened up the eyes of his countrymen to the beauty available within their own home shores, Tan Sri’s other ventures are as far-reaching as his vision.

Work will soon progress on a 200 key resort and 50 villa property in Okinawa, Japan, which the Four Seasons will manage; while in Malaysia, the notable Berjaya Redang Resort has already undergone a make-over,

and villas, a lot of projects would be too challenging to be viable, especially in Malaysia where room rates are very low. I am still at a loss to understand why they are so low!”



When asked about the rebranding of Berjaya Redang Resort, his candour continues, and he says, “The Berjaya brand name did not do so well with our hotels, so we are trying to work with other big name players. We will be partnering Ritz Carlton in an investment in the Maldives which will be the second Ritz Carlton Resort in the world after Krabi.”

His empire and business concerns aside, Tan Sri Vincent is also known for his philanthropy. He has committed to give away half his wealth in his lifetime, and, in response to the need of the hospitality industry, is looking at including donations via the way of scholarships from the acclaimed Berjaya University College of Hospitality to train personnel for the industry.

“I admire what Bill Gates and Warren Buffet have done. Personally I believe that most wealthy people should do this too. I give my children a good education and enough money, but to leave them everything is simply not a good thing. I’m not about to sell half my businesses in order to have money to give

away, but I made this commitment publicly in order that it can be fulfilled. We are all mortals, and I have made this decision so that Malaysian society will be enriched by it. The public has made me wealthy and so the public will benefit.”

with yet another property to be constructed in the beautiful bay of Teluk Dalam Besar, which will feature a resort and villas for sale. With astonishing candidness Tan Sri shares, “The villas will help defray the capital cost of the resort. Without residences

away, but I made this commitment publicly in order that it can be fulfilled. We are all mortals, and I have made this decision so that Malaysian society will be enriched by it. The public has made me wealthy and so the public will benefit.”

On Top Of The World

Hospitality Asia caught up with Deepak Ohri, Chief Executive Officer of lebua Hotels & Resorts and the man responsible for the creation of Dome at lebua's world renowned restaurants.

He shared his vision for the group and how lebua Bangkok dealt with the political unrest last year.

"While I am now Chief Executive Officer, I began my career in this industry as a dishwasher. Working in such a position was an important experience because it gave me perspective on something employees value dearly – fairness. This is a lesson I carry with me today because hospitality is a people business and I strive to treat my employees fairly. At lebua, our policies apply equally from the bellhop to the CEO."





Early in his career, Deepak Ohri worked for India's public sector Tourism Development Corporation which owns hospitality businesses and promotes tourism. "I developed a keen appreciation for branding on a national scale and this certainly applies to my work in Thailand because the country has worked hard to establish a national brand as a compelling tourist destination," he says, continuing that in his travels overseas he promotes the lebua properties and Thailand as great places to visit. Working directly with Kempinski India's Managing Director also gave him a preview into what it was like to lead a dynamic company. "I gained early exposure to tackling difficult decisions that have a real impact not just on the bottom line, but also on customers, employees, and owners. It prepared me for a central challenge and responsibility that comes with a position at the top – a need to focus on both corporate strategic direction and on-the-ground implementation. That dual role characterizes my leadership of lebua," shares Deepak.


His two key ambitions were to travel and to become an entrepreneur. He relates "I seized the chance to do both by opening a restaurant in Singapore." But while the business was not ultimately successful, it gave him many important lessons about business and life. "For example, I learned how to incorporate customer feedback, but also to believe in my ideas. Those lessons have been crucial to lebua's founding and expansion," he points out. Seeing that this is a business for the people, by the people, Deepak is very much a hands-on leader. He specifies, "I like to understand what is going on with all of our key stakeholders – customers, employees, owners, and suppliers. Importantly, I keep a close eye on even small details in our operations and make adjustments when required."

In the midst of the political turmoil last year, occupancies plummeted throughout Bangkok, but the CEO of Bangkok's luxury hotel observes, "Character is revealed in times of crisis." Though lebua could not control occupancy, they focused on the positives; channelling their efforts into connecting with people. "We increased our outreach efforts, connecting with customers via phone, email, and online to let them know that lebua was not only perfectly safe and open, but also that we would provide an even greater level of service than our loyal guests had come to expect." The Dome outlets – Sirocco, Breeze, Mezzaluna, Skybar and Distil – offer the world's finest in dining and entertainment, so the team focused on keeping

the spirits up at the restaurants to counter the depressed mood in the city. "We gained many loyal customers during that period. I think our very strong performance in the fourth quarter of 2010 is partly attributable to the lessons we learned and the internal development that took place during the tougher days of the second and third quarters," reflects the charismatic leader.

On juggling the interest of both owners and employees, Deepak dispels that it is not a matter of prioritizing one over the other. He sets things straight, "Many hoteliers think of this as a zero sum game. That is, what is given to the owners is taken from the employees, and vice-versa. This is a misconception. I think there is actually a great deal of alignment. Owners are happy when revenues and profits are strong. This occurs when employees are committed and therefore provide outstanding service. That, in turn, is possible when the owners provide compelling job opportunities and strong salaries and benefits that make a hotel (or any company) a desirable place to work for the long term." Summing it altogether, he says "It is very much a virtuous circle and we are fortunate to partner with owners who understand and appreciate that concept."

The next few years for lebua are all about expansion. "At our founding, we opened a single restaurant and bar on a barren rooftop in Bangkok. Since then, we have gone on to create a world-class restaurant complex, to managing some of Thailand's best performing hotels and operating an ultra-luxury lodge in New Zealand." The most recent addition to their portfolio is a boutique hotel named The Eugenia by lebua. With this success, lebua plans to extend hotel management contracts to worldwide city and resort destinations and operate its restaurants in selected cities.

His vision for the group is clear-cut. "lebua is a luxury brand first and foremost. With that mindset and all of the strategic decisions and operational imperatives that accompany it, I know lebua can continue to provide exemplary service that creates an emotional connection with our guests. Taking that concept forward, we aim to grow lebua Hotels and Resorts globally to create great experiences for more guests, great careers for more employees, and great returns for more owners." If there is one piece of advice Deepak can give in the context of generating success, it would be to young readers. He says, "If you are smart, ambitious and have a great idea to charge ahead, make that dream a reality – don't wait!" 

