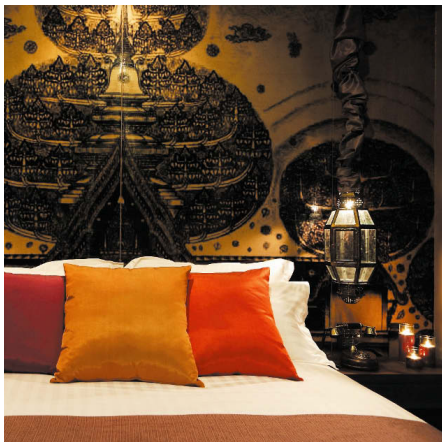


# hospitality



Asia cannot be beaten when it comes to luxury properties. From Bali's gorgeous Bulgari which boasts nothing but the best things in life and escapism, to the newest crop of hotels springing up around the region, it is clear that Asia is the place where service excellence in the hospitality industry is set to create a new benchmark.



## Grand Millennium Beijing Opens Its Doors

Millennium and Copthorne Hotels plc (M&C) has added a feather to its cap and is proud to welcome its latest addition into the Group with Grand Millennium Beijing, opening its doors for business on 10 April 2008. An international, upscale hotel, it will be owned and managed by Millennium & Copthorne International (MCIL), the Asian arm of Millennium & Copthorne Hotels plc (M & C).

Grand Millennium Beijing is located 25 minutes from Beijing's Airport and is situated in the heart of Beijing's financial and business district. The location provides immediate access to a full range of public transport, and is minutes away from many major corporate offices, embassies and exhibition centres. The hotel is the centrepiece of the Fortune Plaza Complex, which offers luxury and lifestyle shopping.

The 5-star property comprises 521 chic and contemporary guest rooms and provides its discerning travellers with quality facilities and personalized services.

The ballroom and meeting rooms are styled with a modern contemporary feel and are spread over two levels. Well-equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, they serve as ideal venues for meetings, conferences, special events and wedding banquets. All essential facilities for modern day travellers are available at the hotel including complimentary high speed Broadband Internet connection, a Business Centre, a modern Spa and Fitness Centre, indoor swimming pool, five restaurants and bars and one Executive Club Lounge. **h**



General Manager Ian Wilson & Govindaraj Subramaniam

## Fairmont Singapore Bags Prestigious Singapore Tourism Board's Best Tourism Host

In a demanding and challenging industry where expectations for excellence in customer service hits the roof or when a sincere smile, a razor sharp acumen of one's role in a multi-faceted and multi-cultural team or when a courteous disposition are primordial qualities required every single day to be highly effective at work, Fairmont Singapore's Govindaraj Subramaniam proves he has what it takes to win Singapore Tourism Board's (STB) Best Tourism Host (Hotel) during STB's Tourism Awards night.

The 26-year-old Guest Relations Officer emerged as the ultimate best, amongst Singapore's finest tourism hosts. Having joined Fairmont Singapore in 2006, the affable Raj is a dynamic, positive and enterprising staff at the hotel's Reception Desk, where he interacts daily with guests.

Raj, who has accumulated more than five years of experience in the hospitality line, plays multifarious roles in his capacity as a Guest Relations Officer including building customer relationships, ensuring that all requests and issues raised by guests are attended to and resolved, making recommendations to enhance guests' stay as well as guiding and training new colleagues.

"I love the challenges and opportunities my job provides. Just the concept of not knowing what is in store is enough to keep my adrenalin up and running. This award is a fantastic bonus for keeps," Raj commented with a smile.

Organised by the Singapore Tourism Board, this annual ceremony was instituted to honour service excellence in the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly to individuals who have made outstanding contributions towards maintaining Singapore's status as a world-class and premier destination of choice amongst international business and leisure travellers. **h**

## It Takes 5 To Tango

Award-winning hotel, Royal Plaza (RP) on Scotts creates a milestone in human resources management and corporate social responsibility by being the first in the hospitality industry to introduce a tripartite initiative to address the labour crunch in Singapore. The comprehensive approach brings together the Government, Employers and Union to benefit the community at large.

A first in the hospitality industry, RP on Scotts has collaborated with the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), Singapore Tourism Board (STB), National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) to launch its first career open house with Minister of State for Health and Deputy Secretary-General, NTUC, Heng Chee How as the Guest-of-Honour. This is also in line with RP on Scotts' direction to be a socially responsible employer, committed to enhance employability and re-employment of potential workers.

This is an initiative putting action to the maxim that workers, both in the private sector and government, should work together to counter the issues of labour shortage. It reflects the common belief that a united vision is imperative to address the situation from various perspectives and executed with a more structured benefits scheme for these employees.

There are more than 40 attractive vacancies in departments such as Food & Beverage, Housekeeping and Engineering in RP on Scotts. The seamless collaboration of these five organisations reflects their joint commitment and strong determination. As the first to leverage on Government initiatives and incentives programmes such as Flexi-Works!, launched by Ministry of Manpower and WDA to encourage flexibility within a dynamic work environment vis-a-vis workers' needs and lifestyles, RP on Scotts sets an example on how companies can draw trainable workforce from the economically inactive population to the hospitality industry.

Given that the tourism and hospitality industry is gearing up to the opening of the Integrated Resorts (IR) in 2009, the initiative is an excellent platform to address an acute shortage of manpower. The hotel sector especially is a highly service-oriented and labour-intensive industry, driven by both human touch and personal service. The lack of skilled and sufficient manpower may adversely affect the operations or impede the growth of the tourism industry. **h**



The bar at Crowne Plaza Changi Airport

### Crowne Plaza Changi Airport For Terminal 3

Crowne Plaza Changi Airport, the first international upscale brand hotel to operate with direct access to the new Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 3, will open in May 2008. The USD60 million Crowne Plaza Changi Airport is a hybrid between a city hotel and a resort. The hotel reception and lobby on the first floor is linked to the Arrival Hall of Terminal 3. Two covered bridges adorned by a landscaped wall on one side and lush tropical gardens on the other, link the first and second floors of the hotel to the new Terminal. This clear seamless connection to the terminal permits the weariest traveller to quickly reach the guest rooms.

Crowne Plaza Changi Airport will target international business travellers, corporate and the leisure market. It will also provide an informal environment for the local community to meet and dine. Guests of the 320-room resort-style hotel will be able to conveniently reach Terminals 1 and 2 via the new automated People Mover System that will link all three passenger terminals. Corporate, MICE (Meetings Incentives, Conventions & Exhibitions), and transit travellers will especially appreciate the hotel's close proximity to the Singapore Expo (the largest purpose-built exhibition and convention centre in Southeast Asia), Changi Business Park and world-class golf courses. Singapore's downtown shopping and entertainment district is within a 20-minute drive. There is easy access from the hotel by the Changi Airport Mass Rapid Transit station to other parts of Singapore.

The opening of Crowne Plaza Changi Airport signifies IHG's (InterContinental Hotels Group) commitment to growing its brands in Singapore. IHG has three other properties in Singapore including InterContinental Singapore, Holiday Inn Atrium Singapore and Holiday Inn Park View Singapore. **h**

### Uniquely U

U Chiang Mai is a new bijoux deluxe hotel, only 20 minutes from Chiang Mai International Airport. Located in the heart of Chiang Mai's city on Ratchadamnoen Road, it is a hotel that is stimulating blend of local heritage and design accents that pairs modern amenities, service and facilities to unobtrusively encourage sophisticated guests eager to enjoy the local environment.

