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September 2015

Globility

Global Traveler

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Looking Ahead

While kids are heading back to the classroom, we're already planning for the New Year. We have some exciting changes on the books — new columns and tweaks on our destination articles and informative features. We'll reveal most of the updates in January 2016, but we couldn't wait to share a fun twist: We have replaced our Snapshot page with a monthly quiz. This month, we challenge you to identify currency from countries around the world. When you think you have it right, check your score via the answer link or pull out your smartphone and scan the handy QR code.

Trying to maintain a competitive edge in the evolving world of airline loyalty programs? Turn to page 34 for a comprehensive report on who wins and who loses as airlines switch from mileage-based to fare-based accrual formulas; then turn to page 38 for a pictorial review of our Leisure Travel Awards gala on the rooftop terrace at Hotel Shangri-La, Santa Monica.

And when it comes to around-the-world travel, we bring you destination reports from Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Tucson, Guangzhou, Berlin, Singapore, Seoul, Murcia (Spain) and Bermuda.

Plus, be sure to check out GT Select Hotels & Resorts (globaltravelerusa.com/gt-select-hotels). *Global Traveler's* new online hotel directory brings you one-click access to everything you need to know about the world's best luxury hotels and resorts.

Whether traveling for business or leisure — or both — we've got you covered.

Lisa Matte, Editor in Chief

Find us here, too!



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Visit our website through Sept. 30 to vote for your favorites in the 2015 GT Tested Reader Survey.

globaltravelerusa.com/gt-tested-awards-ballot

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Going Places

I have wanted to visit Israel for a long time but never nailed down the trip. This time, it is a done deal, and I'll be heading there this fall.

There are so many options for flying to Israel: changing planes in Europe, changing planes in Canada or even in the United States. But after years and years of doing exactly that (sometimes flying over a destination only to change planes and fly back), I am done! I am looking forward to an efficient, non-stop flight on EL AL Israel Airlines to Tel Aviv.

The Waldorf Astoria recently opened in Jerusalem, and I cannot think of a better way to explore and experience this religious and historic city. Hilton continues to have a lot of

tricks up its sleeve, from innovation with apps for keyless entry to room selection before you arrive. Jeff Diskin is one of the Hilton executives pushing for continual improvement in the customer experience and the ease of accessing your room.

I also want to hit the links in Israel. Golfers who travel are always looking for that different golf experience, and this surely is one: Nowhere else can you drive a ball over terrain where Jesus once walked. I'll add this to my many golf experiences such as playing near the pyramids in Cairo and midnight-sun golfing during the summer solstice in Finland.

We just came off a whirlwind introduction of Rafie Iannello to *Global Traveler's* Pacific Rim operations, including a "getting to know you" trip with Kim Krol, managing editor, followed by an introduction to how we do business on the East Coast with scheduled meetings in New York and a day at World Headquarters. We are all looking forward to Rafie's contributions to the magazine.

While I have your undivided attention, let me introduce you to GT Select Hotels & Resorts. Perhaps you already found it, as it debuted online this summer at globaltravelerusa.com/gt-select-hotels. GT Select is our hand-selected online directory of the best luxury hotels and resorts around the world. Take a look at the great properties listed on this exciting new feature when booking your next stay.

Enjoy your travels — tell us what you have been doing and where you are going!

Francis X. Gallagher, Publisher/CEO

Find us here, too!



What's happening on GT blogs?

Have you checked out our *Global Traveler* blogs recently? Last month, we featured blogs about everything from exploring the pyramids in Egypt to taking a countrywide tour of Greece.

globaltravelerusa.com/blog



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mail call



July Cover Battle

Our July issue highlighted the winners of our inaugural Trazees, the awards distributed by our sister web publication, trazeetravel.com. Our cover showcased Maui, one of the winning destinations. Our alternate was a fun cover shot from Munich. Which did you prefer?

Maui is a beautiful destination; and while I understand you were trying to incorporate the nature of the award into the image, there must be pictures that better capture the beauty of the destination. I thought the Munich image was fun, a little kitschy and vastly different from your normal covers. It made me smile and was definitely my favorite of the two options.

Leslie Grafton, via email



Hotel to Home

After staying at several Westin Hotels & Resorts on business travel, I noticed I was getting exceptional nights of sleep while on the road. My sleep was actually suffering at home some nights, and I decided it was time to purchase a new mattress and pillows. When I asked about the Heavenly Beds at check-in on my next trip, I was delighted to learn I could buy one for home and mimic the hotel experience at my house. It's rare to sleep better somewhere other than your own bed, but that was exactly my experience. Since I made the switch, my sleep is better than ever.

I was thrilled to see *GT* recognize this trend in the July issue with your article about hotel décor in the home. There've been several other design elements I've noted in worldwide guestrooms that I'd love to work into my own aesthetic.

Christine Lincoln, Carlsbad, Calif.

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Thoughts on a recent *GT* article?

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Which Would You Pick?

Our two finalists for the September cover were Seoul and Berlin. We went with the Seoul cover. Here's a look at the runner-up. Share your thoughts; did we make the right choice?

Email letters@globaltravelerusa.com.

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Mergers and Mayhem

As a government employee traveling back and forth to Europe, I found your June article, “Mergers and Mayhem,” enjoyable. We’re now down to three American-flagged carriers, and customer service has suffered.

With that said, American Airlines really went out of its way last month during a delay. It contacted us ahead of time and had completed rebooking a later connecting flight by the time we arrived at the airport. The airline further ameliorated the situation by posting personalized envelopes on the wall of DFW that included boarding passes and directions to the new gates. Apparently staff at that facility see and recognize these, letting affected passengers move to the front of lines if they have tight connections. We also appreciated all of the staff who were made available right outside the jet bridge should passengers still have needed assistance.

Rob Skully, Wiesbaden, Germany

GT Is Back!

I always looked forward to seeing *GT* in the United Clubs and was disappointed when they seemed to disappear so quickly every month. I was pleased to see them today in a prominent place with other periodicals and newspapers. I’m further pleased to report travelers were reading it at Chicago O’Hare while we rode out a summer thunderstorm. I first became hooked on *GT*

years ago while reading it in the Club and just had to subscribe. It’s always been my “required reading” in flight. Now I’m doubly thrilled to be part of the Globility team. Thanks, *GT*, for being there!

Sue Castorino, via email

DOJ Investigates Alleged Airline Collusion

In the July 8 issue of eFlyer USA, we reported the Justice Department is investigating whether some of the biggest airlines in the United States colluded to keep fares high. We asked: Do you think it is possible airlines have been acting inappropriately and colluding to the detriment of passengers?

Of course, they are colluding! Why would they not? It helps them to make more profits.

Airlines promised the DOJ they would not raise fares after mergers. Within weeks of the recent American Airlines/US Airways merger being blessed, airfares from Phoenix to San Diego went from \$190 to \$210, then to \$220. I had to pay \$240 recently. The DOJ doesn’t really care about travelers by approving these mergers that allow the industry to not have to be competitive.

Thomas Bartel, Phoenix, Ariz.

Bag Fees Bring Some Benefits

In the July 23 issue of eFlyer USA, we reported new academic studies report bag fees improved passenger satisfaction since being introduced in 2008. They’ve reduced lost-baggage rates and decreased flight delays. We asked: Has your satisfaction with airlines increased since the introduction of baggage fees?

I hate the fees and have had worse experiences lately. Everyone brings bags, it takes longer to load the passengers, there are lines in the jetway waiting for people to pick up the bags that won’t fit, and it costs me more when I am making a trip that requires a larger bag. And the airlines are making more money from the bag fees, but they are raising prices anyway.

Andrea Norris, via email

Baggage fees have not helped my experience with any airline. I resent all the new fees and increases in fees on the major airlines. We try to get everything into one suitcase and the rest in our carry-on.

John Natalie, Wilmington, Del.

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Surfing the WiFi-Friendly Skies

Though more and more flights are offering Internet access 35,000 feet in the air, only a small percentage of passengers are taking advantage of the service, due to high prices and slow speeds. The low number of passengers using Gogo's WiFi services hasn't changed much since 2011, hovering currently around 7 percent, according to company data published by Quartz.

However, with innovations like upgraded communications satellites, in-flight WiFi is poised to take off in popularity. Passengers flying Virgin America flights this fall are slated to experience faster WiFi speeds thanks to the carrier's new partnership with ViaSat, a provider of satellite broadband. Virgin will update around 10 Airbus A320s with ViaSat-1, a high-capacity Ka-band satellite service offering speeds of up to 140 gigabits per second, translating to WiFi speeds eight to 10 times faster than standard in-flight networks. Upgraded connectivity should go live as soon as this month.

As in-flight WiFi technologies improve, so does passenger ability to stream content to personal electronic devices. Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines and Southwest all offer such a service. Major League

Baseball games now stream live via JetBlue's Fly-Fi WiFi. The carrier added MLB to its line-up of in-flight entertainment options this summer, enabling passengers to stream games on their laptops and supported smartphones and tablets via JetBlue's Fly-Fi equipped aircraft. MLB's At Bat mobile app provides customers with complimentary access to MLB.TV, featuring live and archived games.

Also new to its in-flight entertainment options is JetBlue's recent collaboration with Amazon Prime, providing Prime members and customers with unlimited, on-demand access to the full catalog of titles from Amazon's digital video library while in the sky. Passengers can stream movies and TV shows from Amazon over the carrier's free Fly-Fi service, available on all Airbus A321 and A320 aircraft this year and on Embraer E190 aircraft in 2016.

Which carriers have you found offer reliable, fast WiFi connections?

gogoair.com

virginamerica.com

jetblue.com

Welcome to Miami

Austrian Airlines makes Miami its sixth North American city this fall with the launch of new non-stop service from its hub in Vienna (VIE) Oct. 16. The Star Alliance carrier will fly Boeing 777 aircraft on the route, offering one round-trip flight every day except Tuesdays and Thursdays. The 308-passenger Boeing 777 features a two-class configuration, with 48 seats in business class. Miami (MIA) becomes the flag carrier's only service to the southeastern United States and joins Chicago (ORD), New York (JFK), Newark (EWR), Toronto (YYZ) and Washington, D.C. (IAD) in its route network in North America, while the new service marks Miami's 17th European destination.

austrian.com

App Your Service

Guests of Marriott Hotels can now request services and amenities via Marriott's mobile app. The hotel company introduced a new feature, Mobile Request, offering a chat function to make real-time requests and have immediate responses and interaction. The function features a drop-down menu with the most requested services, such as extra towels and pillows. The new feature, initially available at 46 hotels worldwide, rolled out to all Marriott Hotels worldwide this summer. Guests can download the free mobile app on the Apple App Store and Android Google Play and make requests 72 hours before, during and after their stays.

mobileapp.marriott.com

Priority Perks

To offer more convenience for top-tier frequent flyers, oneworld launched new Priority branding, an initiative designed to highlight and show travelers where in airports they can access the alliance's premium perks, including premium check-in counters, fast-track security channels, airport lounges and priority boarding lines. New signage with symbols designating Emerald, Sapphire and Ruby — the alliance's three member-status tiers — direct cardholders to locations where they can receive their special benefits. Perth Airport became the first location to debut the new Priority signage this summer, while various gateways in the United States introduce the initiative this month. The alliance plans to replace signage at more than 1,000 airports served by member airlines in 155 countries worldwide.