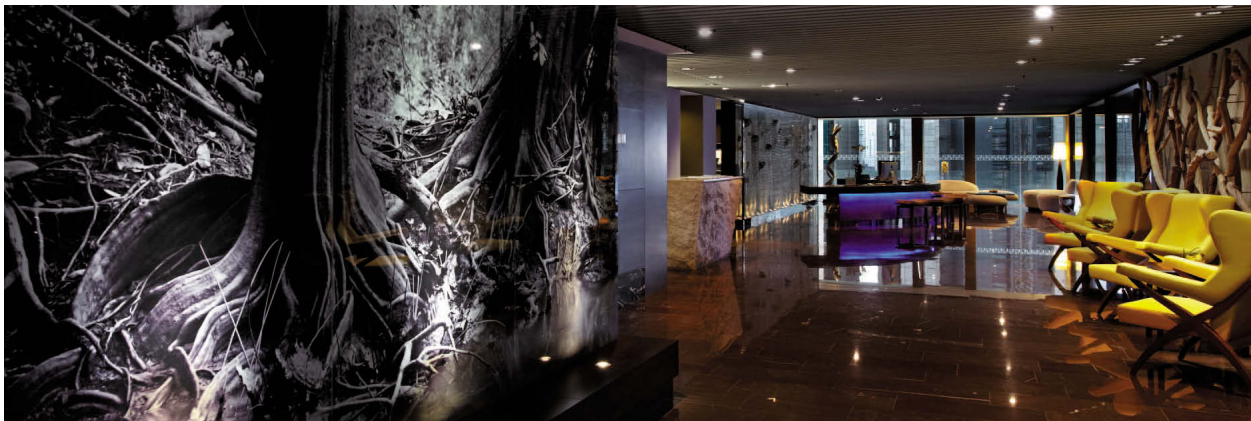


Towering Expectations

It's not rare to find the post of Financial Controller in the resumes of hotel General Managers, but Colin Ng, Executive Director of GTower Hotel Kuala Lumpur and Head - Corporate Investments for Goldis Berhad is in a league of his own. Like many finance men, there is a factual clippedness in the way he speaks; but the orange satin lining his charcoal Nehru jacket hints of something more dynamic than just number crunching.

GTower, in a way, stands for what Ng is, and the values he holds dear. He describes himself as “being thrown into the deep” when asked how he got his start in hospitality. “The hospitality business was pretty much new to me when Goldis decided to build a new building. I’ve travelled extensively in my career – everywhere but Antarctica and the Atlantic – and I used these experiences when deciding what GTower would offer. We

concentrated on features relevant to business travellers – no bath tub, but good showers; desks designed for long term comfort and which did not face a mirror (who wants to look at themselves for a few hours when they are working?), comfortable beds and walk-in wardrobes for long-stay guests, TVs in the bathrooms instead of phone, and a Club floor designed to do business in, with three soundproof boardrooms, concierge and secretarial services.”



As Executive Director of the whole building, Ng sees himself not as a hotel manager, but a man in charge of a building that just happens to have a hotel in it. It is largely thanks to Ng that Malaysia can boast its first truly green hotel. A towering accolade to style, function as well as sustainability, GTower is housed in Malaysia's first Green and Smart building.

"I grew up in Australia and so, am a very Green person. But it was still a learning process for myself, our consultants and our operations team when it came to designing and building a Green building," shares Ng. By rethinking key elements from site orientation to harnessing the latest sustainable green building technologies and systems available, GTower Hotel functions more energy efficiently than a building of similar size. Energy consumption is reduced via the use of double glazed low e-glass, allowing for maximum entry of natural light while minimising the amount of heat transmission. Goldis also invested in state-of-the-art chilled water centralized air-con chillers which

circulate cool air through the rooms but at lower energy consumption than traditional air-conditioning systems. All light fixtures are low energy LED, while the waste heat generated from the air conditioners are harvested using a sophisticated heat exchanger, providing warm water for the infinity pool which uses salt to condition the water. All sanitary and tap fittings are green rated for water efficiency, and key water catchments areas were designed to harvest rainwater which irrigates the green roofs and green walls throughout the building. These in-built green walls play an essential role as natural air purifiers, absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen in return to help maintain air quality," Ng reels the facts off as if they are part of him, which they well might be.

The one thing he cannot overemphasize is this: it does not cost more to build a Green building. "I am numbers-oriented and not being from the hospitality line, I used the very powerful word 'Why?' I asked why we could not furnish the hotel with recycled furniture, and questioned the need for 500-thread

count sheets when there was a marginal difference between 350 thread count which would also need less energy to wash and dry. The wood in the Club floor was recycled from a 15-year-old building and is chengal wood (one of the hardest and most expensive tropical hard woods). Our carpets are green-certified, with the base made out of recycled carpets. We did a lot more with less. Yes, we had to produce a training video in Bangladeshi and Indonesian for our maintenance staff, but they have taken ownership of the concept and understand why we do things a certain way."

Keen to promote the efficiency of a Green hotel, Ng throws open the doors when other hoteliers come to visit. "I hope our efforts can lead to the industry being more sustainable. Sustainability is not only about planting trees and greening the environment, it is about saving energy and reducing our carbon footprints in ways like using local ingredients in our restaurants. There is very little cost in going green," stresses the man to whom green is the new colour of passion. ■

Primed And Ready



New Zealander John Primmer embodies the best of what New Zealand has to offer. There is a steady sense of a man who gets the job done, but there is also the quintessentially Kiwi charm which breaks through in the tilt of a grin, and the sunshine cheerfulness of a man who knows he is doing what he loves best. As Hard Rock Hotel Penang's General Manager, Primmer also embodies the sunny nature of Malaysia's Pearl of the Orient. Having worked in Bukit Merah Laketown Resort, he is no stranger to Malaysian recreational properties.

He says, "Coming from a small country like New Zealand, I find Malaysia to be much more dynamic in terms of business and lifestyle. More challenges, opportunities and varied cultures. With that comes great food, entertainment, cheap travel and of course awesome people. Having previously opened two hotels in Malaysia I guess I was just lucky to land the GM post here and perhaps my personality suited the brand, as well."

He is completely enamoured with his General Managership and frankly confesses, "I tell you it will be hard going back to any other hotel brand after this! The job is not only running a hotel but a large merchandising operation, musical based events, themed restaurant (Hard Rock Café) as well as keeping the staff energized and rocking at all times. We try to infuse fun and music into everything we do to create a truly unique experience for guests."

Not everything is rock and roll, because he also is entrusted to paint a clearer picture of what the brand is all about and what one can expect staying at a hotel like this. "Some people have different expectations of what a Hard Rock holiday is all about. We are careful in our marketing and positioning to ensure the message is understood by the local market and spans different cultures," he says earnestly.