The hotel facilities include "Eat&Drink" serving no menu, homely cuisine in a European influence bistro setting for breakfast, lunch and dinner which includes an open air bar area. The Resident's Lounge and three spa treatment rooms are located in the refreshed past residence of the Chiang Mai's governor. The residence has been refreshed in the original Chiang Mai architectural style but through interior design and decorative items, this heritage setting is given a modern Thai accent. The Reading Room is also located in the same area with extensive collection of Chiang Mai's history and literature. A fitness together program provides a total workout solution.

All 41 rooms hotel include private balconies with a day bed, rain shower, IDD telephone, tea and coffee making facilities, satellite TV, electronic safe, hair dryer, iPod with iPod docking station and speakers. **h**



U Chiang Mai's Superior Room

### Luxury Club Suites Take Centre Stage At Amara Singapore

Jet-setting business executives wanting to rest their weary heads on something more than a travel pillow get that wish and more with Amara Singapore's newly designed executive club floors. The art deco-inspired interior of three of the hotel floors are both classy yet warmly inviting to the harried traveller with discerning taste. From the wooden panelling to the fresh flowers and special pillows and sheets in each executive suite, Amara Singapore gives a new meaning to the term "business class".

There is a well-outfitted business lounge attached to the three club floors, ideal for small meetings and business drinks. Pre-dinner cocktails and snacks are served in the cozy lounge area, with large windows overlooking the Singapore skyline. A personal butler is at the lounge to attend to the every need of the club-floor guests: from check-in and check-out services to booking of spa packages or golfing sessions.

Amara Singapore is slowly but steadily gaining a niche reputation as a provider of contemporary business-class accommodation. With its sister property, Amara Sanctuary Resort making waves in the boutique luxury resorts sector and some projects further a field in foreign locales, the Amara Group is rapidly expanding its portfolio. **h**

### Visionary Hospitality

InVision Hospitality, the freshest hotel management and consultancy company are delighted to announce luxury tier brand SOMA Hotels & Resorts, deluxe brand Lantern Hotels & Resorts and mid tier brand Glow Hotels. The different tiers of brands have been designed and aligned with the needs for each targeted market customers.

SOMA Hotels & Resorts is a brand that creates a new luxury horizon and offers inspiration for those seeking an escape from the ordinary. The brand offers a personal touch, gracious service beyond the expected to make a welcome difference, creating a meaningful journey and nurturing

long relationships with our guests. Lantern Hotels & Resorts will offer guests a stay defined by value, space, relaxation and uncomplicated simplicity. The

unique concept of consistent 24/7 hospitality, ensuring guests gain the most from each day, every day and at all times. The

service approach focuses on understanding the needs and individual values of guests by providing them what they want when they want it – at no extra charge. Room rates are inclusive

of all special services and facilities such as Wi-Fi internet, mini-bar, fitness centre, 24 hour use of the room and more. Glow

Hotels is created for guests who seek lodging solutions that provide a convenient and comfortable environment at a value price point. InVision

Hospitality will shortly announce branded properties in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand with a target of 12 hotels/resorts operating by 2012. **h**



*The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre will be hosting some prestigious events in 2008*

### Team Malaysia Shines Again

“Team Malaysia”, comprising the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (the Centre), Malaysia Airlines, Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd and the Kuala Lumpur City Council (DBKL), continues to prove a dynamic partnership in the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industry.

Working closely with local associations, the team’s efforts in promoting the country, Malaysia, the city, Kuala Lumpur and its infrastructure, and in turn, the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, were successful in winning bids to host a number of prestigious events. These include the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (17CCEM) on 15-19 June 2009, the five-day 14th Conference on Thinking 2009 (22-26 June 2009) and the AOSpine Global Interactive Course (25-30 October 2009).

Kuala Lumpur will be the first South-east Asia city to host the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) when the 23rd Annual World ICSEI is held at the Centre from 5-8 January 2010. Hosted by the Institute of Principals Studies, University Malaya, the ICSEI provides an international platform for researchers, policy makers, school leaders and teachers to share ideas, promote research and encourage practices that will increase equity in education.

Also making its first visit to Asia is the 10th International Conference on Low Vision (VISION 2011) in February 2011. VISION 2011 will feature distinguished academics, researchers and practitioners who will share their results on vision science research, rehabilitation services and the psychosocial aspects of vision impairment.

In an effort to further raise the profile of Malaysia as a MICE destination, the Centre in collaboration with its Team Malaysia partners, also organizes annual Association Seminars to educate local associations on how to bid for regional and international events and how to take advantage of the support available from Team Malaysia. **h**

### Carlson Hotels Worldwide Expands Into The Philippines

Carlson Hotels Worldwide – Asia Pacific will expand into the Philippine market and manage two new hotels under the Regent and Radisson brands in Manila Bay. Built by developer Hotel Specialists Inc of SM Investments Corporation and designed by architects KKS International (S) Pte Ltd, the two hotels will give Carlson a strong foothold in the capital of the Philippines, one of the markets targeted in the hotel group’s expansion strategy.

This special development will also showcase a unique hotel-within-a-hotel design, with the 80-suite luxury Regent Manila Bay housed within the Radisson Hotel Manila Bay, but with its own driveway, entrance, lobby, guest facilities and staff.

Expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2009, the hotels will be situated on Seaside Boulevard in Mall of Asia Complex, a 60-hectare shopping, entertainment, leisure and business development that includes a convention centre, offices and the expansive SM Mall of Asia, a destination shopping complex that attracts up to a million people on weekends.

The Radisson Hotel Manila Bay will have 500 guest rooms and suites along with a business centre, gym, swimming pool, yoga deck, spa and extensive function facilities.

The Regent will include 69 executive suites of 60 to 80 sq m each; 10 suites of 120 sq m each; and a presidential suite of approximately 400 sq m. It will have a separate lobby lounge and a specialty restaurant along with a health centre and feature pool for the exclusive use of Regent guests.

Guests of both hotels will enjoy a view of Manila Bay, famous for its iconic sunsets, and easy access to the nearby commercial hub of Makati and Ermita and Malate districts, popular for nightlife and entertainment. **h**



Centara Chaan Talay Resort & Villas Trat will be Centara's newest property

### Centara Adding One More Property

Centara Hotels & Resorts has signed a contract to manage a new resort in Trat, on the mainland, overlooking Koh Chang. The resort will be known as Centara Chaan Talay Resort & Villas Trat.

The resort sits directly on a stunningly beautiful beach, surrounded by pristine nature and with wonderful sea views. In the first phase there are 44 spacious rooms, eight of which are Nature Spa Suite Villas and Beach Front Spa Suites with a personal outdoor Jacuzzi. A host of dedicated facilities include a beachside restaurant and bar, swimming pool, meditation hall for yoga, fitness centre, water sports, movies, library, tours and excursions, and a Centara signature Spa Cenvaree. A journey to Trat can either be by plane in less than 1 hour or under 4 hours driving time from Bangkok. **h**

### Accor Launches Pullman Hotels In Asia Pacific

Accor has officially launched its new upscale brand, Pullman, into the Asia Pacific market. The launch event took place at the Pullman Bangkok King Power, the first Pullman hotel to open in Asia.

Pullman hotels will target the business and conference markets in particular. They will typically be located in the heart of large international and regional cities and close to major airports

The launch of the Pullman hotel brand is part of Accor's drive to reposition its brands, which will in particular elevate Sofitel into the luxury segment. This strategy has created the opportunity to launch a new brand of hotels clearly positioned in the upscale segment.

Pullman hotels will provide specific services and facilities to create an atmosphere that balances conviviality, calm and connectivity. These will include a 24 hour IT solutions manager on site, there will also be Pullman Welcomers who will not only be responsible for welcoming, but to also provide immediate action of guest requests. There will be wireless and broadband communications, chill out zones, executive floors and lounges, health club facilities and the latest in hi-tech facilities for meetings and function organisers. Fast communications and connectivity is facilitated by the latest equipment with further enhancement likely as a result of a partnership with Microsoft.