oneworld.com

High Seas Escape

Norwegian Cruise Line's new ship, *Norwegian Escape*, makes its debut this fall, slated to begin sailing the Atlantic and Caribbean next month. Among the 4,200-passenger ship's cabin categories is The Haven, featuring 95 suite accommodations hidden away at the top of the ship and boasting private balconies and luxurious showers as well as 24-hour butler and concierge service. Accessible only with a key card, the two-story enclave is a ship within a ship, providing guests with exclusive access to a private restaurant and The Haven courtyard with a private pool, sundeck, hot tub and fitness area. Upcoming *Escape* itineraries include trans-Atlantic voyages and eastern and western Caribbean sailings.

ncl.com

Beyond Platinum

To recognize customer loyalty, InterContinental Hotels Group launched a new top tier for its IHG Rewards Club — Spire Elite — allowing its most loyal members to benefit from an ability to earn 100 extra bonus points on all qualifying stays across the IHG hotel portfolio. Rewards members can reach Spire Elite by earning 75,000 points or by completing 75 qualifying overnight stays at any IHG hotel within one year. The new tier gives members the ability to earn a significant number of additional points as well as choose between gaining an extra 25,000 points or automatically upgrading a friend or family member to the Platinum level.

ihg.com



PHOTO: © NICHOLAS BURNINGHAM | DREAMSTIME.COM

Coast-to-Coast Connections

Alaska Airlines is growing its reach from Seattle with new service to destinations in the southern part of the country this fall. Though the airline has been flying to the South since 2007 with service to Orlando (MCO), it has not served any cities in Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina until now. Alaska will offer daily service from Seattle (SEA) to Nashville (BNA) from Sept. 23, daily service to Raleigh-Durham (RDU) from Oct. 1 and flights four times per week to Charleston (CHS) from Nov. 16. Boeing Next Generation 737 aircraft will operate the routes, offering free programming streamed to personal electronic devices, Pacific Northwest-inspired food and beverages and custom power-equipped seats. By this fall, the airline's total destinations served from Seattle increases to 83, with 290 daily flights offered.

alaskaair.com

Direct Link

The first trans-Pacific direct link between Asia and Montréal launches this month with the start of a new partnership between Air China and Air Canada. From Sept. 29, Air China will initially fly three times per week between Beijing (PEK) and Montréal (YUL), with Air Canada placing its code on the flights on a codeshare basis. Once the service begins, Air China will also place its code on Air Canada flights between Montréal and select cities in China. With the start of the new non-stop service, the Star Alliance airlines offer customers convenient connections and seamless transfers to other destinations in China, Canada and the United States via their respective hubs in Beijing and Montréal as well as the benefits of loyalty rewards.

airchina.com

aircanada.com

Fido-Friendly

New at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport is a family- and dog-friendly outdoor lounge from JetBlue on top of Terminal 5. The 4,046-square-foot T5 Rooftop features landscaped green spaces, seating for 50 people, a children's play area and the first post-security dog walk area on a rooftop. In addition to views of the Manhattan skyline, the lounge offers free WiFi and a number of New York-centric food and beverage venues.

jetblue.com



PHOTO: © FLYDRAGONFLY

deals



PHOTO: © TORNADO144 | DREAMSTIME.COM

Free Weekends

Through Sept. 30, stay any five nights at Sheraton and earn a free weekend night with Starwood Preferred Guest's Sheraton Free Weekends promotion. Members can earn up to three free weekend nights and redeem their Free Weekend Night Awards for any Friday, Saturday or Sunday nights through Dec. 13 at any Sheraton hotel or resort, including categories 1–7. Registration for the promotion is open through Sept. 15.

spgpromos.com/sheratonfreeweekends

Member Discount

Members of the Hyatt Gold Passport loyalty program can save up to 15 percent on stays in Hawai'i, Phoenix, San Diego and downtown Washington, D.C., through the rest of this year and into next. Book and stay through March 31, 2016, to receive up to a 15 percent discount on all standard and premium rooms at participating hotels. To qualify for the exclusive member rate, guests must provide their Hyatt Gold Passport membership number at time of booking and request the My Hyatt Rate. The offer is not valid with groups/conventions and may not be combined with any other promotional deal.

hyatt.com

goldpassport.com

Resort to Savings

Enjoy an extended stay in paradise with savings from Hilton Caribbean Hotels and Resorts. The Stay Longer and Play Longer special offers a complimentary fourth night with three consecutive nights at

select hotels and resorts within the Hilton portfolio in the Caribbean, as well as \$100 resort credit per room per stay. Participating hotels include select Hilton properties in Barbados, Trinidad, Curaçao, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Cartagena, Jamaica and Puerto Rico. Book by Sept. 26 for stays through Sept. 30 with promotional code RPPSL1 or P7L to receive all promotional benefits.

hiltoncaribbean.com/summer

Get Paid for Stays

Stay at Aloft, Element and Four Points properties this fall for the chance to earn a free prepaid MasterCard. Members of the Starwood Preferred Guest program can receive a \$50 prepaid MasterCard with three or more stays of one night or more through Nov. 30 at more than 350 hotels worldwide. Stays can occur on any day of the week at any Four Points, Aloft or Element hotel.

spgpromos.com/mastercardfifty

rewards

Third Night's a Charm

Hyatt Gold Passport is making stays in Las Vegas more rewarding with its Third Night's a Charm promotion, offering up to 1,500 bonus points after every three nights at participating properties. Members can earn 500 bonus points after every three nights at Hyatt Place Las Vegas, Luxor or Excalibur; 1,000 bonus points at Vdara, MGM Grand, The Signature at MGM Grand, Mandalay Bay, Delano Las Vegas, The Mirage, Monte Carlo or New York – New York; and 1,500 bonus points at Bellagio or ARIA. Register and stay through Sept. 30. To participate, you must be a Hyatt Gold Passport member and a member of M life and provide both membership numbers at check-in.

hyatt.com/vegassummer

Bug Bounty

United Airlines is showing how seriously it takes customer safety, security and privacy with its new bug bounty program, a first of its kind within the airline industry, rewarding members of its frequent-flyer loyalty program with up to 1 million bonus MileagePlus miles for discovering security bugs. The new program entices passengers to discover and report issues that affect the confidentiality, integrity and/or availability of customer or company information and rewards them for being the first to discover a bug. Discovering low-severity bugs such as cross-site scripting earns members up to 50,000 bonus points, while members who discover medium-severity issues such as brute-force attacks can earn up to 250,000, and finding high-severity problems like remote code execution can receive up to 1 million bonus points. If you think you discovered a bug, email bugbounty@united.com and include Bug Bounty Submission in the subject line.

united.com

Triple Points

Get more value on your next Hilton stay with a new promotion offering members of the loyalty program triple HHonors points. Book and complete a stay of at least two nights at participating hotels and resorts in the Hilton HHonors portfolio in the Americas by Jan. 30, 2016, and earn triple HHonors points. Minimum two-night stay required. Offer valid for all days of the week. Members must book with promotional code ZZTPT1 or Z3P online only.

hiltonhhonors.com



The Palace Downtown Dubai

Reviewed by David E. Katz

Arrival/Check-In: Following a 15-hour journey from New York City to Dubai by way of Amman, Jordan, I arrived at The Palace Hotel Downtown Dubai at about 2 a.m. The trip to the hotel from the airport takes about 30 minutes, although traffic at that hour is nominal compared to rush hour.

The Palace Downtown Dubai remains a gem among several noteworthy Emaar properties in Dubai, including The Address and Vida hotels. It's nestled within the downtown mall area, standing guard at the foot of the Burj Khalifa. The wow factor kicked in as we drove up the 100-yard driveway, the hotel's entrance strategically hidden from view of the main road with its array of retail shops and eclectic restaurants.

Several valets greeted me with smiles. The staff embraced their roles with genuine warmth and care.

The lobby was darkened somewhat as I was escorted to the main desk, where I promptly checked in. I was then escorted to my room, followed a few minutes later by my luggage. The gentleman walked me through every aspect of the hotel and guestroom, detailing all services and amenities.

Guest Quarters: I was somewhat disappointed to learn my room was on the first floor, technically two floors down from the main lobby. But my impression immediately changed as I entered. The room, adorned in dark tones, offered everything I expected: an exceptionally comfortable king-sized bed, a spacious desk, a large closet and a two-vanity bathroom with a separate tub and rainforest shower (body wash and loofah included). The room also featured a flat-screen TV with excellent international programming, an elaborate coffee

machine and an iPad with 24-hour room service assistance (my favorite) that was incredibly easy to use. But the best was yet to come. I also had access to a private ground-level patio surrounded by beautiful plants overlooking the manmade waterway running through downtown Dubai — an incredible vantage point for viewing the elaborate nightly fountain shows choreographed to music by the likes of Michael Jackson and other classics.

Services/Amenities: Although I did not experience the pool or spa, both looked impressive, and according to another guest, there was “no reason to leave the property.” Each morning, I enjoyed the international breakfast buffet at Ewaan, which opens to a spacious rectangular pool deck and happened to be on the same floor as my room. The breakfast buffet was terrific, including made-to-order omelets and my favorite, an array of fruits and freshly squeezed juices.

Additional restaurants include Thiptara, a one-of-a-kind experience featuring Thai cuisine, and Asado, specializing in Argentinean food. The slow-cooked baby goat coupled with an outstanding wine selection blew me away as we sat outside in the shadow of the Burj Khalifa, listened to live music, enjoyed conversation and recognized this hotel as a unique, ageless jewel.

The Experience: This incident sums up my experience: I did not have smaller bills of local currency, and my morning taxi driver could not make change. Although I politely resisted, my valet, Abdullah, insisted on taking the correct fare out of his own pocket. If you're going to travel to Dubai, an Emaar property is the way to go; The Palace Downtown Dubai blends functional sophistication with a modest amount of luxury and just the right personal touches that remind you of being welcomed into someone's palatial home.

GT CHECKLIST

- ☑ Doorman/valet
- ☑ Less than 10 minutes for check-in
- ☑ Separate tub and shower
- ☑ Large vanity
- ☑ High-quality towels
- ☑ Powerful, unattached hair dryer
- ☑ High-quality bed linens
- ☑ Large, flat-screen television
- ☑ Large desk with convenient outlets
- ☑ Large, complimentary laptop safe
- ☑ Complimentary in-room WiFi
- ☑ Complimentary bottled water
- ☑ Stocked minibar
- ☑ Ample lighting
- ☑ In-room coffeemaker
- ☑ Iron and ironing board
- ☑ On-site restaurant and bar
- ☑ 24-hour room service
- ☑ 24-hour state-of-the-art fitness center
- ☑ Turn-down service

The Palace Downtown Dubai

The Old Town Island
Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard
Dubai
United Arab Emirates
tel 971 4 428 7888
theaddress.com

Wentworth Mansion

Reviewed by Francis X. Gallagher

Arrival/Check-In: We selected Charleston as a halfway point on a journey south; we always wanted to see this beautiful historic town. It was also my first time traveling with a pet; our Dalmatian, Ella, seemed to anticipate the journey with excitement.

Arrival was simple. The property has its own parking lot at the back, but we had a great deal of luggage plus a dog crate — I think Ella had more baggage than us — and I wanted to check in first. As we walked up the steps, Jason and Jared were ready to help, holding the door and welcoming us into the beautiful hotel. I was not sure what to expect; was Ella allowed in the lobby? Of course, she was welcome, and they had a water bowl ready. After checking in, we were shown our suite on the lower level — perfect for a quick walk out back on the grassy lawn for you-know-who. Jared went to the car with me and loaded up all our belongings.