Citing a sense of humour to be one of the most important things to have in a job like his, Primmer comments, "It's really important in any hotel environment because of the long hours and dealing with lots of different people daily. The need for the fun factor is probably more prominent in a brand like Hard Rock because of the 'coolness' of the differentiators of our music, memorabilia and merchandise. When we look for staff we are looking for a great smile, attitude and someone that won't mind dancing on the bar!"

Asked about the uniqueness of his particular Hard Rock Hotel, Primmer gushes,

"It was the first absolute beachfront Hard Rock hotel in the world and the facilities are wide ranging covering several market segments. With this we have wonderful family facilities (kids club, teens club, 26,000 sq ft swimming pool and activities). Our meeting facilities are varied with full secretarial services, many options for outdoor parties, dinners as well as a fully comprehensive team building product. The young trendy types are also well catered for with excellent live bands nightly in the Hard Rock café and live entertainment in the Lobby lounge five nights a week with a great range of cocktails and other party starters. So we are a multiservice product in a resort location whereby some of the other Hard Rocks are more corporate or casino products."

A particular necessity for this post was music knowledge. He chuckles when he says, "I've had to brush up on my music knowledge! However with three teenagers there is always music around even at home. Old school does not cut it anymore! I have to know the current stuff both worldwide and locally!" **ha**



Great Decisions Come From The Top

An organization is only as good as its processes, so when a hotel has its Chief Executive Officer calling the shots on pest management, the chances are that no stone is left unturned and no cockroach eliminated in the quest of superior hygiene and sanitation. Michael Sengol Chief Executive Officer, Meritus Hotels & Resorts talks to us about why he takes this issue so personally.

Why does your organization take hygiene and sanitation issues seriously when it is a back of house issue?

The health and safety of our guests and employees are our utmost priority; hence hygiene and sanitation issues are never just “back-of-house” issues to us. Because of the dynamic nature of our business, we have to be on top of our game in terms of hygiene and sanitation initiatives in every aspect of hotel operations – whether it’s the personal hygiene of food handlers, or how effectively public areas are kept clean and disinfected, and so forth. Every possible area must be looked into and audited to ensure it conforms to stringent industry standards. Any potential issue must be immediately addressed from the outset, and this is only possible with the training and proactive vigilance of employees, coupled with working with the right partners who have proven expertise in their field of hygiene and sanitation management.

Tell us about your pest control experiences.

Mandarin Orchard Singapore has been using the services of PestBusters for the last 20 years, way back when the latter was known as ‘Quicksilver.’ This partnership has continued over the last two decades because of PestBusters’ committed and professional service using innovative products and technology, whilst keeping their rates competitive. They deliver what they promise and their follow-up service is thorough, professional, and prompt. Most of all, the focused training that PestBusters offers bring so much value to their partners.



In this business, it’s quite a feat to effectively keep the problem of bugs and roaches under control and we’ve managed to do that with the aid of PestBusters. They use safe and highly effective chemicals from the United States, versus low-cost and less effective ones commonly used in the industry.

How long does the process take to show results?

Problems that arise are usually eliminated by the first week. If the problem is with cockroaches, the source is identified and treated within 24 hours, and closely monitored daily until there is little or no evidence. Mandarin Orchard Singapore has been in existence for the last 40 years, half of which time we have been working with PestBusters. With over a thousand

rooms in a prime location and thousands of international visitors in and out all day, we have maintained impeccable hygiene and sanitation standards – an achievement owing largely to the professional help of PestBusters. The real benefits are both immediate and long term. PestBusters’ committed response time is within an hour, whilst their follow-up service is frequent and continuous.

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

Without question. Imagine how lack of hygiene and sanitation could lead to disastrous consequences! Particularly in a people-centric business like the hospitality industry, one can never compromise or put enough emphasis on such issues. Organizations should engage a reputable, responsive, and responsible pest service provider. One cannot discount as well the need to educate and train staff to be vigilant about the health and sanitation of their respective areas.

Would you recommend PestBusters services to others?

Without hesitation. Throughout the years that I’ve dealt with them professionally, I’ve highly recommended PestBusters to my contacts. Their professionalism, innovation, and expertise in what they do contribute significantly to your peace of mind as a hotel operator, freeing you to focus on other aspects of your business. ■



Advance, Australia Fair!

Top row (left to right): Pronto Fresco antipasti; The best lamb from Hillside Lamb makes for great eating; Katnook Estate has won two Jimmy Watson trophies

Bottom row (left to right): Goulburn Valley Beef is handpicked – measured to a certain size, specification and grain of meat; Pronto Fresco is owned by a second-generation Italian; Stellar cheeses from Tasmanian Heritage

For the driest inhabited continent on Earth, Australia has made huge inroads in bringing great produce and products to the world. It is a rare professional kitchen which does not boast of at least a shelf's worth of products from the country with the sixth largest land mass in the world. It is also increasingly common to find Australian wines topping sommelier's recommendations at some of Asia's most well-known restaurants and dining establishments.

Australia's human capital has also helped to uphold and elevate the standards of the hospitality and food and beverage industries. It is therefore no surprise when Ross Bray, Senior Trade & Investment Commissioner, Australian Trade Commission – Philippines and Leader – Food & Beverage Industry Team (ASEAN Markets) shares, "Our people are Australia's biggest exports to the international hospitality market. I've met so many Australians working in the hospitality sector across South East Asia. They're trained in Australia and now travel the world influencing cuisine."

Their influence to cuisine, of course includes exports like frozen and chilled beef, milk, yogurt, seafood (oysters, abalone and mussels); cheese and wines. And although an indirect export for food service, wheat for milling into flour is Australia's largest export to the region.

In Southeast Asia, Indonesia ranks as Australia's largest market. Bray says, "Indonesia represents one-third of our exports (primarily wheat and beef), followed by Singapore at about 20 percent and then Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines."

On average, Australia exports almost A\$90 million of Australian wine annually to the region, making ASEAN as a whole, Australia's fifth largest export wine market after the US, UK, Canada and China. Of the ten member countries of ASEAN, Singapore is the largest export market for wine at about half that value. This is followed by Malaysia with A\$22.4 million and Thailand at A\$11 million. The Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam make up most of the rest."



Wines From Down Under

Southeast Asia's love and respect for Australian wines has grown steadily over the years. This is, in no small part, due to the dedication and care that Australians themselves have poured into their vines and wines.