The launch of the Pullman brand follows the European launch last month, which saw 12 Pullman hotels in announced. By the end of 2009, the Pullman network will consist of 59 hotels and over 15,600 rooms in 23 countries in Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and South America. In the medium to longer term, Accor's ambition is to develop a worldwide chain of 300 hotels by 2015, with 100 hotels in Asia-Pacific, growing at a rate of 25 new hotels a year

Pullman is the upscale, non-standardized hotel brand of Accor. It was designed with the requirements of business women and men in mind. Located in the main regional and international cities, Pullman hotels provide an extensive range of tailored services, access to groundbreaking technologies and the "Co-Meeting" offer, a new approach to organizing meetings, seminars and high-end incentives. At Pullman hotels, business travelers can choose between being independent or relying on the staff available round the clock. **h**

### Hilton Hotels Corporation To Manage Hilton Pattaya

Hilton Hotels Corporation announced that its subsidiary has signed an agreement with CPN Pattaya Beach Co. Ltd (a subsidiary of Central Pattana Public Company Ltd) to manage the Hilton Pattaya, a 300-room upscale full service hotel in the beginning of 2010.

The Hilton Pattaya will be part of the new Central Festival Pattaya Beach complex, one of the largest beachfront-shopping complexes in Asia. The 240,000 sq m mixed-use development, with over 200 leading international shops and restaurants, comprises a seven-floor cosmopolitan shopping mall anchored by a 23,000 sq m Central Department Store (one of Thailand's leading department store chains). It will also house a 10-screen cinema, a 25-lane bowling alley, a 3,000 sq m supermarket and multiple recreational facilities. Located along Pattaya Beach Road, the development offers stunning views of the Pattaya Bay.

With an exclusive ground floor entrance, the main lobby of the Hilton Pattaya will be located on the seventh floor, with the 300 upscale guest rooms located in a 15 storey tower above the lobby. The 25th floor restaurant will serve as Pattaya's first premium sky restaurant overlooking the Pattaya Bay. **h**

## Conrad Cairo Awarded Global Green Globe Certification

The Conrad Cairo has been awarded the prestigious Green Globe Certified Gold status under the globally-recognized program which recognizes the hotel's commitment to operating at the world's highest environmental standards.

To achieve this award, the Conrad Cairo was successfully certified for over seven continuous years which has resulted in their achieving the highest honour the Green Globe programme offers. The certification process involves an onsite audit by an independent third party Green Globe Accredited Auditor. The Conrad Cairo successfully benchmarked against key environmental indicators including energy and water consumption, waste production and community commitment. The continuous successful completion of the independent audit process demonstrates that the Conrad Cairo has a strong commitment to the principles of environmental and social sustainability.

Green Globe is the worldwide Benchmarking Certification and improvement system assisting the international travel and tourism industry to attain sustainability. Green Globe provides a certification system that responds directly to the major environmental problems facing the planet, including the greenhouse effect, over-use of freshwater resources and the destruction of biodiversity. **h**



*The lobby of Le Meridien Kuala Lumpur and the entrance to a sensory experience*

## Le Méridien Appoints Innovators To Transform Arrival Experience

In their ongoing commitment to bring unique and stimulating experiences to their guests, Le Méridien is transforming arrival experiences that will enhance all of the guests' senses. This experience will commence from the moment the guest arrives at the hotel until they have opened the door to their guest room.

Upon entering the hotel, a visual and audio effect – a “wall” of sound and art - will engulf each guest. The experience will create a change in mood for guests and signify their entrance into a new environment. This portal will create intrigue, and will re-set guests expectations and will encourage them to be open minded to new experiences during their stay.

Once through the transitional portal, guests will be enveloped with Le Méridien's signature scent, sound and use of light. Global lighting leader Philips Lighting Company has been appointed to work with Le Méridien brand worldwide on the lighting components, evoking a sense of warmth and drama depending on the time of the day and occasion.

Le Labo, the innovative perfume house, has created a signature scent for Le Méridien. Through their relationship with Le Labo, the brand has developed an “olfactive” statement that is based on Le Méridien's values. This exclusive, custom scent will complete the customer experience by engaging memory and emotions through the sense of smell.

Developed to engage its guests, Le Méridien's “Unlock Art” programme will include an artist designed key card that offers access to more than just the guest room – the card, created by artist Michael Lin, is intended become a collector's item

for guests and will grant guests complimentary access to Le Méridien's affiliated arts organisations. Le Méridien will also transform the expected and predictable event of riding an elevator into an “elevating experience” through video and sound. **h**

## The First St. Regis Hotel In South East Asia

Superbly located in the heart of the city state in the Orchard Road area, The St. Regis Singapore will be immediately positioned at the very top of the market, offering the refined, timeless elegance and peerless service that are synonymous with the St. Regis name.

The fine legacy of the St. Regis name is now carried by a small and exclusive group of prestigious hotels, of which The St. Regis Singapore will be the thirteenth in the world and the third in Asia.

Designed by internationally acclaimed architects WATG and interior by Wilson & Associates, The St. Regis Singapore features 299 luxuriously appointed guestrooms and suites, all generously proportioned with plush furnishings evoking a sense of timeless elegance.

The hotel will feature many firsts for Singapore and the region, including the country's first ballroom that features two large skylights, the first premium Remède Spa outside of the United States, and a fleet of customised Bentleys for transportation.

A hallmark of the St. Regis brand is bespoke service, with ever-present yet unobtrusive personal butlers catering to every guest's unique tastes and preferences. The St. Regis will be the only hotel in Singapore to offer butler service to all guests.

The new Singapore property joins a select portfolio of St. Regis hotels in locations, which include New York, Washington D.C., Monarch Beach, San Francisco, Aspen, Houston, Fort Lauderdale, London, Rome, Bora Bora, Beijing and Shanghai. **h**



*Executive Deluxe Room at The St. Regis Singapore*

# Purity Without Compromise

## The Advent Of Pure Rooms In Malaysia

### How did you first learn about the Pure Concept?

Enviroverks (M) Sdn Bhd has been specializing in Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ Solutions) and Mold Remediation Programme for the hotel industry for quite some time and when we attended an exhibition in the United States we came across the PURE Allergy Friendly Programme and thereby decided to adopt the program for the hotel industry back here in Malaysia. We then established a joint venture with PURE LLC and launched PURE IEQ (M) Sdn Bhd in Malaysia to market the PURE program to hotels locally.

### What was it that attracted you to it?

The PURE program is a patented process which makes it more credible and it has a global partnership program so it has been tested and proven. This reflects very well in the hotel industry, as most hoteliers are connected somehow or other. By offering the PURE Allergy Friendly program; not only we partner the hotels to upgrade their rooms to be Allergy Friendly, we most of the times offer them our expertise for problems and various solutions related to Indoor Environmental issues.

### Why do you think it is so viable?

It is an easy program to implement, it seeks a niche market and PURE is a program that does not sell and walk away. It builds a long term partnership with the hotel, giving the hotel the added advantage of having an Allergy Friendly Room concept, yet not creating a financial hole as it is very cost effective. PURE offers tailor made programs to hotels, depending on their individual properties' needs. The PURE Programme also offers hotels the opportunity to increase their revenue with premiums of

between 10 to 20 percent additional charge on the Allergy Friendly Rooms.