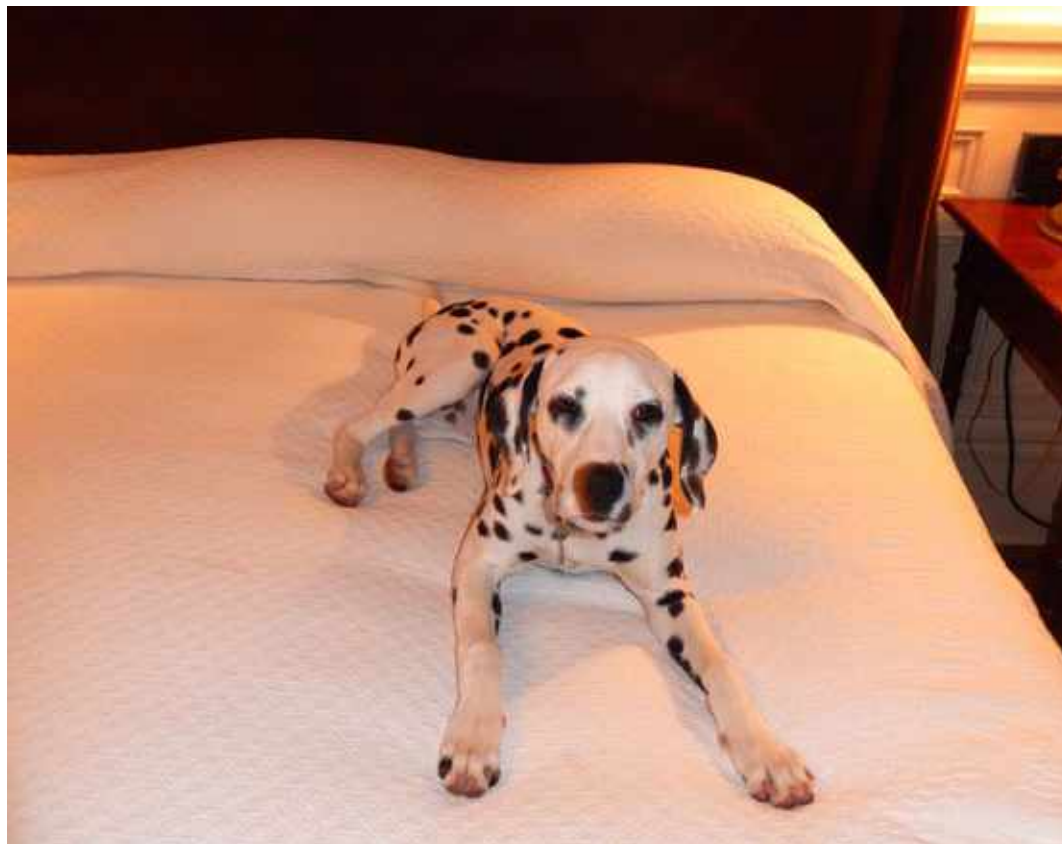
A wealthy cotton merchant, Francis Silas Rogers, built the mansion in 1886 as a jaw-dropping home for his family of 13. It is the best example of the Second Empire style which became a hallmark of Charleston architecture. Rogers was a world traveler and collected two European-crafted chandeliers, stonework and marble; all have survived to this day. The current and fourth owner, Richard Widman, purchased the mansion and its grounds in 1997 and remodeled it into an award-winning, 5-star hotel. Many of the guests are repeats, including their pooches.

Guest Quarters: Our garden suite was at the far end of a long hallway. A small atrium acted as a foyer and opened into a large bedroom with a king-sized bed, which Ella immediately proclaimed as her spot — not for long! The furniture throughout the suite was tastefully planned and matched the period of the hotel. To the right of the bedroom were two doorways. The far one opened into a lovely sitting room, which became Ella's room for the night, and the other led to a spacious bathroom with a large walk-in shower and whirlpool tub. Bathroom amenities included Antica Farmacista soap, shampoo and conditioner along with ample supplies of cotton swabs, a sewing kit and a loofah. Double sinks would have been nice, for which there appeared to be enough room.

Our own little private enclosed patio held black-iron furniture with comfy cushions, a table and a pleasant walled garden.

Services/Amenities: How can you be unhappy with doggy treats on the night table all wrapped up as a gift? It sure made us feel at home and welcome.

We put Ella in her room and took a stroll to Circa1886, the signature restaurant across the courtyard and in the former carriage house, headed up by Chef Marc Collins. In warm weather there is outdoor seating where your pet



*Wentworth Mansion earned
pooch approval from Ella.*

can sit with you. The restaurant offers a tasting menu with wines or an à la carte menu. The service and atmosphere were friendly and professional, and I enjoyed a lovely beef sirloin with the restaurant's Cabernet selection. Don't miss breakfast at the same location, with wonderful shrimp and grits or eggs Benedict. It's the talk of the town.

The mansion is beautiful, and there are so many rooms to read and relax in. Complimentary wine is served in the evening, and a few decanters of sherry and other aperitifs are always available. We took Ella for a nice walk in dog-friendly Charleston; not sure if Rhett Butler would approve, but the students from the neighboring colleges thought she was cute. The mansion also has a full-service spa, but we had to leave right after breakfast, and they did not offer dog massages.

The Experience: Wentworth Mansion is tops — worth a trip, and I would go back in a heartbeat. I have a little test: I open the ice bucket when I check into a room — if it already contains ice, I am impressed. The short list of hotels that have passed this test includes The Peninsula Beverly Hills, the old Hotel Bel-Air (prior to the renovation) and Wentworth Mansion.

GT CHECKLIST

- ☑ Doorman/valet
- ☑ Less than 10 minutes for check-in
- ☑ Separate tub and shower
- ☑ Large vanity
- ☑ High-quality towels
- ☑ Powerful, unattached hair dryer
- ☑ High-quality bed linens
- ☑ Large, flat-screen television
- ☑ Large desk with convenient outlets
- ☑ Large, complimentary laptop safe
- ☑ Complimentary in-room WiFi
- ☑ Complimentary bottled water
- ☑ Stocked minibar
- ☑ Ample lighting
- ☑ In-room coffeemaker
- ☑ Iron and ironing board
- ☑ On-site restaurant and bar
- ☑ 24-hour room service
- ☑ 24-hour state-of-the-art fitness center
- ☑ Turn-down service

Wentworth Mansion

149 Wentworth St.
Charleston, SC 29401
tel 843 853 1886
wentworthmansion.com

The Ritz Carlton, Millenia Singapore

Reviewed by Carly Allen

Arrival/Check-In: I arrived in Singapore in the evening after a long flight from Korea and took advantage of The Ritz-Carlton's gratis pickup in a sleek Mercedes at Changi Airport. My driver offered me water, WiFi and friendly chatter during the short ride to the hotel. The sweeping driveway leads to one of the most impressive entrances and lobbies I have seen. The valet ushered me through a floor-to-ceiling geometric glass entryway that spilled light into the two-story, marbled lobby filled with art and custom sculptures. At the registration desk, hidden off to the side, a staff member greeted me and showed me to my room for a quick in-room check-in.

Guest Quarters: My club-level premier suite felt more like an apartment than a hotel room. A brightly lit long hallway opened into the suite where warm, light wood; large windows; and neutral-colored furniture gave a calming and comfortable vibe. Natural light poured into the living room, and a seating area off to the right included the entertainment area with a 46-inch flat-screen TV, espresso machine and minibar on the adjacent wall. My favorite part of the living room was the large wood desk facing the windows, allowing in natural light and giving excellent views of Marina Bay. The desk also featured plenty of outlets.

Double doors opened into a bedroom with a king-sized bed with a comfortable mattress. Each side table included open plugs and master switches for the suite lighting, and large windows provided a great view to wake up to.

Another set of double doors led to the expansive marble bathroom with double sinks, a large mirror and bright lighting. The freestanding, glass-enclosed shower had my favorite rain shower feature and Asprey bath amenities. A large hexagonal window by the marble tub showcased the Singapore Flyer and offered great natural light. The small walk-in closet off to the left provided plenty of storage for personal items.

Services/Amenities: The Club Level on the 32nd floor offers guests a place to relax, eat or do business. I was happy to make use of the beautiful full-service meeting room, a perfect place to visit with clients in privacy. The lounge area felt like a classic living room, with a marble buffet resembling a real home kitchen, only with professional chefs to cook a great breakfast and friendly staff to help you in any way. Each morning, I snagged a seat by the windows to enjoy my meal looking at the Singapore skyline.

The large gym on the ground floor of the hotel, adjacent to the beautifully kept pool area, includes plenty of cardio, free weights



and a stretching area. My only issue was the temperature; it was extremely warm with just a few fans running, which did not bode well for my workout.

The Millenia offers several dining experiences, from sushi to classic afternoon tea to light lunches, each with amazing art and stories to tell.

The Experience: The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia is my new favorite hotel in Singapore. Not only is the staff friendly, but also the hotel creates a classic and comfortable feel for its guests, even among its thousands of pieces of renowned art. The property is centrally located to entertainment and shopping and a short taxi ride from the financial and business district. If you plan to take a taxi, however, give yourself at least a 15-minute cushion of time when leaving the hotel; the line and lack of taxi flow can cause a delay. This seems to be a problem in all of Singapore.

GT CHECKLIST

- ☑ Doorman/valet
- ☑ Less than 10 minutes for check-in
- ☑ Separate tub and shower
- ☑ Large vanity
- ☑ High-quality towels
- ☑ Powerful, unattached hair dryer
- ☑ High-quality bed linens
- ☑ Large, flat-screen television
- ☑ Large desk with convenient outlets
- ☑ Complimentary in-room WiFi
- ☑ Complimentary bottled water
- ☑ Stocked minibar
- ☑ Ample lighting
- ☑ In-room coffeemaker
- ☑ Iron and ironing board
- ☑ On-site restaurant and bar
- ☑ 24-hour room service
- ☑ 24-hour state-of-the-art fitness center
- ☑ Turn-down service

The Ritz Carlton, Millenia Singapore

7 Raffles Ave.
Singapore 039799
tel 65 6337 8888
ritzcarlton.com

PHOTOS: © THE RITZ CARLTON, MILLENIA SINGAPORE



British Airways | Business Class

London (LHR) to Newark (EWR)

Reviewed by Francis X. Gallagher

On the Ground: I was traveling with my wife and daughter, and we were excited to fly British Airways, an airline that has been a leader during my entire career in the business/luxury travel industry. I checked in online the night before and forwarded the boarding passes to the front desk clerk at the Jumeirah Carlton Tower for printing. We were dropped off at the wrong side of Terminal 5 at Heathrow, which meant a long walk with a lot of baggage. Checking luggage was swift, as was security, and frankly, I was excited to spend some time in the British Airways Galleries Lounge South. However, it was crowded and we found it difficult to locate three seats together. The lounge was filthy with cups, drinks and dishes everywhere, and the floor was equally dirty with napkins, wrappers and crumbs. I assume this was a combination of insufficient staff and messy passengers. On the upside, Aaron Paul, an actor from *Breaking Bad*, was in the lounge, and he agreed to a photograph with my daughter — very cool, nice guy!

Pre-Flight: We took our time on our way to the gate and were surprised the flight was already boarding. As a seasoned traveler, I directed my family to the business-class line and as we entered, the main ticket agent directed some economy-class passengers in front of us. I did not mind, as they seemed to be moving on without an issue. However, the BA boarding agent told them they were in the wrong line (she was actually doing the right thing), and I came to their defense, informing her the other

agent let them in front — a wink and a nod, and we all boarded with ease. Getting us all settled with carry-on bags stowed took a few minutes, then flight attendants distributed newspapers and served Champagne.

In-Flight: I find the seating on BA's business class a little awkward and even a little uncomfortable. I was seated on an aisle facing forward, and the gentleman to my left was facing directly at me — I felt forced to speak to him and thought it rude to raise the privacy shade. Other passengers who were banished to a middle seat had to straddle sleeping passengers when they needed to use the bathroom.