The McGuigan love affair with winemaking began with Owen McGuigan who was born in the Hunter Valley in 1869. As wine started to find a home in the Hunter Valley, he was the first McGuigan to venture into this exciting new endeavour. Four generations and over a century later, McGuigan now spans the best wine regions in Australia, with its heart in the Hunter Valley and a second home in the Barossa Valley. In Australia, McGuigan Wines has tremendous success with the number one selling red wine in the country - the McGuigan Black Label Red.

Voyager Estate is located in the famous Margaret River wine district of Western Australia, and is one of the region's older vineyards, being established in 1978. Known for its cool climate characteristics and exceptional soils, Margaret River produces more than its share of Australia's iconic wines and is recognized worldwide as a premium wine-growing region. The Wright family acquired the property in 1991 and, led by Michael Wright, set out to grow and establish it as one of Margaret River's superior wine producers. In 2010, Voyager Estate joined the ranks of Australia's most respected and revered wines, with the inclusion of the Voyager Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot in Langton's Classification of Australian Wine V for the first time.



Katnook Estate's vineyards stretch over 198 hectares on the fabled Terra Rossa soil. Katnook Estate quality begins with growing grapes which capture Classic Coonawarra flavour, while minimizing environmental impact. Katnook Estate has won two Jimmy Watson trophies (in 1987 and 1998) and two major trophies from the UK based 2003 International Wine and Spirit Competition (Best Vintage Red Wine of the Year and Best Australian Red Wine). Odyssey Cabernet Sauvignon and Katnook Estate Cabernet Sauvignon have both earned a place in Australia's Langton classification, the 'honour roll' of fine Australian wine.

Taking the descriptor 'flowery' to a new level, Sence Rose is a white wine infused with rose nectar boasting a delicate balance of sweetness and acidity that delivers a soft fusion on the front palate, whilst providing a pleasing dry finish. Sence Rose is the perfect accompaniment to spicy Asian cuisine and good friends.



Top row (left to right): Australia exports almost A\$90 million of Australian wine annually to the ASEAN region; McGuigan now spans the best wine regions in Australia

Second row (left to right): ASEAN is Australia's fifth largest export wine market; Margaret River produces more than its share of Australia's iconic wines
Above: McGuigan Wines has tremendous success with McGuigan Black Label Red



Above: Ross Bray, Senior Trade & Investment Commissioner, Australian Trade Commission – Philippines and Leader – Food & Beverage Industry Team (ASEAN Markets)

Far right (from the top): Pronto Fresco zucchini antipasto; Only the best pumpkins make it into Pronto Fresco's antipasto; Eggplant antipasto

Bringing Australia To The World

As Team Leader, ASEAN Food and Beverage, Bray's role is to work with his F&B team across the region to bring Australian exporters and customers together. Bray comments, "What's made our job easier is being able to promote the lower tariff rates for many food items from the new ASEAN – Australia – New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) and previous FTAs. We're lucky that Australia has the advantage of proximity to ASEAN importers and can supply orders at short notice across the region. Austrade works closely with our partner organizations, such as Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA); Australian Pork Limited (APL); Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL) and Dairy Australia, just to name a few, to promote meat, dairy and fresh produce into the region. For example we have been running a series of seminars on the fresh produce sector presenting on Australia's seasonality, traceability systems and point of sale material to wholesalers, supermarkets and food service customers. Promoting these key sectors is an important strategy to pull through emerging F&B exports to the region."



When asked what he has found to be the most successful way of introducing new F&B products to existing markets, Bray muses, "Both the food retail and food service segments have different approaches. For retail, the 'Australia week or month' supermarket programmes run by stores are a very effective way to introduce new products to customers especially when combined with store tastings.

For the service sector it's all about partnering Australian producers with the right company in each market. The importer/distributor needs to have a good network across the hospitality industry with complementary products in their line-up. Get it right, and strong relationships will be created with the F&B managers/chefs/purchasing teams at the hotels and restaurants."

Companies like Classic Fine Foods are an integral link in this network. Their representatives comb the world for the best flavours and gourmet experiences, and select their product lines by stringent quality, deliverability and good practise standards.

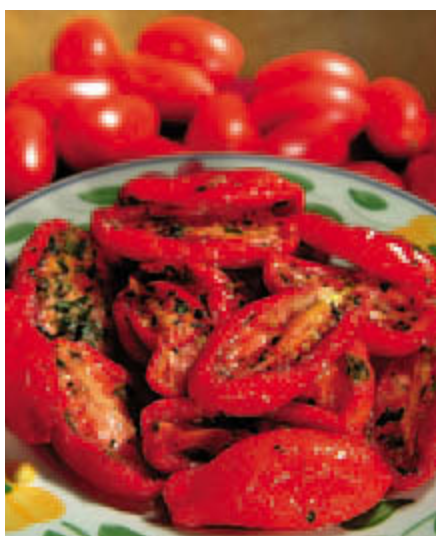
Frederic Carriere, Sales Manager, Classic Fine Foods Sdn Bhd says that his company selects suppliers based on quality and supply. "We worked with Goulburn Valley Beef for six months before we were sure that there would be no complaints. In fact, we visited Goulburn Valley, Victoria to look at their pastures and their 100 percent British breed stock of Black Angus, Hereford. Goulburn Valley Beef is handpicked; measured to a certain size, specification and grain of meat. There is a 20-25 percent difference in price but it is value for money, with consistent quality. When people see it on the menu, they know what they will get. Most Malaysian restaurants serve grain-fed beef, but grass-fed, like Goulburn Valley Beef is much beefier. and because it is free-range, it tastes more like European meat, which appeals to the more well-travelled Malaysians who dine at places like Prime, Le Meridien Kuala Lumpur."

Agnes Ng, Director of Operations, believes that Australian products have a strong selling point in their food safety standards. "Australian products are very safe. You can trace the culinary path, from field to plate. Each process is documented and this gives them an edge over other producers. That is also why we carry Hillside Lamb. The meat is sourced from animals that have been specifically bred for meat, mainly consisting of lambs produced from a Merino mother with a ram father from a breed that has a genetic base with essential characteristics for the production of lambs for meat purposes, such as the British breeds Poll Dorset, and South Suffolk."