### Your company Enviroverks is the Pure agent for Malaysia. What kind of assistance do you get from your headquarters?

We have a great working relationship with our HQ whom are our partners in the local distributorship. They provide great assistance from marketing and technical support, product updates and global partnerships with other distributors. PURE LLC also provides us with leads from their partnership with the headquarters which are located in the United States and other regional offices of 5-star hotels.

### Who are your major clients?

All 5-star hotels and boutique hotels including resorts. We are also in the midst of securing a large chain of budget hotels which would offer the PURE Allergy Friendly Room as an option to their guest. The concept of PURE Allergy Friendly Rooms is being driven in the U.S. and the Middle East. With up to 100,000 rooms being converted by the end of 2008, we expect all hotels in Asia to follow suit.

### What made them sign up with you in the first place?

Our expertise in the indoor environmental business and the credibility that comes with signing up for a PURE room. The program speaks for itself - after experiencing a PURE room, there's no turning back- you only want more of it! It's not only about providing your guest with a difference - most hotels look at it as another revenue stream which can be quite rewarding. 



*Nitesh Malani, Chief Executive Officer of Enviroverks (M) Sdn Bhd and PURE IEQ (M) Sdn Bhd*

Nitesh Malani, Chief Executive Officer of Enviroverks (M) Sdn Bhd and PURE IEQ (M) Sdn Bhd is the man whom dozens of travellers thank when they enjoy the fresh crispness of a PURE room at the Subang Sheraton Hotel and Towers in Malaysia. Here he tells about his discovery of the PURE system.

# Driving Dreams

## The GM Of Singapore's First Smoke-Free Hotel Speaks Up



Patrick Fiat, General Manager, Royal Plaza on Scotts, Singapore

**“Mr Fiat is my father, call me Patrick,” says the affable General Manager of Singapore’s Royal Plaza on Scotts. With this opening gambit Fiat effectively demonstrates why the 5-star business-class hotel has thrived under his leadership. He was the bold advocate who saw the value in making RP a completely non-smoking hotel. He has also seen the hotel through its biggest facelift, resulting in a property which has again become the talk of the town.**

### **It has been a great two years for RP. How are you going to keep the winning streak?**

The most important step is retention of staff. That’s very difficult, especially with the opening of Sentosa in 2009. Poaching will happen, but we will ensure our staff retention program is in place. Service and branding is also important. We have to reinforce service delivery as well as looking at succession planning.

### **What do you think is the key to keeping good staff in an industry so rife with poaching and offers of advancement?**

In the past we interviewed people. Now, they interview us back – they are interested in growth and the potential of growth. And so we must show care to the people we choose. Growth and respect are very important to people. Our staff wants feedback, they want explanations on decisions made and we encourage them to ask questions. Their salaries are not enough to keep them now, they must feel that they belong here and will be given opportunities to grow.

### **Carousel was named the top restaurant for buffets by the Straits Times. How are you looking to keep on top of the game?**

When we were named best restaurant in town I told the team that to win is easy – it is the keeping of the title which will be hard. We have to keep reinventing without going away from what we are. Quality, freshness of product, those continue to be important.

### **Independent hotels have always had to work harder than their international chain counterparts. How has RP used its independent status to its advantage?**

If we look at hotel chains today, most of the Accor or Starwood properties are looking to re-individualize so they look like an independent hotel. We on the other hand, being an independent hotel are truly ourselves. We target personalized service, individualism. We have no red tape so our guest service does a lot more and faster. That’s why guests come back.

### **Have going 100 percent smoke-free been difficult for the hotel?**

France just went no smoking and to do that in France! You’d have riots! But it is the new trend. You can’t escape it. You have to realize though, smokers want non-smoking rooms too! They may want to smoke in their rooms, but they want to go into a fresh room! Going no smoking has been very positive for us. You can feel a very positive vibe, and some of our staff also have stopped smoking. We have had two or three complaints from people who did not know, or whose offices had booked them into the hotel without knowing it was non-smoking but they either say they won’t stay when they find out, or they’ll say that it is something good for them. Since we have gone smoke-free, so have two other hotels and there will be more to come. **ha**

# The Golden Age

## Malaysia Outlines Its Tourism Strategy For The Next Two Years

### What has the response been arrival-wise to the extension of VMY2007?

The January statistics indicated an increase of three percent over January 2007. Based on the feedback from the travel trade members, I am optimistic that the performance will be better, if not as good as last year. Arrivals increased by 18.9 percent during January-February 2007 compared to 2006. This year Malaysia received 35 charter flights from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan from 5-14 February 2008 which carried more than 5,000 holiday-makers during the Chinese New Year period. The points of origin were Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Guilin, Hangzhou, Kunming, Nanjing, Shenyang, and Shanghai. Our overall targets for 2008 are 22.5 million tourists and RM50 billion in receipts.

### What will be the Ministry's strategies to promote Malaysia in the following years?

Our strategies for 2008-2010 are to continue the branding of Malaysia through the 'Malaysia Truly Asia' campaign. Sub-brands will be developed for respective markets. We will adopt a destination-focused approach in marketing Malaysia by identifying selected destinations in Malaysia and carrying out intensive promotion on these destinations. We will develop dual-destination marketing strategies for long haul markets, taking advantage of the higher number of air connections to regional destinations such as Singapore and Thailand. We will be enhancing tactical promotions of Visit Malaysia Year by repeating anchor events such as Flora Fest, Colours of Malaysia, Sales Carnival, F1 Grand Prix and other world-class events to strengthen the image of Malaysia as a desirable holiday destination. There will

also be effort made to convert day trippers from neighbouring markets to become overnight-staying tourists so as to enhance tourism revenue and we will also be trying to stimulate repeat visits by visitors from the Asean markets.

### Which markets will Malaysia be targeting in the next couple of years?

Asean countries, especially Singapore and Thailand, have always been our largest source of tourist arrivals. However, we are working towards attracting quality tourists for better yield. At the same time we are targeting to increase the share of the medium-haul and long-haul markets. For the medium haul market, Tourism Malaysia will maintain our focus on fast-growing markets such as China, India and West Asia. For the long haul markets our focus is on Europe, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and United States. At the same time, we will strengthen presence in new growth markets such as Indochina, Iran, Former CIS and North Africa.

### Will there be any change in the methods and delivery of our promotion of Malaysia as a holiday destination in the near future?

The methods and delivery will basically be the same. However, the marketing mix will depend on the respective market needs. As mentioned earlier, while the VMY 2007 campaign was more event-driven, the 2008 -2010 marketing campaign will be destination-focused, i.e. identifying selected destinations in Malaysia and carrying out intensive promotions of these destinations – the East coast during summer and Sabah, Sarawak and the west coast during winter. **h**



*Dato' Mirza Mohammad Taiyab, Director General of Tourism Malaysia*

Dato' Mirza Mohammad Taiyab, Director General of Tourism Malaysia shares his views on the extension on Visit Malaysia 2008, strategies to be used for the promotion of Malaysia for 2008-2010 and the reasons Malaysia can look forward to more tourist arrivals.

# Faith And Vision

## Growth In The Hospitality Industry And Aggressive Development



YTL Corporation Berhad's Executive Director Dato' Mark Yeoh Seok Kah

He is a man the international media has billed the guru of some of the world's best getaways. An avid traveller, YTL Corporation Berhad's Executive Director Dato' Mark Yeoh Seok Kah, has an innate sense of what works and what doesn't, but he is the first to give credit where credit is due – to his staff and front liners.

### What kind of strategies will YTL Hotels and Properties be utilizing in the next few years to ensure the company remains visionary?