Meals were ho-hum, and the service left a lot to be desired. My Scotch was served from a little bottle as on a domestic first-class flight, but I must say the Merlot was tasty.

Taking the night flight over from New York to London, we planned to eat on the ground and sleep when we boarded. You must use the dining in BA's Galleries Lounge, as it is exceptional and the pickings on board the night flight are slim. The service in Newark was excellent, a wonderful buffet and wine, with an exquisite made-to-order risotto which was perfectly cooked. I ordered the onboard meal just to see what one would receive, and it was an unappetizing salad with chicken.

The Experience: Just not up to speed compared to what I remembered from my earlier days flying British Airways. Perhaps I have become a little jaded with the improvements made on all airlines across the globe. But the stacked business-class seats, the disappointing lounge and feeling as if I were no different from anyone else — this was not the service I recalled from this carrier. Kudos to the chef in the Galleries Lounge and to Aaron Paul for making the flight memorable.

GT CHECKLIST

- ☒ Less than 10 minutes for check-in
- ☒ Friendly and helpful agents
- ☒ Priority tagged bags
- ☒ Airport lounge
- ☒ Complimentary in-lounge food
- ☒ Priority boarding
- ☒ Helpful and courteous flight attendants
- ☒ Pre-flight beverage service
- ☒ Pre-flight newspapers and magazines
- ☒ Extensive on-demand entertainment
- ☒ Amenity kits
- ☐ Slippers
- ☒ Lie-flat seat/bed
- ☒ Turn-down service
- ☒ In-flight menu with three entrée choices
- ☒ Top-shelf wines and liquors

British Airways
britishairways.com

Lars Redeligx | Chief Commercial Officer, Brussels Airlines



Name: Lars Redeligx

Title: Chief commercial officer

Company, city:
Brussels Airlines;
Brussels, Belgium

Number of employees: 3,500

Recent project: Our new commercial strategy will bolster the company against the ever-increasing low-cost competition in the Belgian market, offering 21 new destinations to attract business and leisure travelers at low fares but with high-level service. Soon we'll launch a new frequent-flyer program for the not-so-frequent traveler.

First job: A trainee in Beiersdorf, the German company that makes Nivea and much more

Little-known fact about you: When I travel, I kitesurf wherever possible. From New York to Dubai, Norway to Vietnam, I get to know places from the water.

YOUR BUSINESS

Essential business philosophy: Customers don't want compromises, neither on price nor on service.

Best way to keep a competitive edge: Build a strong team of people who like to challenge the status quo. Travel with open eyes and an open mind.

Yardstick of success: Brussels Airlines' return to profitability in 2015

AS A TRAVELER

What is the most important item you take when traveling? Contact lenses — I forgot them once.

How do you spend your time on board? Talking to crew and customers. I work when necessary and take a break when possible.

What is your favorite restaurant in the world? Perry's Beach Club in Renesse, Holland, is a great place to be with family in summer.

What is your favorite destination in the world? Hamburg, my hometown, by the harbor, and New York

ABOUT YOUR BRAND

Brussels Airlines is recognized for its premium onboard food and beverages. Tell our readers about these innovations.

We want to do more than just fly from A to B. Our vision is to build a personal airline — almost boutique — that brings people together and makes traveling a pleasure, and we have invested in our in-flight product, catering and ground services. Our entire Airbus A330 long-haul fleet is now equipped with a state-of-the-art cabin. Business class is exclusive and club-like with only 22 or 30 lie-flat seats. Economy features ergonomic seats with a generous 31- to 32-inch seat pitch and the same state-of-the-art in-flight entertainment as in business. We are a flying ambassador of the well-known Belgian gourmet cuisine, part of our "Belgitude" approach offering a "Best of Belgium" experience and hospitality. Our guests traveling long-haul business class not only choose from fine-dining options prepared by Michelin-starred Belgian chefs but also, starting this year, can discover eight different Belgian special beers from a beer card created by our in-house beer connoisseur. Guests can also enjoy great Belgian chocolates and cookies.

Our clients and international experts welcomed these efforts. We are proud to have won *Global Traveler's* Wines on the Wing competition three times in a row and to have been voted Best Trans-Atlantic Airline last year. These awards inspire us to continue our investments in quality.

What does Brussels Airlines offer premium business travelers?

Brussels offers smooth connections between the United States and Europe as well as Africa. If you connect from a Schengen Area destination to the United States, terminal walking distances are 325 feet or less. In Brussels, we opened our new flagship lounge "The Loft," which redefines the standards of a business lounge with "Belgitude," an outstanding customer experience and the world's first digital offer in cooperation with Microsoft.

What's in store for Brussels Airlines in 2015, particularly in North America?

We have great news for guests traveling with us between Brussels and Washington, D.C., as they can now enjoy more onward connections to dozens of Brussels Airlines destinations in Europe and Africa or to U.S. gateways. We continue to operate our popular daily service between Brussels and New York JFK. For U.S. clients who wish to spend summer holidays in Europe, Brussels Airlines and our convenient home base Brussels Airport offer ideal gateways, extending our network this summer with several exciting destinations and increased frequencies on existing destinations. We are also convinced U.S. travelers will appreciate our new onward smooth and comfortable connections between Washington, D.C.; New York; and Tel Aviv via Brussels Airport.

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PHOTO: © ANKE VAN WYK | DREAMSTIME.COM



JULY 26, 2015

"We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us" — Anonymous

Like us on Facebook to stay updated and interact with fellow travelers.



PHOTO: © BT-IMAGES.NET



JULY 29, 2015

A gorgeous painting of the hills of Switzerland! #Globility #Travel #Switzerland #Explore

Follow us on Pinterest, or choose your favorite *GT* boards at pinterest.com/globaltraveler.



JULY 27, 2015

Come visit *Global Traveler* at booth #1708 at this year's Global Business Travel Association – GBTA convention in Orlando! #sharing



JULY 17, 2015

Profits are at an all-time high for commercial aviation, but this isn't reflected in the salaries of flight attendants. globaltravelerusa.com/united-flight-attendants-take-on-the-big-guys/



JULY 23, 2015

Immerse yourself in The Copenhagen Experience at the Hotel d'Angleterre, Copenhagen, Denmark. globaltravelerusa.com/summer-in-copenhagen-golf-and-sightseeing/

Connect with us on LinkedIn to stay informed on the world of business travel.



JULY 21, 2015

#TravelTipTuesday: Last Minute Travel Deals helps the spontaneous traveler save at a moment's notice. <http://bit.ly/1Jv5PJK> #TravelTuesday



JULY 25, 2015

Can you guess the six hot spot countries for increased #business #travel demands? <http://bit.ly/1JBaSL>

Follow our Twitter account, @GTmag, for the latest #travelnews and #traveldeals.



PHOTO: © JEVITIC | DREAMSTIME.COM



JULY 28, 2015

"You mean you haven't checked out GT Select Hotels & Resorts yet?" Go to globaltravelerusa.com to learn more.

Follow *GT's* Instagram, @globaltravelermag, for the best #snapshots from around the globe.

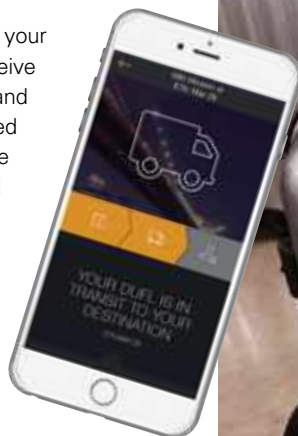
Back in the Swing | Get down to business with innovative tools.

BY ALEXANDRA KIRKMAN

DUFL

Introducing a private valet service that stores, cleans and ships your business attire. Create an account with the DUFL iOS app and receive your DUFL suitcase in the mail. Pack as usual (including toiletries) and schedule a pickup; your items are inventoried, professionally cleaned and stored in your personal closet, with all items viewable within the app, plus a list of personal items. Send all the items you like and select only those to be cleaned and sent to your next destination. When checking out, schedule a pickup and leave your suitcase at the hotel desk. Switch out your entire suitcase by scheduling a trip to your home, repacking and booking pickup. Only for travel within the United States. \$99/roundtrip (including cleaning); \$9.95/month storage.

dufl.com



Turing Phone

Here's a true conversation piece: the world's first phone crafted from a single unit of Liquidmorphium, or Liquidmetal, an unbendable alloy stronger than titanium or steel, with peerless shock absorption and screen-breakage resistance. TRI's Binnacle Ocean Master nano-coating technology provides an IPx8 waterproof rating and safe submersion in 30 feet of water. The phone features a side fingerprint sensor and magnetic charging and is just as sleek on the inside. Turing's end-to-end authentication system creates a protected communications network entirely insulated from cyber threats and privacy intrusions, so users can exchange sensitive data with confidence. If your phone is lost or stolen, the data is rendered useless to anyone but you. Sold unlocked for use with any carrier. Available in 16GB, 64GB and 128GB versions. \$610–810.

turingphone.com



SwingTIP

A Bluetooth-enabled motion-sensing device, SwingTIP is an effective, easy-to-use mobile golf swing analysis and training tool. It clips onto your golf club shaft and works with free mobile apps (iOS 7.0+ and Android OS 4.0+) to capture, record and analyze your swing, displaying 3D animation and video alongside key impact metrics and instructor-style analysis. Includes a wireless sensor, golf club shaft holster clip, fitting shims for smaller shafts and a free online account for tracking your performance and booking MobiCoach live remote lessons. \$99.99.

mobicoach.com/product



RAVPower RP-WD03 FileHub

This handy gizmo provides three useful tools in one: a travel router that turns any Ethernet jack you find into a WiFi hotspot; a 6,000mAh battery pack that keeps your devices humming along when you can't juice them up elsewhere; and a file hub that lets you transfer files and wirelessly stream content (like music and movies) from a flash drive, hard drive or SD card to all your devices. At a sleek 5.4 ounces, it's a must-have when you're on the go. \$59.99.

ravpower.com



A Perfect Blend | Hedges Family Estate wines capture the terroir of Washington State. BY EUNICE FRIED



In a way, Tom Hedges backed into winemaking. It was the 1980s and he was marketing American wine in Taiwan. Next, he sold an American Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot blend he'd purchased to the Swedish government. From there, it was not long until he and his French-born wife, Anne-Marie, thought about making their own wine. To start, they bought 50 acres on the southwest slope of Red Mountain in his native state of Washington; nothing had ever been planted on it. Today, the Hedges Family Estate is celebrating its 25th vintage of wines made from grapes grown on their now 125 acres of Red Mountain. Daughter Sarah is the winemaker. Son Christophe is general manager and director of sales. It is, as its name says, a family affair.

Considering the grapes their vineyards are best suited to grow, the Hedges specialize in red wine, their acreage planted mostly to Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with some Syrah, Cabernet Franc and Malbec. With 40 percent of the vineyards already certified biodynamic, the remainder are currently being switched to that method. As the family often says, they are farmers first, winemakers second. They believe a wine must express the land on which its grapes grew.

Capturing the terroir, they say.

The winery's flagship wine, Hedges Family Estate Red Mountain (\$30), combines all five varieties grown on the estate. Its 2012 vintage, composed of 60 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, is the current release. A dark-shaded wine with an intense, forward nose and a lively taste that speaks of its grape base, it should age well and long.

There are older vintages of Hedges Family Estate Red Mountain also on the market, among them the 2007 vintage (\$35). On a base of 55.6 percent Merlot and with eight years of age, it is a wine of finesse with the aroma of a much younger wine and still a touch of tannin in its finish. Some markets offer still older vintages.