Another Australian product line carried by Classic Fine Foods is Tasmanian Heritage Cheese. As finicky as the French are known to be, Carriere goes on record to say, "Tasmanian Heritage Cheeses are as good as French cheeses. I did

Top left: Meat is among one of Australia's famed exports

Bottom row (left to right): Pronto Fresco owns the fields from which the tomatoes come from; Tomatoes are manually checked for perfection at Pronto Fresco
Below (from the top): Split green olives from Pronto Fresco; Sliced mushroom antipasti





Top right: Australian cheeses combine the best of European tradition and the best Australian dairy
Right (from the left): Tasmanian Heritage is part of National Foods; Dairy good from Down Under



not believe in Australian cheeses, but was quite surprised at the first taste. Tasmanian Heritage keeps traditional European cheese making know-how and infuses it with Australian ingredients and touch." Tasmanian Heritage is part of National Foods, an Australian conglomerate with a significant share of the dairy, specialty cheese, soy and fruit juice markets, with operations extending across every Australian state as well as New Zealand and Asia.

Vegetables and fruits including table grapes, citrus, beans and carrots are Australia's biggest sellers, due again, Bray believes, to Australia's reputation for high quality. Bray adds, "Apart from being clean and green, our counter seasonal advantage has led to increasing levels of orders as the hospitality sector demands year round supply for their customers."

Pronto Fresco may not technically be counted as fresh produce, but their products certainly began that way. Classic Fine Foods' Ng draws the culinary trail for the product. "People think that

antipasto is the same across all brands, but that is not true. Pronto Fresco owns the fields from which the tomatoes come from, so the quality of the tomatoes is standardized. They use canola oil as opposed to olive oil because the function of the oil is to preserve the vegetables used in the antipasto. Canola oil is virtually tasteless, meaning diners will only taste the ingredients and their prime freshness. This company also uses 95 percent Australian sourced ingredients, and utilize machines only when absolutely necessary – they have people checking every tomato!"

This level of pride in their products, the accountability factor in the production process, complemented by stringent product governance, and clear, targeted promotion and marketing continue to ensure Australian products are chosen, used and lauded at every level, all the time. Truly, Australia has earned its wealth for toil! **h**

In Malaysia McGuigan wines are distributed by Luen Heng F&B Sdn Bhd
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Fax: +60 3 91730498

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Making The Cut With Culinary Challenges



What are the positives of using uncommon cuts?

There are three traditional cuts of the beef which is commonly consumed, while the rest of the beef is entitled to application beyond what people think. For instance, the shoulder blade is a moving muscle so it's not designed to be cut up, but if you cut it up and stir fry, it's tender and beautiful. The point is to understand cooking styles and methods – whether the meat is to be grilled, stir fried, etc. Beef has so many cuts and each cut is suited to different cooking methods. It is our job to educate the consumers on that part.

Have the industry players and consumers been receptive to the rare cuts?

Absolutely. Butchers, chefs, retailers and consumers love the different cuts.

How have you gone about educating consumers and industry players about trying the various cuts?

We have a lot of technical trainers and staff on board who have been travelling around talking to butchers, retailers and chefs. We spend a lot of time educating chefs, training them on how these rare cuts should be cooked. We also have a library of educational material and we work with commercial or retail outlets.

What are the costs?

Beef is a more expensive protein; it does take a lot longer to grow. Beef also comes with a lot of benefits. It's more nutritional than other protein sources. So you don't have to eat as much beef as you need with other protein sources to get the same nutrition. There is a common misconception where people think they need to buy tenderloin to enjoy beef but actually beef can be enjoyed in many different flavours and cooking methods. **ha**

How has the Black Box Culinary Competition impacted the industry?

We all have a very strong commitment to corporate social responsibility. I don't think the job is simply just to sell meat - that is just the commercial transaction. We are here to make sure that the consumers understand the various cuts of meats. With the culinary competitions we organize, we are encouraging innovation in cooking and in this case, promoting the use of uncommon cuts in cooking.

What other competitions are in store?

We are now working with chefs in Malaysia and Singapore to focus on Chinese cuisine. I believe there's a lot of potential for modern Chinese cuisine. We're working to form an ambassador programme that will become our model for training and development of young chefs in Chinese cuisine.



Aaron Iori, Regional Manager of Southeast Asia & Greater China for Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) shares with Hospitality Asia how the Black Box Culinary Competition has encouraged innovation in cooking and has raised the standards of competition among aspiring chefs. He further addresses the benefits of using the uncommon cuts.

Why Mattresses Matter

Hospitality Asia spoke with Ronald M. Hendrickson and Dr. Coralee Van Egmond of the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) who were spokespersons at King Koil's Healthy Sleep Outreach Programme. Here, we get professional tips to choosing the right mattress.



Ronald M Hendrickson, Deputy Executive Director and Dr Coralee Van Egmond, Director of Professional Development (ICA)

How did the partnership between the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) and King Koil come about?

The partnership resulted from a mutual concern for healthy sleep and in recognition of a need in the sleep products world for a scientifically designed spine-support sleep system. King Koil executives approached the ICA expressing a desire to scientifically design an optimal spine-support mattress. For more than forty years ICA, a worldwide scientific, educational and research organization of doctors of chiropractic, acknowledged as the premier spine care experts, have worked in a unique partnership with King Koil Sleep Products.

Why is it important to use a chiropractic mattress instead of a normal mattress?

Through the ICA-King Koil partnership, industry has worked with science to design and produce mattresses which provide an optimal platform for healthy sleep for people of all ages, shapes

and sizes. Using their extensive anatomical and neurological knowledge and understanding of the needs of the structures of the human spine – bones, muscles and above all the important nerves that run through and radiate from the spinal column, ICA chiropractors have developed an array of innovative design prescriptions that provide a straight-line means of support for the spine. These designs, applied by King Koil in the construction of their mattresses, seek to help consumers avoid spinal distortions that come from imbalanced or sagging support and the potential health consequences that often result.

What kind of considerations should be taken into choosing the right mattress?

SIZE : You need to identify the right size mattress for your personal needs. This means providing room for easy, comfortable movement for yourself, and if you share the bed, without disturbing your spouse. Too small a sleep surface puts you in competition for sleep space and risks disturbing both you and your partner's slumber since most healthy sleepers move from 35 to 60 times a night. This usually includes at least a dozen full body turns that follow the various stages of the sleep cycle.

SUPPORT : Sound support is essential for healthy sleep. A good mattress and foundation will continuously support your body at all points and keep your spine in the same "straight line" configuration as a person with good posture in a standing position. Pay special attention to your shoulders, hips, and lower back—the heaviest parts of your body. The mattress should contour to those heavier pressure points, keeping your spine in the same vital straight line configuration. Here you must test the candidate mattress yourself, and not rely on what the label might say. One brand's "FIRM" might be too hard for your needs, or not firm enough.