The hotel business is like fashion – we always need change. To be on the cutting edge, we need to be relevant. And in the hotel world, it means the guests are the most important people, not me. It is an inverse pyramid. We have launched many initiatives, such as opening the Ritz Carlton in 1997 in the mid of the financial crisis and setting the rooms at US\$70. We also have the youngest General Managers in the business, most of which are first timers with hunger and drive. We have an active expansion policy in the next couple of years. We have a management contract for the Pangkor Laut in Dubai where we manage from an owner's perspective, offering inputs from construction to design, giving the benefit of totality.

### One of the successes of YTL Properties is location. As the world shrinks do you think it will be harder to find these new locations?

Location has always been a challenge for us, but we have always taken non-traditional routes for a big company even if it means building something and building an entire community to serve it. It may be a longer process, taking five to ten years to establish, but once it is there, it takes life of its own, and coupled with the natural beauty of the sites we select, each resort becomes unique.

### YTL has shown the viability of Malaysia as a premiere luxury escape destination. Why do you think other operators have not been able to tap into this viability?

When I was a law graduate busy trying to get into a practice, (former Malaysian Prime Minister) Tun Mahathir established Visit Malaysia Year 1990. I was the only 'unemployed' son and so was asked to come back and establish a hospitality arm. We have grown since then, but we are merely scratching the surface of what Malaysia can achieve as a destination. I do not believe in competition, but I do believe in enhancement and this I feel, is the thing which will help the growth of our tourism sector. We are too insular and we compete among ourselves too much. We need to instill the discipline of performance and training, especially with staffing being such a challenge. We have the strength of product – the hospitality, the food – but we need the discipline of product with no cutting of corners. We need to build a brand and it takes discipline and hard work. If people are into the short term benefits, they should not get involved.

### You're known as the guru behind some of the world's best getaways. What continues to drive you personally?

My staff are my gurus! I am the last man in this equation. What drives me are the perks of this job – travelling and bringing back lots of ideas. My Christian faith is very important to me. Our value as a family company is something we try to extend to our staff. I like to treat them all as one part of a big, happy family, but they must know that with the privileges of being in the family comes also the responsibility. **h**

# Extraordinarily Personal

## The Man Behind Singapore's Newest Boutique Hotel Speaks His Mind

### What was your vision and concept for Naumi?

I have globe-trotted the world and found the big hotel chains offering the usual service and facilities. There was nothing extraordinary after a while. I wanted to create an experiential stay for guests who seek something different. The ideal approach was to establish a boutique hotel where the entire feel can be more individualistic and memorable. That's why Naumi was created. To fill that splendour and offer a customized 'tailored-for-you' service and a "one price includes all" universal concept. Naumi is the first of its kind. I envisage to expand the brand within the region where the name is signature for its modern luxury, highly personalized service and elegant décor. 'Naumi', in Hindu, means the ninth day of the month. The ninth day is usually associated with all good things happening.

### What has response been to the hotel?

Since our inception, we have been gaining favourable compliments from our guests, mainly business travellers from all around the world. Our guests appreciate our highly personalized service, refined touches and luxurious oversized rooms.

### How do you position Naumi in the market – as a boutique hotel, or a luxury small hotel?

Naumi is different from other boutique hotels; it's a non-traditional boutique hotel, oozing with bespoke luxury and is immensely trendy and stylish. It is not quirky and thematic but an everlasting elegance. We position Naumi as a business travellers' haven, where they can experience privacy and personalized service in a fresh and new environment.


### You talk about the need for service to become personal again. How does Naumi accomplish this?

Traditional hotels offer the standard conventional service level. For Naumi, we like to be different, 'out-the-box'; we created the concept of a Naumi Aide (service ambassador) to serve each room guest and to ensure that the guest is well-pampered and looked after during their stay. Every staff is a hotel ambassador so the guest need not have to ask another person for any of his/her requests.

### Naumi has a Ladies Only floor. Why did you offer this and what has response been to it?

With globalization, more corporate ladies are travelling around the region for work or business. I felt that to differentiate Naumi from the rest, having a ladies floor would certainly appeal to the ladies. It gives the female guests a sense of security, comfort and privacy. The housekeepers are females, amenities and décor are feminine as well. We have been receiving good response especially when we recommend the ladies floor to females, they welcome our recommendation without hesitation.

### What personally do you like most about the hotel?

The rooftop is where we have an Infinity Pool and the skyline of Singapore is outstanding especially in the evening. We have had numerous parties there and everyone loves it. You can see the upcoming IR & The Singapore Flyer as well, not to mention too the fireworks display is awesome when viewed from the roof! 



*Surya Jhunjhnuwala, Managing Director, Hind Development*

Surya Jhunjhnuwala, Managing Director and owner of the 40-room haven of plush designer comfort and personalized service, Naumi Hotel in Singapore, is passionate about the experience guests will get when at the hotel. Here he talks about why he founded Naumi and the concepts behind the Central Business District hotel.




### Jan Verduyn

Managing Director  
Dusit Thani LakeView Cairo, Egypt

Jan Verduyn, the seasoned General Manager of Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket has been promoted as Managing Director of Dusit Thani LakeView Cairo, Egypt. Verduyn's role will be primarily to open the Dusit Thani LakeView Cairo hotel, scheduled to open late this year, bringing the fine Thai grace and charm and the Dusit name in hospitality into Egypt.

He joined the Dusit family in May 2005, following the aftermath of the Asian Tsunami in December 2004. He proved his leadership qualities in putting Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket on the road to a quick recovery and back on the map for overseas travellers. He brings his professionalism once again to the fore overseeing the Dusit Thani LakeView Cairo construction.

Working closely with Dusit's own development and technical services team, together with architect, ASA Consultants of Egypt, and interior designer, P49Deesign of Thailand, the project will open in four phases from the hotel, to serviced apartments, Spa and Wellness Centre, and finally the Country Club. It is due for full completion by December 2009.

A Belgian national, Verduyn has over 20 years experience in hospitality; having been General Manager at various hotels in different locations such as Cyprus, Cameroon, Vietnam, Belgium, Kenya and Korea. 


### Richard Lawrence Dusome

General Manager  
Marina Mandarin Singapore

Underlining its pursuit of excellence in its portfolio of deluxe hotels and resorts across Asia, Meritus Hotels & Resorts is pleased to announce the appointment of Richard Lawrence Dusome as General Manager of Marina Mandarin Singapore with effect from 1 April 2008.

A graduate in Hotel and Restaurant Management from Niagara College of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario, Canada; Dusome started his hotel career in Food & Beverage with the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto. He went on to work with other internationally-renowned hotels chains that include the Hilton International Hotels, which he worked with in both UK and Thailand; the Peninsular Group in Hong Kong as well as the Six Senses Resorts & Spas in the Maldives. He was most previously with Sunland Resorts, Maldives as its Group General Manager.

Richard has worked with numerous international hotel chains – with him helming the team at Marina Mandarin, we are confident that he will lead Marina Mandarin from strength to strength to further boost the Meritus brand and our trademark hospitality of Asian grace, warmth and care."

Armed with almost three decades of international experience in city hotels as well as resorts, Dusome brings with him a wealth of knowledge and will undoubtedly bring his team at Marina Mandarin to its next level of premium hospitality. 



### David Good

Vice President – Operations  
Centara Hotels & Resorts

Gerd Steeb, President of Centara Hotels & Resorts recently announced the promotion of David Good from Group Director-Projects & Openings to Vice President – Operations responsible for taking charge of the operational aspects of all properties in the group.

Good is a British citizen. He graduated with a degree in Hotel Management from North London University in 1981. He has also attended several post-graduate courses at Cornell University. He has more than 20 years of international hotel industry experience including General Manager of several hotels and four years with Centara Hotels & Resorts as the General Manager of the 5-star Centara Grand Beach Resort Samui. Later, he was promoted to Group Director of Operations, Centara Hotels & Resorts for four years. Prior to his promotion to Vice President – Operations, he held the post of Group Director – Project & Openings for three years.