Hedges' newest and top-of-the-line wine is La Haute Cuvée 2012 (\$175 for a magnum). From 100 percent biodynamically grown Cabernet Sauvignon, it presents an intriguing, rich varietal character and delicious fruit.

An added compliment to Hedges wines: Their alcohol content sits between 13.4 and 14 percent, the better to enjoy their more elusive and subtle qualities, often masked in higher-alcohol wines.



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Seoul Announces Five New Incentives to Attract Business Events

SEOUL LAUNCHED A SERIES of new initiatives aimed at attracting major MICE events. Mayor Park Won Soon announced the new programs at the Seoul MICE Beijing Road Show, held at Renaissance Beijing Wangfujing Hotel. The mayor visited Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou to showcase Seoul as a leading MICE and tourism destination.

The first measure offers two options in association with upcoming major autumn events in the city. Business events with 50 or more delegates staying at least two consecutive nights can apply for either complimentary reserved seats at the Seoul Mega Concert, a K-Pop musical concert at Seoul City Hall plaza scheduled for early October or this year's Seoul International Fireworks Festival on Oct. 3. Seats for either event are reserved on a first-come-first-serve basis.

For events through June 16, the second initiative offers organizers three benefits, including a 10,000 KRW food credit per person, a coach bus for

a city tour or up to 3,000,000 KRW in credit toward a Seoul performance.

Apply by Sept. 30 for both incentives, and learn more by emailing mice@seoulwelcome.com.

The new measures join Seoul's longstanding business event support program that recently relaxed restrictions, making qualifying easier than ever for promotional and on-site support programs and services.

The Seoul Convention Bureau, a division of the Seoul Tourism Organization, is the official government-sponsored body representing and promoting the city overseas as a prime venue for meetings, conventions and exhibitions. It provides multilayered support to foreign and domestic event planners choosing Seoul to host their conference, and acts as an information service for business tourists and the media on Seoul's convention infrastructure.

Visit miceseoul.com.

Great Expectations | Count on The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach spa to deliver an oasis of calm. BY KIMBERLY KROL



SETTING THE MOOD: Spa entrance

PHOTO: © RITZ-CARLTON, SOUTH BEACH

The property overall exudes a wonderful scent. Immediately upon entering any public spaces, the fresh smell soothes and calms guests, a theme which continued in the spa and in my treatment room.

Truth be told, we needed some time to unwind. Traveling to Miami for three full days of meetings, my associate Olivia Falcione and I were desperate for 60 uninterrupted minutes of spa time on our third day in the southern Florida city.

Our arrival to Miami hadn't been quite so peaceful. Disregarding our gut instincts and eschewing our normal travel habits, we made a last-minute decision to check our luggage when we arrived at Philadelphia International Airport for our night flight to Miami International. It was nearly 9 p.m., after a full workday, our suitcases heavy and laden with materials for our meetings, and it was a direct flight. It seemed unlikely something could go wrong. Murphy's law. Lesson learned.

Our luggage arrived a day after we did, and we spent our first day in South Beach early-morning shopping for work clothes before a full day of back-to-back meetings. We arrived at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach late at night on our second day, relieved to finally be reunited with our bags.

Following another day of meetings and driving, we once again returned to the welcoming 5-star hotel for our early-evening spa treatments. After checking in, we were escorted through the mood-lit, dark marble spa to the spacious locker room to change out of business clothes and slip into the comfort of luxe spa robes.

The spa feels a world away from the chaotic nature of South Beach. It proved a true oasis from the frenetic pace of the city and of our business trip and offered a respite to recharge at a much-needed moment. The spa's elite menu of La Maison de Beauté Carita treatments complements a comprehensive list of European wellness and beauty rituals. The award-winning spa features 14 treatment rooms, relaxation lounges, a salon and two couple's suites. Fitting to the location, the ocean inspired many of the available treatments, while the exclusive Rhythm Massage brings the culture of Miami into the treatment room with Latin-inspired music.

The spa caters to pregnant women (must be in the second

trimester), offering four prenatal treatments. All this was welcome news to Olivia, a mother-to-be. Her 50-minute Mellow Mama massage, performed as she lay on her side, included a stomach massage. Using techniques and products curated to be safe for those expecting, the massage increases circulation, alleviates tired muscles and reduces water retention. As Olivia noted, she was so relaxed she fell asleep during the experience.

Other mother-to-be treatments include the 75-minute Smoothie, a moisturizing massage; the 50-minute Healing Hour, specifically designed for women in the fourth trimester; and Belly Bootcamp, a 50-minute treatment performed in four stages, which is also recommended post-birth to tighten loose skin.

A variety of treatments are available for spa goers at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach. The 13 massage options range from the typical therapeutic and neuromuscular to four-hand, astro balance and lymphatic drainage massages. Manicures, pedicures and hair services join other luxury, specialized treatments and experiences; treatments for men and those with children and teens in mind round out the menu offerings.

I chose one of the spa's cleansing and wellness therapies, the Taste of the Tropics Body Treatment. Designed to help get bodies beach-ready (which I doubt mine will ever be!), the treatment draws inspiration from the spa's signature Mango Guava candle. The smell in the room instantly put me in a beach-y state of mind.

Mango and guava are incorporated into the scrub for their therapeutic, restorative benefits. Mango is rich in vitamin A, and its powerful antioxidants restore skin elasticity and moisturize dry skin. Guava has vitamins A, B and C to detoxify and fight free radicals.

My favorite aspect of scrubs, ironically enough, is after the treatment ends, when the lingering effects are evidenced by the shine and feel of my skin. Scrubs prove so beneficial and do a wonder restoring and rejuvenating the skin.

Overall, our time spent at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach was a soothing experience. From the décor to the expert staff, guests can breathe a sigh of relief, secure in the knowledge that every wish, whim and necessity will be met during their visit. From the speedy valet

service to the bell staff ready to go above and beyond, a smile greeted our every request.

Encompassing the history of the area, the hotel is housed in an original 1953 Morris Lapidus-designed landmark building. Its convenient location boasts an oceanfront infinity pool, The DiLido Beach Club and more than 20,000 square feet of meeting and event space.

As we checked out of the spa, hesitant of that jolt back to reality, we were left with small parting gifts to remind us of our serene visit. For me, the signature mango guava candle that inspired my treatment — a perfect antidote, now that I've returned home, to a busy day whenever I want to escape, at least in my mind, to the tropics. And for Olivia, one of the first gifts for her little bundle of joy — a branded rubber ducky and a bib inscribed, "I had my first massage at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach." The perfect added touches to cap off our already-memorable experiences.



SWEET HARMONY:
Treatment room

PHOTO: © RITZ-CARLTON,
SOUTH BEACH

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From the Heartland | Chef Paul Lynch embraces regional cuisine at FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar. BY KIMBERLY KROL



It's no surprise Executive Chef Paul Lynch embraces "regionally grown," one of the mantras at FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar in Radisson Blu Mall of America. For nearly 40 years he's incorporated the concepts of farm-to-table and locally sourced in his kitchen. And while he's not a native of Minnesota, he's embraced the restaurant's other philosophy, "Minnesota-inspired," incorporating the area's Scandinavian, German and Irish roots into his cuisine.

The Texas native worked around the United States and in a variety of hotels, including Four Seasons and Westin, before moving to Minneapolis in 1999, first with Radisson Plaza Hotel before entering his current position. The result at FireLake Grill House is, in Lynch's own words, "a restaurant about the flavors of real burning wood from the land of 10,000 lakes."

Lynch helped found Minnesota's Heartland Food Network and was honored in 2006 as a Carlson Fellow, the hotel group's highest award for creativity and innovation. In 2008, he presented his Midwestern brand of cuisine at the James Beard House in New York City.

WHAT THREE GO-TO INGREDIENTS ARE ALWAYS IN YOUR HOME KITCHEN?

Always a high-grade tamari soy sauce, a fantastic instant marinade whether it's poultry, pork or game; the deep umami flavor creates great caramelization on the grill. Because when I'm at home, I'm grilling. The second is my homemade paulula hot sauce, a staple condiment I make each August to add just the right depth of heat and bright flavor to sauces, salads and even egg dishes. And last, a nice, high-end, fruity olive oil. Once again, whether it's making a dressing, creating a marinade or just finishing a beautiful piece of grilled fish, it's where so many great flavors begin.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SEASON FOR COOKING, AND WHY?

Fall. It's beautifully crisp outside — perfect for firing up the grill — yet I still have the bounty from my garden to play with, keeping our meals ultra-fresh and engaging.

ASIDE FROM YOUR CURRENT POSITION, WHAT'S THE BEST JOB YOU'VE EVER HAD?

I was director of product development for a 14-unit restaurant chain on the West Coast in my mid-20s. The travel, the constant creativity necessary to keep the menus current and advancing, especially with the development of regional food — the regionalization was inspiring. At that time, food in America really came to life; it was absolutely the best job I could have had then.

WHAT'S THE FIRST MEAL YOU EVER COOKED?

My first memory is being about 5 years old picking apricots from the tree in our backyard in El Paso, stealing a piece of pie dough my mom had made and using empty chicken pot pie pans to make apricot pies in my sister's Easy Bake Oven. I then presented them to my mother. I remember her saying, "Where did you get these?" with a look of bewilderment. She kindly served them at dinner and everybody raved.

WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST THOUGHTS WHEN YOU HEAR "FARM-TO-TABLE"?


How natural it seems and how much sense it makes. How much better it is for the food, for our planet and my kitchen. Even though it's been played heavily, it's the way I've always approached food and I live it. My meals at home revolve around what I get out of the garden from May to November and what comes out of my pantry and root cellar November to April. It's the way food was meant to be.

FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar

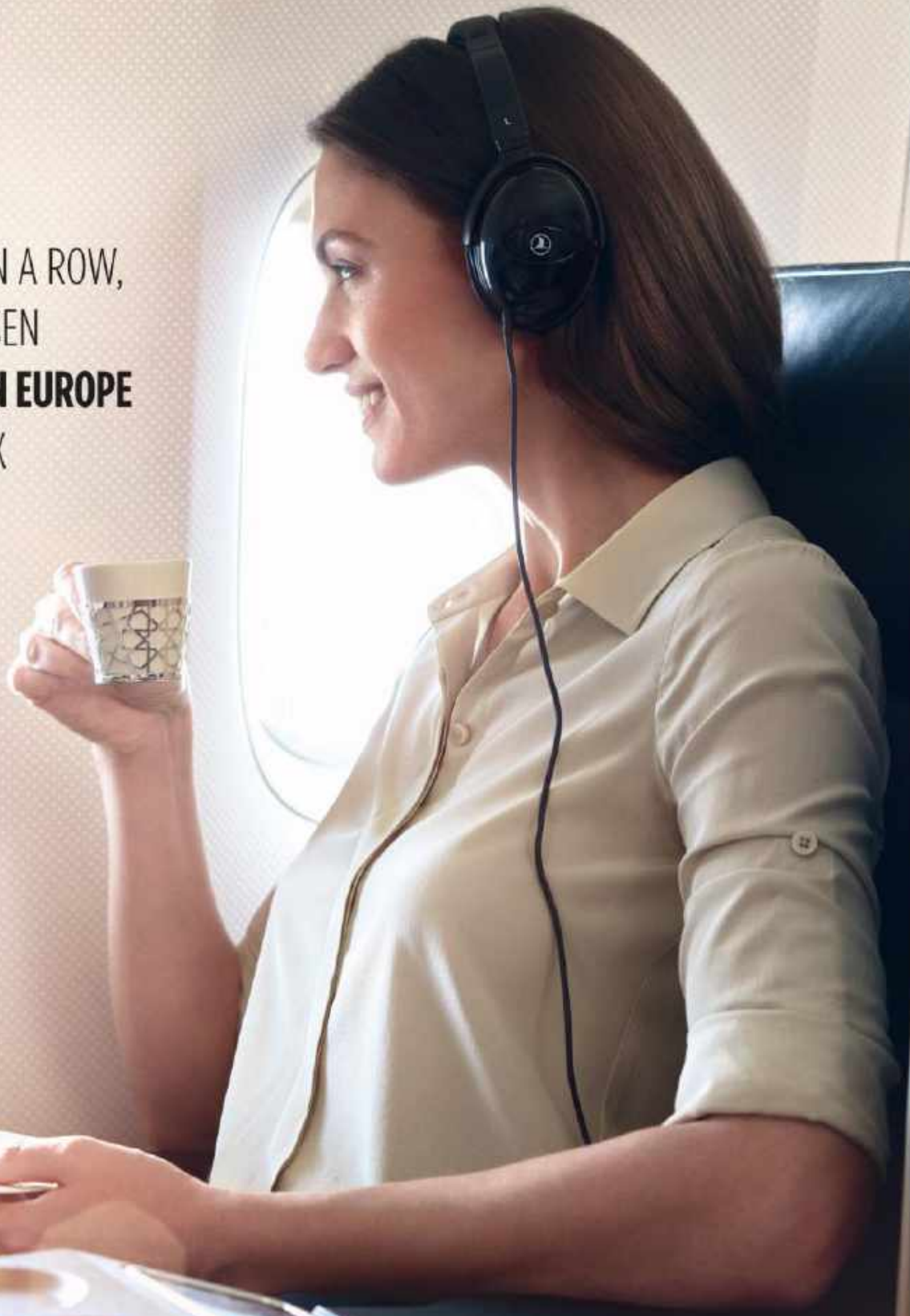
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Wild and Windy |