COMFORT : How does a candidate mattress feel? On top of the support level of a mattress there must be an appropriate dimension of comfortable



Left : King Koil's Spinal Guard Pocket Spring Bedset
Below : King Koil's Residency XL Full Bedset

cushioning materials that both offer a welcoming embrace and provide a breathable sleep surface that will help you maintain an optimal sleep-body temperature. In terms of healthy spine support, look for the firmest, most supportive mattress you find most comfortable.

DURABILITY : You want a mattress that is well constructed with quality materials. These factors will determine the service life of your mattress more than any others.

CONSTRUCTION : There is one final technical element that requires the shopper's close attention, and that is coil count and coil construction. Metal coils are what make a mattress supportive and at the same time responsive to the weight and pressure points of the body. Coil counts and how coils are configured are indicators of quality. The higher the coil count in relation to the surface area, the greater the strength and durability of the mattress. As a basic guideline, a standard twin-size mattress should have 300 or more, a queen size mattress 375 or more, and a king should have 450 or more.

WARRANTY : Manufacturers of high-quality mattresses are not at all hesitant to offer a long-term warranty. A top-quality sleep system should come with a minimum warranty of 10 years. Anything less is a red flag signalling the wary consumer to look at another brand or model.

Do stiff or hard surfaced mattresses necessarily improve one's posture and back condition?

A hard surface is no guarantee of proper spine support and will not necessarily improve one's



posture. Firm, long-lasting support is, however, essential and while every person's needs may be different, all consumers should look for the best possible combination of comfort and support.

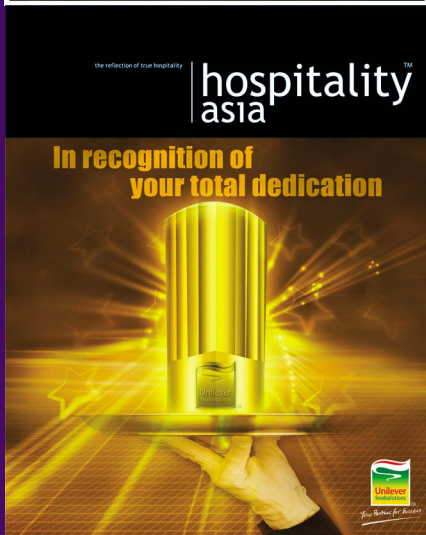
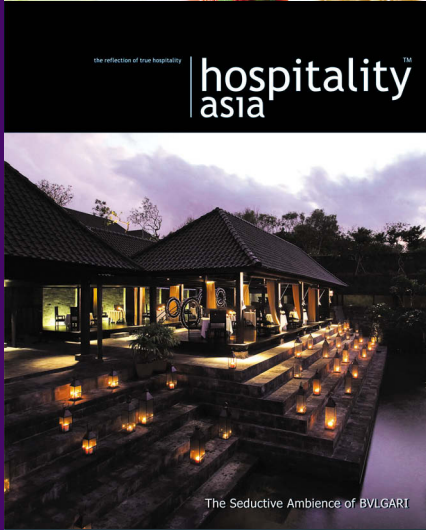
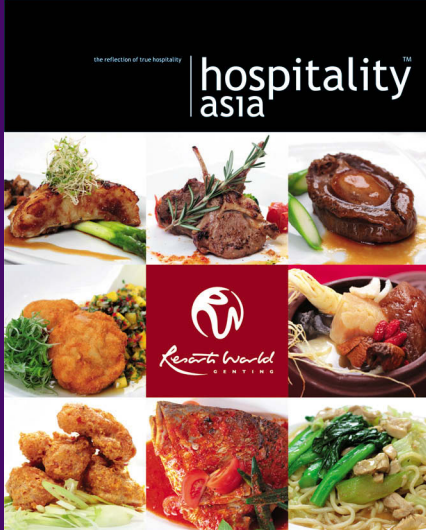


In terms of pricing, how much should one pay on an average for a queen-sized chiropractic mattress?

Like every other major purchase, the better the quality, the more you are likely to pay for a well-built, well-designed mattress. In today's market, if you actively shop around, you can find a well-built queen-sized unit with an excellent guarantee for around \$US 1,000. There are many bargains for much less, but the reduced quality will extract a price of its own, as such products will not last and the quality of your sleep will be much less. **h**

For more information, contact:
Kingkoil Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd
Wisma King Koil
2C-5, Level 5
Jalan SS6/6, Kelana Jaya
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Harvey John Thompson
General Manager
Le Méridien Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Le Méridien Kuala Lumpur recently announced the appointment of Harvey John Thompson as General Manager. Hailing from Australia, Thompson's passion for the hospitality industry has earned him 27 years of experience and knowledge. He will be leading his team at Le Meridien Kuala Lumpur to embark on its next phase of growth. Top on his list are getting to know the hotel's customers and continuing to deliver service that exceeds expectations.

Thompson's foray into the hospitality industry began as Trainee Manager in Bronte Inn, an 80-room Boutique Hotel in Sydney, Australia at the age of 19 and working in several hotels in both room operations and Food and Beverage, including a brief period in France running a ski chalet. He started his career in ITT Sheraton in 1988 at the Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas, North Queensland Australia and then moved to The Sheraton Noosa Resort, Queensland, Australia in 1994 as Rooms Division Manager, and gradually forged a career that has taken him to Fiji, Hong Kong and Malaysia. Thompson moved from Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia as General Manager to take up the new posting in Le Meridien Kuala Lumpur. **ha**



Michel Horn

Vice President – Operations
Centara Hotels & Resorts

Gerd Steeb, President of Centara Hotels & Resorts has announced the promotion of Michel Horn from General Manager of Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld to Vice President – Operations of Centara Hotels & Resorts.

Horn will be responsible for the operations of all Centara properties in Bangkok, the north of Thailand, Hua Hin, Hadyai, and internationally, covering hotels and resorts in the Middle East, India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia, China, and the Philippines.

Horn, who is French, graduated with a Higher Degree in Hotel Management from the University of Hotel & Management in Strasbourg, France. He has over 30 years' experience in hotel management, including 13 years in Accor, and has worked as General Manager in various countries including France, UAE, United Kingdom, Singapore, China, Cambodia, South Korea and Thailand. He also worked with Centara Samui Beach Resort, Samui as General Manager in 1994 for the hotel's pre-opening.