Good has also worked in Asia for Dusit Hotels & Resorts and Amari Hotels & Resorts. Before working in Asia, he held several management positions in hotels in the United Kingdom with, amongst others Forte, Edwardian and Renaissance Hotels.





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### **Christina Toh**

General Manager  
Dorsett Regency Hotel Kuala Lumpur

Christina Toh, Dorsett Regency Kuala Lumpur's young, effervescent, vibrant and more importantly, enterprising General Manager is, as a matter of the fact, the hotel's pillar of strength.

Having started her hotel career as a Sales Officer at the Holiday Inn Penang, Toh's passion for the hospitality industry saw her rising rapidly to the position of Sales Manager of the then Regent Hotel Kuala Lumpur (which was subsequently renamed the Parkroyal Kuala Lumpur). Her success in meeting her sales and marketing targets soon catapulted her to the position of Area Director of Sales & Marketing (for Malaysia) for the Parkroyal Hotels & Resorts Group.

Today, Toh's challenges in the hospitality industry continue, with her having successfully held the helm as one of the nation's youngest female General Managers for the Dorsett Regency Hotel Kuala Lumpur since year 2001. Overseeing the hotel's operations and revenue management, she has been successful in ensuring that the hotel's monthly and yearly occupancy remains one of the city's most envied. **h**

### **Karim Tayach**

General Manager  
Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place

Karim Tayach has been appointed as the General Manager for the new Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place. With his new appointment, Tayach will oversee the general operations of the hotel, serviced apartment and catering and conference of The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place which will feature the most spacious guests' rooms in Jakarta as well as the most prestigious and largest ballroom in Asia.

Prior to his new appointment as General Manager, Tayach was the Executive Assistant Manager – Food and Beverage of The Ritz-Carlton, Jakarta for two years since the opening in 2005. During his professional career he has had many years of experience of opening distinguished hotels namely Hyatt Regency Makkah in 1995, Hyatt Regency Muscat, Oman in 1997, Al Diar Siji Hotel Saudi Arabia in 1999 and The Ritz-Carlton, Doha in 2001.

Tayach joined the Ritz-Carlton group in Dubai in 2001 as an Outlet Manager and has won numerous awards. A graduate of the Institut Supérieur d'Hôtellerie et de Tourisme, Tunisia with many student's awards, Tayach began his hospitality career when he worked for Hyatt International based in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1995. He speaks Arabic, French, English and Italian fluently. **h**



### **Florian Hallermann**

General Manager  
Zeavola Resort Koh Phi Phi, Thailand

Florian Hallermann was recently appointed as General Manager of Zeavola Resort Koh Phi Phi. Hallermann bring with him more than 19 years of experience in hotel industry. His forming experience was his five years with Banyan Tree, in which he was part of the opening team of three different properties. In 1998 he joined the 500-room Radisson Narita in Japan as Executive Assistant Manager Food & Beverage where he had experience working in an American business environment. After three years he moved to Shangri-la Hotel, Beijing, China as Director of F&B and from there he specialized in hotel openings.

His first position as General Manager was at the Puri Wulandari Resort in Bali, a member of SLH Property. Another of his career highlights was overseeing the opening of one hotel in Kuala Lumpur with Impiana Hotels & Resorts in the capacity of Project Manager. For the opening of the Rawi Warin Resort in Thailand he was leading the team as General Manager. His latest position before joining Zeavola Resort was the Ramada Resort Karon Beach, Phuket, as General Manager. Hallermann is native Austrian and speaks English, German, French and Thai besides his native language. **h**



### Shannon Creado

Director of Marketing  
JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa

John Webb, General Manager, JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, is pleased to announce the appointment of Shannon Creado as Director of Marketing. A native Indian, Creado is a Marriott veteran. He has been working with the company over nine years. His first assignment was as a Sales Manager at Goa Marriott Resort, India, in April 1999. Prior to this appointment, he worked with JW Marriott Hotel Seoul, Korea as Director of Marketing. In addition, his professional experience includes being the Project Director of Marketing for Marriott Thailand's four new Courtyard properties in Phuket, and Hua Hin. In his new role, Creado will be responsible for Sales and Marketing area at JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa.

He has won several awards for his excellence including FHRAI – Young Hotel Sales & Marketing Manager 2005 from Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Association of India, Marriott International's Chairman Circle Award 2005, Sales Leader Special Achievement Award – APA Region 2004, and Marriott International President's Circle Award 2004 and 2003. **h**



### Chris Kok

Information Systems Manager  
Sheraton Subang Hotel & Towers,  
Malaysia

Sheraton Subang Hotel & Towers is pleased to announce the new addition to its family:

Chris Kok, Information Systems Manager. No stranger to the hospitality industry, Kok has worked with Parkroyal Kuala Lumpur and Istana Hotel Kuala Lumpur for the past 10 years and is very well-versed in the information technology systems for hotels.

A computer Science/Information Technology graduate, Kok started his career as an IT support executive. In his current role, he is in charge of the entire IT system for the hotel, including both the hardware and software network. He is also responsible for providing support to the end users and hotel guests on IT related issues while ensuring all IT related matters are brand compliance to Starwood Hotels & Resorts' standard and procedures. **h**



### Muhammad Taha Zainal

Executive Assistant Manager  
PNB Darby Park, Malaysia

Muhammad Taha Zainal has joined one of Kuala Lumpur's finest serviced apartments, PNB Darby Park, located in the heart of the Golden Triangle and Central Business District of Malaysia's capital city. Muhammad Taha joins the PNB Darby Park team from the Awana Kijal Golf, Beach & Spa Resort Terengganu to take up his current post as Executive Assistant Manager.

A graduate of the hotel management school from UiTM, Taha has accumulated 15 years of experience in the hotel industry ranging from 5-star international city hotels to resorts and now serviced apartments. He is looking forward to contributing to the upward growth of KL's award-winning serviced apartments and is eager to impress guests with the sumptuous suites and apartments which will become their home away from home. **h**



**Rex Loh**

Director of Sales  
The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore

Rex Loh has been named Director of Sales of The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore by General Manager, Allan Federer. His role encompasses the responsibility of generating room sales from the corporate, group and leisure markets for the award-winning 608-room luxury hotel.

A Singaporean, Loh has over 15 years of experience in the tourism and hospitality industry with the last eight in sales positions. Prior to re-joining The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia, he held the position of Director of Convention Sales in the Pudong Shangri-la, Shanghai where he led a team of nine persons to contribute to over 35 percent of total rooms revenue for the hotel.

A certified meeting professional since 2004, as conferred by the internationally recognized United States based Convention Industry Council, he is familiar and well versed with the needs of meeting planners from the meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) industry. Before Shanghai, Loh was the Associate Director of Sales at The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia and prior to that, spent four years in the sales and catering offices in the flagship Shangri-La hotel in Singapore. **h3**

**Lourdes H. Yuvasasiri**

Director of Human Resources Projects  
Conrad Brand, Asia Pacific

Lourdes H. Yuvasasiri, Director of Human Resources of The Conrad Bangkok has recently been promoted as the Director of Human Resources Projects - Conrad Brand, Asia Pacific. In her new role she is tasked to re-brand the Hilton property to the Conrad brand as well as being responsible for the opening of new Conrad Hotels in Asia Pacific by providing orientation of team members with the Conrad brand values of individuality, brand standards, and service culture.

Yuvasasiri, who was born in the Philippines, holds a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Santo Tomas, Manila. She started her career as a university lecturer in the Philippines, then moved to Bangkok where she taught in various schools and colleges including the International School Bangkok and the Bangkok University.