Take on the challenge of Donegal Golf Club's rugged coastal terrain. BY FRANCIS X. GALLAGHER

PHOTO OP: View of the bay from Hole 8, and Donegal Golf Club sign (below)

PHOTOS: © FRANCIS X. GALLAGHER



The most common name in the Donegal phone book is Gallagher, so it was fitting that I found time to visit, staying at the beautiful Lough Eske Castle. It was equally important to hit the links while in Donegal to provide you with another golf report from around the world.

Donegal Golf Club was established in 1959 with the first golf course and clubhouse at Tullycullion just outside of Donegal Town. Some years later, the membership realized a fine parcel of land on the Murvagh Peninsula was more suitable for the links-style course they required. They hired Eddie Hackett, one of the top Irish designers of the day, to design an 18-hole championship course in 1970. The course and new clubhouse officially opened in 1976.

Pat Ruddy, the most respected links designer in Ireland today, recently refined the design and improved some of the holes and greens.

The Murvagh Peninsula offers windswept topography bordered by pine forest, with the Atlantic Ocean on one side and Donegal Bay on the other. “Windswept” is not an understatement. The day I played here, sustained winds of more than 40 mph howled across the land, so I was nearly the only person on the course. As I gathered my clubs in the parking lot, a few members were giving up play for the day. My hat blew off, and I chased it about 100 yards, to the merriment of the packing members. “You need a woolly hat on a day like today,” one said — and then the cover for his driver took off on the same windy dance. I chased that, too, to their cheers.

I teed off to an open course that had been cleared by nature, alone except for a threesome who let me play through on the second hole — just like when the president plays.

HOLE 1 | 530 yards, par 5 “The Road to the Isles”

The club website says birdies are possible for the long hitter, but this was not in the cards on the day I teed up. The course is spectacular, with a view of the Bluestack Mountains and just a stone’s throw from the beautiful Donegal Bay. Hole 1 provides a warm-up, as you are just entering the teeth of Murvagh. I shot a decent drive right center, but the wind punched down my approach into the forward bunker, ending my dreams of a first-hole par.

HOLE 2 | 463 yards, par 4 “Westward Ho”

As I approached the tee box, I was waved through by a threesome searching for a ball in the high fescue on the left and only about 90 yards away. This was my big break to pass and play the course in record time, making it back for lunch in Donegal Town with my wife. I teed up and sent a ball dead left and low, right toward the threesome, as I screamed, “Fore!” There was no way they could hear me over the howling winds. Fortunately, the ball did not strike them, nor did they see how close they came to near-death. I teed up a provisional ball and sent it out toward the bunker on the right, running to my cart to make my getaway. Even on a normal windy day, players consider this hole one of the most difficult on the course; on this day, I had to play it as a par 5 and hope for the best.

HOLE 5 | 196 yards, par 3 “Valley of Tears”

The name is no lie: This hole can bring the strongest player to tears. A nearly blind long shot leads to a plethora of bunkers on the way to the elevated green. Some believe this hole marks the beginning of the greatest front nine collection in all of Ireland.

HOLE 8 | 549 yards, par 5 “Moyne Hill”

If you had any question that Donegal has length, this hole will firmly remind you; it is one of the longest holes on the Emerald Isle. Eight is an absolutely beautiful hole, with Donegal Bay to your right; you must pause a few minutes for a selfie. But once you finish your foolishness, prepare for battle with this monster’s narrow fairway and little trouble areas. Some small bunkers and moguls lie to the left of this landing strip of a fairway. As I lined up my drive, the wind picked up sand from the beach far below the high dunes where the tee box lies, stinging my face as it hit. The next shot is blind and almost fooled me into going for the 10th green, which happens to many visitors. This hole’s green lies down lower than the fairway and slopes front to back.

HOLE 12 | 593 yards, par 5 “Runway”

I have a different name for this hole: I call it “The Destroyer,” as this



is what it did to me. Forget that the hole is nearly 600 yards from the tips. Worse, a drainage ditch runs diagonally across the hole, and you can’t see it from the tee box or fairway until you are virtually on top of it. Also, bunkers dot both sides of the landing area from the tee box. You need to lay up on the right side, avoiding the ditch, and then smack away to the green in three. Wind or no wind, this is a long and difficult hole; I understand it represents one of Ruddy’s signature changes at Murvagh.

HOLE 14 | 566 yards, par 5 “Hare’s Croft”

Here’s another long hole where you need to send out a near-perfect drive to be in position to lay up — as on 12, that pesky drainage system snakes from the left side of the fairway, then crosses the green and continues up the right side of the fairway. This is where a little course knowledge comes in handy! The green is best attacked from the left side of the fairway.

Murvagh is a must-play course, and I liked the conditions under which I played — a testament to my fortitude, and it makes for a great golf story.

TRICKS AND TREATS:

Hole 8 (top), and the drainage ditch on holes 12 and 14 (above)

PHOTOS: © FRANCIS X. GALLAGHER

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Polar Adventure | Explore the Kingdom of Ice on an Antarctic cruise.

BY J.D. BROWN AND MARGARET BACKENHEIMER



ON ICE: *Quark Expeditions'*
Ocean Diamond

PHOTO: © QUARK EXPEDITIONS

*At the height of
Antarctic summer in
December and January,
temperatures creep
above freezing, the ice
recedes, whales arrive
and penguin chicks poke
out of their shells.*

For many, Antarctica, the pristine Seventh Continent, ranks as the ultimate cruise destination — the Kingdom of Ice (stronghold of 99 percent of the world's frozen water) teeming with marching penguins, elephant seals and albatross but devoid of an indigenous human population as well as shopping ports, trendy cafés and beaches for sunbathers.

The sailing season is brief — December and January are the prime months — and the journey long, arduous, chilly and expensive. The typical Antarctic cruise entails a substantial international flight to Buenos Aires or Santiago; a charter flight to tiny Ushuaia, Argentina, the world's southernmost town; and finally an open-water cruise lasting upwards of two days both coming and going through the storm-lashed Drake Passage that separates the White Continent from the rest of the civilized world. It's a cruise for the hearty and adventurous, more an expedition to the literal ends of the Earth than a casual holiday. Tourists didn't begin making landfall here until the 1960s, and Antarctica remains a rare cruising destination. Even its polar opposite, Alaska, sees 30 times as many cruise visitors annually. Nevertheless, several cruise lines have begun to provide luxurious passage to the planet's southernmost extreme, even if wool hats, parkas, thermal underwear, waterproof packs and high rubber boots figure prominently on the must-pack list.

Seeing Antarctica in relative comfort and style is now

possible because of companies like Silversea Cruises. Its Antarctic vessel, the *Silver Explorer*, carrying just 137 passengers, undertakes eight voyages annually, round-trip from Ushuaia between November and March. Silversea's shorter 10-day expeditions require four days at sea crossing and recrossing the Drake Passage, with six days spent exploring points along the Antarctic Peninsula. Here, passengers take inflatable Zodiacs, setting foot on the ice at scenic coves, islands, research stations and former whaling outposts. Exact locations always depend on weather and sea conditions. Silversea's longer 18-day cruises add stops in the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), where penguins far outnumber people, and South Georgia, where passengers visit famed South Pole explorer Ernest Shackleton's grave and a whaling museum at Grytviken. The Silversea cruises include charter flights to and from Buenos Aires, complimentary parkas, cold-weather gear rentals, butler service, onboard gratuities, naturalist guides and Zodiac drivers.

The 450-passenger, all-suite *Seabourn Quest* also makes a trip to Antarctica a luxury experience with four round-the-Horn cruises between Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Valparaíso in Chile in November, December, January and February, each lasting about three weeks. The Antarctic portion takes up about a third of these voyages, which also visit the Falkland Islands, Strait of Magellan and Chilean fjords. Seabourn boasts

a large team of exploration leaders, photographers, lecturers and naturalists and provides passengers with parkas, backpacks and Zodiac landings.

The 960-passenger, high-end *Crystal Symphony* plies a similar route to that of Seabourn on an 18-night cruise setting out Jan. 27, 2016. Note that under international guidelines, however, vessels with more than 500 passengers are not allowed to conduct shore excursions in Antarctica, meaning guests can see a stunning array of icebergs, glaciers, penguins, seals and whales but not touch shore. The same restriction applies to the 2,170-passenger *Celebrity Infinity* — replete with food and wine pairing workshops and a Canyon Ranch spa — which makes a 14-night voyage beginning Feb. 14, 2016, that includes Paradise Bay and Elephant Island along the Antarctic Peninsula.

For a fuller immersion in the Antarctic experience, more adventurous cruisers favor expedition-style voyages featuring smaller ships and fewer onboard amenities, such as those offered by Quark Expeditions, Abercrombie & Kent or Lindblad Expeditions/National Geographic. Lars-Eric Lindblad delivered the first band of ecotourists to Antarctica in 1966, and his son, Sven Lindblad, has teamed up with National Geographic to continue that tradition. Employing the 148-passenger *National Geographic Explorer* and the 102-passenger *National Geographic Orion*, Lindblad's fleet features an onboard National Geographic-certified photographer, an undersea specialist and a roster of expert naturalists and lecturers, giving voyages an educational focus. There are two cruises monthly from November through February. The 12-day cruise from Ushuaia crosses the Drake Passage and devotes six days to exploring the Antarctic Peninsula's wildlife, history and terrain, while the 24-day cruise adds two days in the Falklands and five days in South Georgia, home to tens of thousands of king penguins.

Abercrombie & Kent, with 175 Antarctic expeditions under its belt over the last quarter century, now charts the 199-passenger *Le Boreal* for 12- and 17-day cruises in the region. *Le Boreal* is quite luxurious for an expedition-style vessel, equipped with elevators, private balconies and a theater. There's even butler service in the suites, but don't expect specialty restaurants, climbing walls or a full-service spa. The 12-day cruise sailing from Ushuaia spends five days on the Antarctic Peninsula, with two Zodiac excursions daily, while the 17-day cruise adds the Falklands and three days in South Georgia.