Horn was Managing Director of Hotel Management & Consulting Services Pte Ltd and Cambodiana Investment (S) Pte Ltd in Singapore for 10 years. Prior to being promoted to Vice President – Operations, he was General Manager of the Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld, the successful flagship hotel of the group, for three years. **ha**



Andre Brulhart
General Manager
Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort
Pattaya, Thailand

Andre Brulhart has been named General Manager of the Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort Pattaya. Brulhart is a Swiss national and a graduate of the Lausanne Hotel Management School in Switzerland. He has over 20 years hotel experience in Europe, USA and Asia, beginning his career at the Hong Kong Hilton, Kahala Hilton, The Regent Bangkok, Sofitel Metropole Hanoi, The Plaza Athenee Bangkok and the Sofitel Centara Grand Bangkok.

Prior to joining Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort Pattaya, Brulhart was the General Manager of Centara Karon Resort Phuket for three years. The Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort Pattaya is the first truly themed hotel in Thailand. Located on Wong Amat Beach in North Pattaya, the five-star resort hotel is designed in a Lost World concept and as a destination hotel located directly on the beach with its own jungle, water park and diverse attractions represents an exciting new opportunity for Thailand's tourism and MICE industries. **ha**



Goh Tee Kay

Director of Sales
PARKROYAL Serviced Suites
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Goh Tee Kay has been appointed Director of Sales for PARKROYAL Serviced Suites Kuala Lumpur. Goh will be responsible for formulating and executing sales and marketing strategies for the property. Prior to this, he was Director of Sales at Doubletree by Hilton Kuala Lumpur. He commenced his travel and hospitality career with Mayflower Acme Tours and thereafter held various senior sales positions with Berjaya Hotels & Resorts, Pangkor Island Beach Resort and Lanson Place Ambassador Row Kuala Lumpur. Featuring 287 well-appointed studios, one and two-bedroom suites, PARKROYAL Serviced Suites Kuala Lumpur is located adjacent to the famous food street Jalan Alor and Bukit Bintang, and mega malls such as KLCC, Pavilion and Lot 10. It is the ideal home for travelers and families who desire comfort, a local connection and a great base from which to explore their new home and surroundings. **ha**



Patcharee Bunma

Director of Sales and Marketing
Aloft Bangkok – Sukhumvit 11,
Thailand

Aloft Bangkok – Sukhumvit 11 is pleased to announce the appointment of Patcharee Bunma as Director of Sales and Marketing of the hotel. The first Aloft hotel in Thailand and Southeast Asia, Aloft Bangkok – Sukhumvit 11 is scheduled to open in early 2011.

Patcharee will be responsible for maximizing overall revenue and fostering relationships with the hotel's leisure, business, group and meetings clientele. "Patcharee is a great addition to the Aloft team!" said General Manager Brendan Daly. "Patcharee's extensive experience in the hospitality business, entrepreneurial spirit and excellent communication and interpersonal skills will play a key role as we establish the first Aloft hotel in this country." "The Aloft concept is the perfect fit for Bangkok's Sukhumvit area – it's fresh, stylish, urban and very forward-thinking. I am looking forward to working with the team here." commented Patcharee.

Patcharee brings with her a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry. In her previous role as Director of Sales at Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel & Towers in Bangkok, she led a team of 11 associates who reported directly to her, maintaining motivational levels to ensure optimal productivity. Prior to Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Patcharee was the Senior Events Coordinator at Diethelm Events, known as one of the most creative agencies in the market. **ha**



Jennifer Chin

Senior Business Development Director
Mandarin Orchard
Singapore

Mandarin Orchard Singapore is pleased to welcome Jennifer Chin as its Senior Business Development Director. Chin will oversee the Sales and Marketing division and work hand in hand with Revenue Management to optimize yield opportunities at Mandarin Orchard, the premier city hotel long regarded as the icon of world-class hospitality in Singapore.

Chin began her hospitality career at the former Harbour View Dai-ichi in 1990 where her unwavering pursuit of sales and focus in building client relationships saw her rise through the ranks to become Assistant Director of Sales in 1997. At the Marina Mandarin, Jennifer played a key role in formulating and implementing sales strategies to realign the hotel's corporate market segment. As Director of Sales and Marketing at Crown Hotel at Orchard, she successfully repositioned the hotel's business mix through effective sales and pricing tactics between 2005 and 2006.

Prior to joining the Mandarin Orchard, Chin was the Director of Sales and Marketing at Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel where she was responsible for room sales, reservations and banquet sales and delivered stellar results, comprising 70 percent of the hotel's total revenue. **ha**

Peter Watt-Pringle

Corporate Social Responsibility
Manager
Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and
Spa, Maldives

Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa, Maldives recently appointed Peter Watt-Pringle as Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, exemplifying its commitment to be a leader in citizenship and sustainable development.

In his role, Watt-Pringle will ensure the five key areas of the company's corporate social responsibility – comprising stakeholder relations, environment, health and safety, supply chain and employees – are fully embraced at the resort.

He will also head the resort's sustainability programmes, including the "embrace" and "sanctuary" projects. Holding a Master's degree in Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, he has eight years of experience in marine biology. As part of his responsibilities,

Watt-Pringle will develop and implement best environmental practices and manage the Eco Centre turtles and manta rays conservation programmes as well as environmental activities. **ha**



Miki Sia

Director of Events Management
Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort &
Spa, Penang

The Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa and her sister property, the Golden Sands Resort by Shangri-La, Penang, recently expanded the events team with the appointment of Miki Sia as Director of Events Management and Ardi Suardi Rosli as Senior Events Manager.

Sia brings with her eight years of experience in event management and guest services having worked at the Traders Hotel Kuala Lumpur and Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

She was selected as a Shangri-La Corporate Management Trainee for six months based at Shangri-La Hotel, Guangzhou in China prior to her appointment at the Penang Shangri-La Resorts.

She honed her skills in event management by handling functions and groups of more than 100 rooms, including the 20th Video Urology World Congress, the 2008 International Petroleum Technology Conference, the 24th International Air Cargo Forum, the 14th World Route Development Forum and the 16th World Congress on IT. **ha**



Holger Jacobs

Director of Sales and Marketing
St. Regis Bangkok, Thailand

Holger Jacobs, named Director of Sales and Marketing, comes to The St. Regis Bangkok from his current Director of Sales and Marketing position at Starwood Hotels and Resorts' The St. Regis Beijing.

Holger brings with him the successful launch and opening of two luxury resorts throughout his nine years' experience as Director of Sales and Marketing within various hotels and resorts, and in-depth knowledge of Thailand's markets.