She embarked on her career in the hospitality industry and has been a Director of Human Resources over 15 years in various leading international chain hotels in Bangkok, such as the Shangri-la Bangkok and the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza where she was on the opening team of both hotels. Prior to joining The Conrad Bangkok, she was the Director of Human Resources at the Sheraton Grande Sukhumvit. Yuvasasiri has been with The Conrad Bangkok for five years since the pre-opening where she is now currently based. **h3**



**Dieter Bischoff**

Director of Rooms  
The Fullerton Hotel Singapore

The Fullerton Hotel Singapore has appointed Dieter Bischoff as Director of Rooms. Said General Manager Louis Sailer, "Dieter comes from a very exclusive and professional background of traditional and extraordinary European service standards. He was a natural choice to join our team and instil his wealth of experience into our service culture."

A German national, Bischoff joins The Fullerton Hotel from Hotel Adlon in Berlin and Hotel Sacher in Vienna, Austria where he was Rooms Manager for three years. "I want to drive front-of-house service standards to greater heights. My personal objective is to develop and offer to our guests the best hotel service in Asia". And as to why he selected Singapore in his career progression: "My preference was to work at The Fullerton Hotel which is synonymous with history, charm and luxury. The beautiful city of Singapore comes as a bonus," he added.

Born into a hotelier family, Bischoff decided at an early age that he would be in the hotel business. He graduated with a business degree in hotel management from the University of Frankfurt, and has since carved out a successful career spanning the globe from Moscow to London, and Berlin to Vietnam, and now Singapore. He is proficient in German, French, English and Russian. **h3**



### TEMPUR® Mattress & Pillows

Sleep is a physiological necessity for all living beings. It is essential for the body's regeneration, and lack of sleep can affect both immune response and functions such as learning and memory. The most important task of a mattress is to give support where the body needs it without

causing pressure points. Relaxing the spine in a natural position during sleep is essential for the body's regeneration during the night. The spine has a natural, double S-shaped position. When forced in an unnatural position, this can cause pain or discomfort. An ordinary mattress and pillow often cause pressure and unnatural sleeping positions, resulting in decreased blood circulation, numbness, pain and discomfort.

A survey by the Majorca based Kovacs Foundation, confirmed The Sleep Council's recommendation - that a back friendly, comfortable mattress should be neither hard nor soft. It should be firm in structure, but yielding and pressure relieving in use. The only mattress that accomplishes this is the TEMPUR® Mattress.

The TEMPUR® Mattress totally supports the body and neck allowing the spine and joints to rest in their natural position. The TEMPUR® materials moulds to your body eliminating pressure points. Your body weight is distributed evenly over the entire surface resulting in total pressure relief and a feeling of weightlessness.

The research also stressed the importance of the correct pillows to support the head and neck. The anatomical designs of the TEMPUR® Pillows in conjunction with the pressure relieving effects of the TEMPUR® Material provide maximum comfort to the neck area, allowing neck and shoulder muscles to relax completely. This helps to relieve pain, snoring, and other sleep problems. **ha**

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### Duprex Aerosol Dispenser

Duprex introduces its new series of Aerosol Dispensing System which provides hassle-free hygiene. Equipped with the latest spray technology, the dispensers are attractively designed, with a streamlined shape and made of highly durable material to suit all environments. The design also boasts unique key-assembly design and easy refilling canister system.

The aerosol dispensers are also equipped with a smart, programmable system, enhancing their efficiency with multiple spray intervals. A unique energy-saving design allows operation up to one year with two AA alkaline batteries. The micro processor LCD indicator displays the low battery/refill indicator for easy maintenance. The dispenser accommodates full line refills of 3000 and 6000 sprays, delivering high performance air and odour control. **ha**



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### SKS Hotel Furniture & Equipment

For a comprehensive range of banqueting and hospitality products, look no further than Malaysian manufacturers SKS Hotel Furniture & Equipment Sdn Bhd. The ISO 9001 Quality Management System certified company produces banquet chairs and tables, Coroll-T tables, foldaway table extensions, mobile stages, hotel operating equipment and bistro furniture and services hotel chains worldwide.

Beginning as the Hotel Division Marketing Arm of S.Kian Seng Sdn Bhd, SKS has proven itself to be an internationally recognized manufacturer and source for all hospitality and banqueting needs. **ha**

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## Amazing Thailand Launches 'Themes and Deals' Mini Website

As part of the Amazing Thailand campaign, tourists worldwide can now gain access to a huge variety of hotel, resort and travel options in Thailand by visiting the new Amazing Thailand mini site, <http://amazingthailand.tourismthailand.org>, presented by the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

The new site presents all the tourism products and services of Thailand that are part of the e-marketing campaign for Amazing Thailand 2008. This great new online channel aims to attract travellers through e-marketing tactics such as search engine marketing, online PR, e-mail, and e-CRM.

The mini site consists of over 2,000 Thailand tourism products including hotels, tours, attractions and restaurants and a travel agent directory. There are hundreds of direct links to websites covering a wide range of hotels, tour options, attractions, travel agencies and more. The new site provides over 300 exclusive travel deals for inbound travellers.

The new site also offers Web 2.0 capabilities with user ratings and reviews of hotels and tours.

The various comments from online reviewers will help visitors choose the right travel option and enable TAT to enhance its customer relationships.

The feedback will also help travel suppliers in Thailand to constantly improve the quality of their services. **ha**



NEC RFID console smartcard for casino gaming

## NEC Asia Showcases A Tourist's Experience Of Next-Gen Technologies

NEC Asia, a wholly owned subsidiary of NEC Corporation (Japan organized a one-day entertainment and hospitality seminar-cum-exhibition at the Raffles City Convention Centre in Singapore in March. As Singapore gears up to host more international events, the hospitality sector in Singapore is also expected to augment their existing and new facilities, in a bid to boost their service standards and to cope with the influx of tourists and higher occupancy levels arising from such events.

With increased visitorship, there is a need for hospitality chains to step up their security measures at their premises for both internal and external users, such as improving safety for guests and staff, and screening out trespassers or potential terrorist attacks.

However, manpower shortage is a common problem for hotels and resorts, not just in Singapore but also in Southeast Asia. Thus, by tapping onto technology and innovative solutions, such as VoIP, mobility, RFID and digital signage, will relief the hospitality sector on the need to wholly rely on the already scarce service work force in this region.

Hence, in collaboration with the best-of-breed IT vendors and business partners, this seminar focused on world-class hotel and theme park solutions by NEC and its partners, showcasing customer-centric technologies that modelled around a tourist's experience, from reservations to checking-in, customer information, in-room entertainment to making use of hotel facilities for purchases of theme park tickets.

Industry experts and invited speakers shared their success stories, demonstrating how existing hospitality operators could integrate proven technologies to derive solutions that best balanced costs and revenue, to improve efficiency and service standards.

The Solutions Gallery, which was made up of five live scenarios encompassing solutions for registration, lobby, guest room, retail outlet and theme park, allowed the participants to have a seamless feel of how technology is being used at each stage of the hospitality channel, from the time they step into the hotel to the time they depart. Back-end surveillance systems such as the intelligent video surveillance solution and the automated biometric time and attendance system was also showcased to provide insight on improving overall security within a hospitality scenario. **ha**

## Bali's Most Technologically Advanced Convention Centre Is Only A Click Away

Bali International Convention Centre (BICC) has launched an attractive new look website – [www.baliconventions.com](http://www.baliconventions.com). The upgraded site aims to provide visitors with a cyber tour of the convention centre, complete with comprehensive information about Bali, Nusa Dua, safety and security procedures, the centre's facilities as well as details about other hotels in the immediate vicinity. In addition, there is also a copy of the planner and exhibitor handbook in PDF version, which comes together with a convenient print out fact sheet. All data contained on the site enables event planners, meeting organizers and participants to access relevant information regarding Bali as a host destination to initiate a successful event.