Norwegian-based Hurtigruten employs the 318-passenger *MS Fram* to explore Antarctica from its base in Ushuaia and targets Norway's former whaling sites in the region. In 2016 it will add a second ship, the *MS Midnatsol*, which will make 10 Antarctic cruises annually from Punta Arenas, Chile. Both of Hurtigruten's ships, where English and Norwegian are spoken, offer optional "extreme excursions" including kayaking, glacier skiing, camping and snorkeling.

Adventurous shore excursions are also a hallmark of Quark Expeditions, a polar specialist offering a wide range of expedition-



style cruises in Antarctic waters on two ships, the 117-passenger *Sea Adventurer* and the 189-passenger *Ocean Diamond*. Quark's fairly economical 11- and 12-day cruises from Ushuaia have multiple departures November through March and take in both the South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula. Quark also provides 13- to 15-day voyages that cross the Antarctic Circle, the geographic marker at 66° 33' S that circumscribes the southern Frigid Zone. Most Antarctic cruises do not go this far south.

Quark also offers an ingenious if expensive time-saver, the "fly-cruise," which erases the usual 600-mile, 36- to 48-hour crossing of the Drake Passage that begins and ends many Antarctic cruises. Employing special three-hour charter flights from Punta Arenas, Chile, directly to King George Island, Quark's fly-cruises give passengers plenty of extra time to try overnight camping, kayaking and snowshoeing on the White Continent, where the ice underfoot can be as deep as two miles.

Finally, not to be overlooked if you are already traveling Down Under, are cruises from New Zealand that explore the far side of Antarctica. The sailings, with stops at "forgotten" subantarctic islands, are lengthy, but eastern Antarctica has some staggering attractions, including McMurdo Sound, the Ross Ice Shelf (the world's largest body of floating ice) and the preserved huts of legendary polar explorers, including Scott and Shackleton. Heritage Expeditions operates such voyages in January and February out of Invercargill aboard the 50-passenger *Spirit of Enderby*, an oceanographic research vessel with an ice-strengthened hull, a Russian crew and an Australian and New Zealander staff of cooks, guides and lecturers. Requiring a full month at sea, these expeditions feature accommodations ranging from bunks and shared bathrooms to full-service suites, with fares starting at \$20,000 per traveler.

By whatever ship in whatever style, cruising the pristine, ice-laced waters of Antarctica is a primordial experience, sweeping passengers as far from the madding crowds as one can sail.

PHOTO OP: A penguin encounter with Quark Expeditions

PHOTO: © QUARK EXPEDITIONS

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Hey, Big Spender

Who gains and who loses as airlines shift to price-based loyalty programs? BY WILLIAM J. MCGEE

As the airline industry continues to remake itself, prognosticating about its future has never been riskier. But one thing seems certain: In the history of frequent-flyer programs, 2015 will go down as a watershed year, the most important since American Airlines forever altered the booking process by introducing AAdvantage in 1981. This year, for better or worse, two major network carriers initiated a game-changer by shifting from mileage-based to price-based awards.

The changes have been at once both gradual and transitional. In February 2014, Delta Air Lines announced an overhaul of its SkyMiles program, effective Jan. 1 of this year. This was followed in June 2014 by United Airlines revamping its MileagePlus program, effective on March 1 this year. In both cases, members earn between five and 11 miles per dollar spent via a sliding scale based on program status, rather than earning by miles flown.

As for the third member of the “Big Three,” in December 2014 American Airlines announced more modest tweaks to AAdvantage, offering bonus

mileage for certain bookings, such as first- and business-class tickets. But since its merger with US Airways isn’t fully implemented yet, several experts assert integration must occur before AAdvantage is overhauled. Meanwhile, JetBlue, Southwest and Virgin America award elite status based on dollars spent.

So what spurred Delta and United? Dr. Eric Chiang, a *Global Traveler* Globility Board member and graduate director of instructional technology, Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Fla., summarized: “A revenue-based model is much more valuable for the airline. One, it rewards those who spend the most. Two, it prevents travelers from gaming the system, such as purposely flying longer routes or greater number of connections to maximize miles. And three, the expense of the program is more predictable since it would be correlated with revenues.”

The changes come as airlines have become rabid about cost control “discipline.” There are about 300 million members enrolled in U.S. airline

loyalty programs (nearly the population of the United States), and about 7 percent of all miles flown are via awards. But the fight for redemption has never been harder, even among elites. The industry's unparalleled consolidation since 2001 melded members of eight major programs — including those from TWA, America West, Northwest, Continental and US Airways — into just three: AAdvantage, SkyMiles and MileagePlus.

Another key but under-reported dynamic is that planes are fuller than they've ever been; in 2014, passenger load factors on U.S. airlines reached 83.4 percent, an average not seen since the era of troop carriers during World War II. For contrast, average annual loads remained in the 50s and 60s throughout the 20th century. This unprecedented crowding of cabins in recent years negatively affects members' abilities to secure both upgrades *and* trips. It's a challenging time for the rules to be rewritten.

In theory, this shift seems to automatically benefit business travelers. Tim Winship, publisher, FrequentFlier.com, summed it up: "By the airlines' own reckoning, revenue-based programs were designed to reward the companies' most profitable customers, albeit at the expense — and here the airlines have been less forthright — of flyers who make more modest contributions to the bottom line. The most and least profitable customer categories map pretty tidily onto those of business and leisure travelers. The former travel more frequently and purchase higher-priced tickets, while the latter travel less frequently and purchase cheaper tickets."

As always, the devil is in the details, and much of the initial reaction was pessimistic. Mileage expert Brian Kelly, founder and CEO, ThePointsGuy.com, referred to Delta's "negative" SkyMiles changes by stating, "[I]n my opinion, they're all going to be bad news for most Delta flyers." He calculated general members would earn miles at 20 cents each, "a terrible value."

The changes also revealed rifts between business travelers and the organizations paying for those fares. In March 2014, one month after Delta's initial announcement, the Radnor, Pa.-based Business Travel Coalition surveyed 2,000 travel managers and found the following: 84 percent believed the changes would "result in higher prices paid for their organizations"; 95 percent were concerned "overall travel cost-control will become more difficult to achieve"; and 82 percent felt "travel policy will become more difficult to maintain adherence to."

BTC chairman Kevin Mitchell stated, "Airlines will no doubt secure higher yields and revenues from the vast number of less frequent business travelers for whom new incentives to earn valuable perks will be compelling."

Even before implementation, the BTC survey underscored the new rules potentially could exacerbate conflicts between corporate buyers and their employees. One respondent noted, "For corporations that allow employees to maintain points for personal use, this will conflict with their policies and efforts to get travelers to book seven to 14 days in advance to get lower fares." Another was more blunt: "Airlines continue to find a way to pick



PHOTO: © SHUTTER999 | DREAMSTIME.COM

away at the managed corporate travel program. The starting trend of basing the miles accrued (i.e., status) on fare paid will incentivize travelers to book closer to departure and most likely result in higher fares.” One travel manager who requested anonymity told *GT*, “Business travelers should realize that if they’re [intentionally] paying more for flights, eventually we’ll know about it. And eventually that affects travel budgets.”

In March, PricewaterhouseCoopers issued the report, “The future of frequent flyer programs: Will you win or lose?” identifying the winners and losers for spend-based programs. According to the report, those likely to fare better are premium-fare passengers, last-minute travelers, business travelers, short-distance travelers and those with direct itineraries. On the other hand, passengers making advance purchases, price-sensitive customers, long-distance travelers and those with layover itineraries will likely fare worse. Jonathan Kletzel, the report’s author and the company’s U.S. transportation and logistics leader, acknowledged the categories are not absolute: “You will always be able to find exception cases, but they will be a fairly limited number.”

Recently we asked the *GT* Globility Board to evaluate the revenue-based model, and the range of responses underscores the multifaceted pros and cons. For example, Dr. Eric Chiang noted, “The new price-based award system is indeed harmful to those who fly long-haul international flights in discounted economy class.”

Celeste Linhard, Western region sales manager, Super Bakery Inc., observed, “With fares still on the rise, I think many will benefit from this new rewards program — I’m not going to worry about it. To me the premier status is still more important.”

Mark Leininger, project manager, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, suggested, “Why don’t I just travel well when my firm is reimbursed, and opt to purchase the things I want when I fly on my own dime? Leave my marketed cocoon of Sky-Team and open up to what all the other world airlines have to offer? Never to see a stand-by list with my name at the top again? It’s a scary thought!”

Sue Castorino, president, The Speaking Specialists, noted the double-edged sword quality of United’s new policy; she usually earns 3,000 miles between Chicago and Phoenix but recently received only 1,600 on that route. Conversely, a Chicago–Washington, D.C. itinerary that usually earns 1,400 miles recently generated 3,600. Her advice: “So the bottom line is if you really want the cumulative miles to pile up, dig deep [and spend more].”

It can’t be stressed enough that individual travel and booking patterns make all the difference. ThePointsGuy.com’s Kelly suggested only one silver lining with Delta: “Basically, if you’re flying short-haul/expensive flights you may earn a lot more miles than you would by simply flying the short distance. But for most travelers, you’re probably going to net a lot less miles.” Of course, some of the highest-yield short-haul flights on Delta’s route map are those on the business-centric Northeast Shuttle (New York to Boston, Washington, D.C. and Chicago) and West Coast Shuttle (Los Angeles to San Francisco), so that’s good news for many corporate travelers.

PricewaterhouseCoopers’s Kletzel would not comment on specific

airlines matching Delta and United, but he said, “Legacy carriers have complex processes and systems which do not allow for them to just turn the ship on a dime and switch from distance-based to revenue-based. It is a gradual process that is difficult to execute during the best of conditions, let alone in an environment like a merger.”

Others believe significant program changes will come in stages. Mike Russo, a *GT* Globility Board member and retired U.S. Air Force officer, suggested, “I think it’s only a matter of time before the next big change comes, decoupling the elite status from the miles flown and instead awarding elite qualification miles based on airfare dollars.”

Winship of FrequentFlier.com called the move to spend-based schemes “inevitable,” and said it’s likely American and Alaska Airlines will follow suit. But he acknowledged an alternative scenario is possible. “Traditional

mileage-based programs are still preferred by the great majority of travelers, if not necessarily by the small percentage of flyers who generate an outsized percentage of the airlines’ profits. If enough of the low-profit customers shift their allegiance from United and Delta to American, on the strength of American’s loyalty program, there may yet prove to be a future for mileage-based schemes.”

What about overseas? While much of the focus has been on Delta and United, program overhauls are occurring internationally as well. As Kletzel noted, “Many international carriers are already revenue-based.”

Winship added, “There’s no doubt many foreign carriers would adopt a spend-based model tomorrow if it were simply a matter of pushing an ‘Update’ button. But because today’s loyalty programs are so tightly woven into every aspect of airlines’ operations, conversions are expensive and time-consuming. The airlines that are most likely to invest the required resources are British Airways and Lufthansa in Europe, and Cathay Pacific and Singapore in Asia.”

Other travelers are finding innovative ways to fly internationally. One member of *GT*’s Globility Board noted that COPA Airlines of Panama, a member of Star Alliance, broke off

from United’s MileagePlus and launched ConnectMiles, which is mileage-based and allows redemption on United and other Star partners. The member noted, “So this may be a more efficient way to collect miles flown for use on Star Alliance airlines than United’s own program.”