His responsibilities will focus on all domestic and international sales and marketing responsibilities, as well as business development. His ability to lead and adapt with ease to the diverse requirements of his position make Holger a great asset to The St. Regis Bangkok team. **ha**



Food and Hotel Malaysia 2011

Discover And Experience The Latest

Acclaimed as Malaysia's Official Food and Hotel Show, the most awaited and eagerly anticipated Food and Hotel Malaysia (FHM 2011) returns! Mark down 20 to 23 September 2011 in your calendars as FHM will be bringing back the big names in the food and hospitality industry to the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre to showcase some of their latest products as well as to engage in serious business talks with the buyers of the industry.

This year's show will be hosting more than 800 exhibitors, six international pavilions, and is expected to welcome over 20,000 buyers and key decision-makers from more than 50 countries and regions. To date, 80 percent of exhibition space has already been sold cementing the fact that FHM 2011 will exceed all expectations and dominate the trade exhibition field in the food and hospitality industry in Malaysia.



Top row (from the left): A crowd of trade visitors observing a product demonstration; The most comprehensive trade show in the Malaysian food & hotel industry

Above: Buyers and vendors discussing business deals

FHM 2011 is an unrivalled platform for the initiating of new business ventures as well as cementing on-going procurement projects. Food & beverage and hospitality industry experts and professionals can expect to witness an extensive of products from big names like Lee's Frozen Food, HSH Frozen Foods, Piau Kee, Bakers' Choice, Boncafe, SUSTA, Dras Engineering, Thai Stainless Steel, Synerchem, Eurochef, Karcher Cleaning Systems, Green Master Global Fine Food, MSM Equipment, Win Far Trading, DH Hygiene, Silikal GmbH, Kian Contract, Pacific West Foods, D & S Exports, Quality Associates, English Hotbreads, US Meat Export Federation, Sinmag Bakery Equipment, NSF Asia-Pacific, Winterhalter and many more!

The four-day exhibition will include PROPAK Malaysia 2011, the sixth Malaysian International Food Processing & Packaging Technology with exhibitors from packaging and processing solutions industry within its profile. FHM 2011 will also feature Halal Food Asia 2011 and Bakery & Confectionery Malaysia 2011.

Culinaire Malaysia 2011, the region's largest culinary competition will once again be held in conjunction with FHM 2011. Seize the opportunity to meet and mingle with some of the country's best chefs. Culinaire Malaysia this year will see more participants and a lot more exciting programmes lined up. A jointly organized event by the Malaysian Association of Hotels, Chefs Association of Malaysia and the Malaysian Food & Beverage Executives Association, Culinaire Malaysia will be the ultimate platform for chefs at all levels to showcase their talents and skills.

Food & Hotel Malaysia 2011 is proudly organized by Malaysia's leading exhibition organizer, Malaysian Exhibition Services Sdn Bhd (MES), and marketed worldwide by Singapore based International Expo Management Ltd (IEM) and London based Overseas Exhibition Services Ltd (OES). For further information on exhibiting opportunities and visiting the exhibition, visit the official website at www.foodandhotelmalaysia.com

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In Support Of The Third World

By David Bowden

This year I've made a few overseas journeys and already have propped up several developing economies out of all proportion to what they've returned to me as a tourist. If you listen to tourism officials, you quickly appreciate how tourism is contributing to the economies of many regional countries. They all want my tourist dollar and they're eager to have me holiday in their respective countries so that I can impart my hard-earned cash on a welcoming populace.

Some are so keen to have me visit that they make me jump through several hoops before I even pack my bag. Regular travellers are familiar with the visa requirements for entering these countries that are seemingly so eager to milk me of my loot. Am I missing something – why the visa and the inevitable charges if they're so keen for me to empty my wallet?

Visas seem so anachronistic in an era when supposedly everyone can travel. Let me relate a few recent tales to support my argument. I've changed the names of these dollar-hungry nations to protect the guilty.

Earlier this year, I travelled to Ripoffasthan for a visit where I was more than happy to shop, eat, drink and stay in hotels that all benefited from me choosing the country over a list of other candidates. However, before I had the chance to get a solitary coin from my long pockets, I had to firstly obtain a visa. This meant visiting the embassy, completing the form, attaching two passport photos to the application, getting on the long and winding queue and then negotiating the visa issuance with a bored officer who had no interest at all in me visiting her country; the one that gave her a job and salary. Now, I can select the fast-track visa which takes an officer half a nanosecond to process (as I saw this being done) and at double the normal rate or, pay the normal rate and come back in three days to collect the said passport with visa inserted.

I opt for the cheaper version and think to myself; welcome to Ripoffasthan as I hand over \$US90. Recently I saw the same country opening its arms to the wealthy West in anticipation of receiving ten million tourists next year. With each visitor handing over a similar amount for a visa, I realised what a lucrative business it was sticking in

bits of paper to passports – some \$US900million if my maths hasn't failed me.

And that's the other problem – my passport which costs half the deposit on a home in Miami to replace every few years just had another page surrendered to these visa bandits.

Ripoffasthan was a breeze when compared to the bureaucratic grind of the Banana Republic – they make Ripoffasthan look amateurish. The poor overworked and stressed out public servants of this grinding bureaucracy have mastered the art of extracting dollars with minimal effort.

Banana Republic staff are so over worked from chopping passports they've out-sourced the whole proceedings. We can't have these public servants actually serving the public – best to get someone else do the dirty work while we do more meaningful tasks like sourcing ice cubes for our gin and tonics!

Of course, this adds another bureaucratic layer to the financial equation as a few more dollars are required to maintain another level of ineffective and disinterested counter staff. The first step in obtaining a Banana Republic visa requires a telex (do people still use such dinosaurs of technology?) to my country to, eh, consume some paper and add a few extra dollars onto the visa charge.

Once this initial hurdle is cleared then there's the real visa. This requires passport photos, surrendering the passport for a few days and of course, another page (but in this case, two pages) of the passport. If I want to pay by credit card, of course there's an extra charge. Then when I turn up to collect the passport, the key holder to the safe is away and I have to return a few days later.

This all occurs in an era when we travellers are told that travel is freeing up and more people are travelling around the globe. Sadly, in this part of the world Ripoffasthan and the Banana Republic aren't alone in maintaining their archaic visa procedures.

For details on the previously mentioned countries please send an unmarked ten dollar bill to the publishers and I will gladly provide their real names (your contribution will go to the inevitable process of obtaining a few more visas in the coming months). **ha**