BICC has hosted quite a number of large scale international events including the 2002 World Earth Summit which was attended by approximately 6000 people, The World Tobacco Conference in December 2006 that catered for 1500 participants, the Inter Parliamentary Union meeting in April 2007 with 500 participants, PATA in September, 2007 with approximately 1200 participants and the recent United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference that was held from 3-14 December 2007.

For more information visit [www.baliconvention.com](http://www.baliconvention.com) or email [BICC.meetings@westin.com](mailto:BICC.meetings@westin.com) **ha**

**M**uthu's Curry restaurant first opened in 1969, Singapore, as a small coffee shop and has grown to become a major tourist attraction with a reputation for fantastic food. Serving great food on time is essential to Muthu's Curry and it prides itself on being able to deliver outstanding customer service.

Muthu's Curry wanted a system that allowed its serving staff to record orders and transmit them to the kitchen wirelessly without having to return to the kitchen. By eliminating error-prone handwritten orders and duplicative entries at wait stations, Muthu's Curry aimed to increase productivity while reducing unnecessary traffic to and from its kitchen, hence creating a calmer and a more efficient restaurant.

Muthu's Curry restaurants are now equipped with the very latest POS technology. The Restaurant Enterprise Solution (RES) 3000 system, from MICROS, is designed to run on Motorola MC50 EDAs and provides the consistent performance they need.

Staff can now take orders using the MC50 EDAs and transmit them wirelessly to any of the five kitchen or bar printers using Motorola AP-4131 access points. This saves time by not having to write orders and return to a fixed terminal to key them in. It also increases efficiency as staff move from one table to another, continuing to take orders and transferring them seamlessly. The data captured through the MC50s is then integrated into the MICROS RES 3000 system, allowing seamless transfer across the restaurant.

Motorola MC50 EDAs allow immediate access to the most current enterprise information, using both voice and data communications on a single device. It combines mobile computing, data capture, voice over IP and wireless networking into a durable device. **h3**

# Superior Service With Micros

## F&B Outlets Of Every Level Benefit With Wireless Solutions



David Bowden

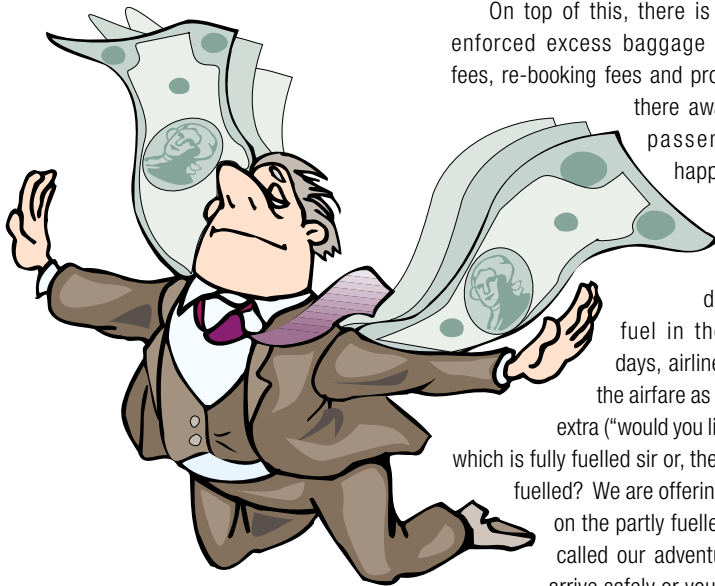
One must wonder how aeroplanes of a decade or so ago ever got off the ground. In the 'good old days' passengers merely bought a ticket and flew happily to their destination while being wined and dined in the sky.

These days, nobody takes to the skies without first buying the skeleton of a ticket to which fuel taxes, insurance, government levies, airport departure taxes, airport arrival taxes, airport noise penalties, booking fees, administration levies, visa charges and now, luggage surcharges are imposed. Thus, a promotional airfare of just a few dollars purchased especially from budget airlines becomes a half a zillion dollar fare before you even arrive at the airport.

down this 'let's get richer, quicker' path? While many believe in the principles of user-pay, there are some basics that service industries must provide. Since when has aviation fuel been an option? Now checked-in luggage has become an optional extra for some airlines and not a basic right. Most would accept that passengers travel with luggage and it is therefore, an essential function of an airline to provide this basic service. No doubt the airlines will howl down this observation by quoting their user pay policies – if you have no luggage you will be rewarded by the airline.

Other could argue that a more equitable policy would be to quote basic fares and then offer discounts to those who don't have luggage rather than charge extra for those with luggage. If one

## Pay Up And Shut Up



On top of this, there is the over zealously enforced excess baggage fees, cancellation fees, re-booking fees and probably several more there awaiting unsuspecting passengers. So what happened to the single priced airline ticket of a decade or so ago? Planes didn't fly on aviation fuel in those days? These days, airlines add fuel taxes to the airfare as if it were an optional extra ("would you like to fly on the plane which is fully fuelled sir or, the one that is partially fuelled? We are offering a promotional fare on the partly fuelled aircraft today; it's called our adventure fare – you may arrive safely or you may not").


What is irksome to passengers is that when aviation fuel prices rise, fares increase quicker than you can reach into your pocket for the additional charges. Not surprisingly, when the prices drop, the fuel taxes stay high while airline officials rationalize their decision with some PR gobbly gook about the OPEC cartel manipulating market prices, fuel hedging, airline directors buying yachts in the Mediterranean or, any other reason that they feel will placate their frustrated passengers.

Are we consumers that gullible to accept this and can we expect the hospitality industry to go

follows the reasoning of some airlines, they should also be charging passengers who are overweight as they chew up more fuel in order to be projected through space. I wish airlines the best of luck as they now try to police passengers trying to avoid check-in baggage charges by carrying oversized hand luggage.

One can envisage airline reservations in years to come being a tick-off list of services from which an airfare is calculated based upon how one completes the form. Will we be required to choose between a seat belt or not, usage of the lavatory or not, smiling greeting from flight attendants or a surly one, life jacket or no life jacket and, plane access via stairs or ascending a rope.

Imagine the turmoil the hotel industry would be in should stringent user pay principles become more prevalent and the hundreds of permutations available to guests. While choice is something we all appreciate and, personalized services and facilities something many hotels strive to offer, there are many basics that are essential to ensure guest comfort. A bed is as essential to a hotel room as aviation fuel is to an aircraft and yet guests don't have to pay a bed surcharge in addition to the room tariff. Well, at least not yet. Hoteliers who charge guests for drinking water because they cannot guarantee healthy tap water should hang their heads in shame.

I think it's time for me to shut up and resign myself to paying up. 

# TRAPICHE

MALBEC  
*Single Vineyard*



The Trapiche team was immensely proud to receive the Trophy for the “Argentinian Wine Producer of the Year 2006”.

When the International Wine and Spirit Competition, one of the most prestigious wine competitions in the world, created the trophy for “Argentinian wine producer of the year” in 2004, Trapiche was the first winery ever to receive it.

History repeats itself. Being awarded the trophy again is the proof that Trapiche is paving the way in Argentina’s wine industry, both in terms of quality and innovation. The winner is designated on the basis of its general performance at the IWSC 2006 and Trapiche won the only gold Medal for an Argentinian wine with Medalla 2003.

Undoubtedly this trophy consolidates Trapiche’s leadership in the Argentinian wine industry.

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