So how will this all play out? Time will tell, and although redemption rates vary from traveler to traveler, there are some helpful benchmarks. In May, IdeaWorksCompany — a Shorewood, Wis.-based travel marketing firm — announced the results of the Switchfly Reward Seat Availability Survey based on 7,640 booking queries at the websites of 25 global frequent-flyer programs. The six U.S. airlines included showed mixed results, in favor of low-cost carriers: Southwest led the pack with a 100 percent total availability score, followed by JetBlue (87.1 percent), Alaska (80 percent), United (75 percent), American (67.1 percent) and Delta (57.9 percent). Clearly, the Big Three have room for improvement.

A similar survey next year may well determine just how beneficial these program changes have been for most business travelers.



Price-based award programs can't be easily summarized as a win or a loss even for frequent business travelers. Myriad factors determine who benefits and who doesn't.

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*Global Traveler's Wines on the Wing Airline Wine Survey "As selected by Global Traveler's Wines on the Wing Airline Wine Survey, www.globaltravelerusa.com"

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Leisure Travel Awards 2015

Global Traveler honors the best in leisure travel with a celebratory gathering in Santa Monica. BY MONIQUE BARRETT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSEPH ROMANA AND NICOLAS BATES



For the third year in a row, *Global Traveler* feted the world's best leisure destinations, airlines, cruises and hotel groups at its annual Leisure Travel Awards celebration. For the second time, *GT* honored the winners of these prestigious awards at the Hotel Shangri-La at the Ocean with themed cuisine and spectacular sunset views high above Santa Monica in the rooftop penthouse.

This year, in addition to congratulating the best of the best in leisure travel, the gathering honored the rich history of the luxury boutique hotel, celebrating its diamond jubilee in 2015. On the eve of the 75th anniversary of its opening, esteemed members of the travel and hospitality industry sang an enthusiastic rendition of "Happy Birthday" to the hotel after winners collected their well-earned Leisure Travel Awards.

Overlooking the Pacific since the end of the Art Deco period, the hotel building boasts an authentic Streamline Moderne design. After a recent \$30 million renovation, the timeless hotel, a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, provides all the contemporary amenities of today while



maintaining the glamour and appeal of the Golden Age of Hollywood.

Among the most prestigious in the leisure travel industry, *Global Traveler's* Leisure Travel Awards highlight the best the leisure travel world has to offer. Nominations in each category came from our elite Globility Board as well as highly experienced magazine staff. From these nominations, our esteemed Advisory Board selected the final winners.



WINNERS' CIRCLE

Best Beaches

Turks and Caicos

Best Island in the Caribbean

British Virgin Islands

Second Consecutive Year

Best Island in Europe

Santorini

Second Consecutive Year

Best Island Pacific Rim

Fiji

Best Adventure Destination

New Zealand

Best Historical Attractions

Israel

Best Small Ship Cruise Line

Silversea Cruises

Third Consecutive Year

Best Large Ship Cruise Line

Royal Caribbean Cruise Line

Best Cruise Line Entertainment

Celebrity Cruises

Best Cruise Line Dining

Oceania Cruises

Best Luxury Cruise Line

Norwegian Cruise Line



AWARD WINNERS:

1. Stefan Viard, general manager, Emaar Hospitality Group
2. Chen Min Wang, deputy general manager, China Airlines
3. Becky Thomson-Foley, director, entertainment, Celebrity Cruises
4. Nicky De Jesus, director of global sales, business travel, the Americas, Meliá Hotels International
5. Michael Kohlstrand, vice president, Western USA, Etihad Airways; Etihad Airways flight attendants
6. Wendy Moriarty, regional director sales, Oceania Cruises
7. Joost Ouendag, vice president, product development, Viking River Cruises
8. Ava Thomas, commercial director, Western USA, British Airways
9. Douglas Grau, director, business development and sales, West, Royal Caribbean International
10. Bob Jacobs, vice president, brand management, Sheraton & Westin North America, Starwood Hotels & Resorts



WINNERS' CIRCLE

Best Adventure Cruise Line

Lindblad Expeditions

Best Family Cruise Line

Disney Cruise Line

Best River Cruise Line

Viking River Cruises
Third Consecutive Year

Best Luxury Leisure Hotel Group in the World

Meliá Hotels International

Best Hotel Chain Resorts

Westin Hotels & Resorts

Best Lifestyle Leisure Hotel Group in the World

Vida Hotels and Resorts

Best Leisure Airline

Hawaiian Airlines

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Outstanding Customized Services

Etiha Airways

Outstanding Environmental Initiatives

American Airlines

Outstanding Innovations

China Airlines

Outstanding Social Awareness

British Airways

AWARD WINNERS:

1. Kathleen Pearson, director of expedition services, Lindblad Expeditions
2. Tausha Vanterpool, West Coast sales manager, British Virgin Islands Tourism
3. Gregg Anderson, regional manager, North America, Tourism New Zealand
4. Nancy Gonzales, regional sales director – Western region, Silversea Cruises
5. Leimomi Hall, director of sales, North America, Hawaiian Airlines
6. Olaf Kaehlert, general manager, Fiji Airways; Ruth Daly, regional director, North America, Tourism Fiji
7. Pamela Ewing, U.S. regional marketing manager, Turks and Caicos Tourism
8. Scott Feinerman, director of clergy and travel industry relations, Israel Ministry of Tourism
9. Grigoria Kamaterou, director, Greek National Tourism Organization
10. Fern Fernandez, vice president, global marketing, American Airlines; Jennifer Adams, managing director, integrated marketing, American Airlines



1. Francis X. Gallagher, publisher and CEO, *Global Traveler*; Matthew McNeal, account executive, *Global Traveler*; Olivia Falcione, advertising manager, *Global Traveler*; Katie Skrzek, director of digital media, *Global Traveler*; Carly Allen, vice president, *Global Traveler*; Monique Barrett, associate editor, *Global Traveler*; Richard T. Evans, senior vice president, *Global Traveler*

2. Amber Gonzales, VIP events producer, Eden Rodriguez Productions; Nancy Gonzales, regional sales director – Western region, Silversea Cruises

3. Stefan Viard, general manager, Emaar Hospitality Group; Leimomi Hall, director of sales, North America, Hawaiian Airlines; Wendy Moriarty, regional director sales, Oceania Cruises; Ava Thomas, commercial director, Western USA, British Airways; Scott Feinerman, director of clergy and travel industry relations, Israel Ministry of Tourism; Dorothy Froix, travel representative, The Aerospace Corporation

4. Philip Chou, manager, EVA Air Los Angeles Cargo Department; Wendy Chen, deputy manager, EVA Air; Sandy Huang, deputy senior vice president, EVA Air; Gary Huang, junior vice president, EVA Air; Stacy Lin, junior vice president, EVA Air



5. Gary Huang, junior vice president, EVA Air; Michael Abraham, director sales and marketing, Hotel Shangri-La at the Ocean

6. Francis X. Gallagher, publisher and CEO, *Global Traveler*; Michael Russo, member of *Global Traveler*'s Globility Board

CHINA AIRLINES' NEXT GENERATION

The leading airline debuts a refined experience onboard its Boeing 777-300ER

In late 2014, China Airlines unveiled its Boeing 777-300ER aircraft, featuring an updated business class, a new premium economy class, the family couch, an advanced in-flight entertainment system and an award-winning design.

PREMIUM BUSINESS CLASS

China Airlines passengers enjoy a private and comfortable space, with 78-inch, full flat-bed business class seats. The industry-leading cabin also features a user-friendly control panel, 18-inch personal screens with more than 100 selected shows, a cabinet for personal belongings, premium in-flight amenities and an accessible herringbone arrangement.

The highlight of Premium Business Class is Sky Lounge, a space in the middle of the cabin for passengers to relax. The Eastern Literary Tea-tasting Area offers tea from Taiwan and complementary snacks, while the Western Fashionable Coffee Area provides coffee and pastries. Selected Chinese and English books of the month are also available.

PREMIUM ECONOMY

Introducing a new cabin on the 777-300ER allows China Airlines to offer passengers a seat pitch of 39 inches at a reasonable fare. The seat's fixed backshell and front-sliding design, combined with adjustable leg rests, optimizes passenger comfort, support and privacy.

Premium-economy passengers enjoy a number of added amenities, including an amenity kit, special meals and a larger baggage allowance, at fares only slightly higher than economy class. Added storage includes a compartment for tablets and large tray tables. The cabin also boasts 12-inch personal entertainment systems.

FAMILY COUCH

China Airlines' enhanced economy-class cabin feature the innovative Family Couch seats. A specially designed footrest raised 90 degrees converts three seats into a single sofa bed, allowing families and couples the comfort of lying on their backs on long-haul flights. The Family Couch comes with a mattress, pillows, blankets and specially designed seatbelts.

ENHANCED IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

China Airlines' industry-leading Panasonic eX3 in-flight entertainment system features multi-touch technology, an 18-inch screen, movies, music, games and much more. The My Favorite function allows passengers to save their favorite programs for continuous viewing after a rest or meal.



The most unique feature is the social networking Seat Chat function, which allows passengers to message each other, share their favorites and make new friends in flight. The entertainment system offers other services, including duty-free shopping, e-magazines, news updates and in-flight menus. Complimentary and fee Wi-Fi access is also offered.

AWARD-WINNING DESIGN

China Airlines 777 NexGen Cabin won the 2015 Red Dot Design Award, named the Best of the Best in what is widely considered the Olympics of design, and marking the first time an airline has been awarded the honor in recent years. Red Dot was impressed by the cabin's design in terms of innovation, function, ergonomics, environmental friendliness, symbolism and emotion.

NEW UNIFORMS

China Airlines introduced brand new uniforms, tapping Oscar-nominated William Chang to design the futuristic, fresh look. Bold color blocks in red, violet, white and blue-gray fuse a traditional Mandarin look with modern Western fashion. Three different color combinations are available for both men and women.



Learn more and check out a 360-degree virtual tour of the new aircraft at www.china-airlines.com.





1. Michael Kohlstrand, vice president, Western USA, Etihad Airways; Etihad Airways flight attendants
2. Agnes Huff, president, Agnes Huff Communications; Michael Abraham, director sales and marketing, Hotel Shangri-La at the Ocean
3. Matthew McNeal, account executive, *Global Traveler*; Richard T. Evans, senior vice president, *Global Traveler*
4. Graham Dee, product manager, Core Digital Media; Amy Sarto, head of marketing



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Global Appeal

Kuala Lumpur soars as a top meeting destination in Asia Pacific. BY TRACEY TEO

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital and most populous city, began as a humble, 19th-century tin-mining town carved from the dense tropical rainforest. Today, the former British colonial outpost is a dynamic, modern metropolis that hosts thousands of international business travelers annually. The gleaming, 88-story Petronas Twin Towers dominate the skyline, a powerful symbol of the city's aspiration to be a strong player in global commerce.

Booming Kuala Lumpur, or KL as locals call it, hasn't escaped the notice of meeting and conference planners who applaud the quality and abundance of event space as well as its strategic location as a gateway to the rest of Southeast Asia. As a result, the MICE market skyrocketed over the last decade, and Kuala Lumpur thrives as one of the top meeting destinations in the Asia Pacific region, jumping from 33 to 28 in world convention rankings in 2014 (by the International Congress and Convention Association). There's also the benefit of having the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau on hand to assist with booking meetings or events.

The appeal of this multicultural city with a polyglot population of Malays, Straits Chinese and Indians is easy to grasp. Interspersed with miles of high-end shopping malls, luxury hotels and restaurants serving fine Asian cuisine are mosques, Buddhist temples and Hindu shrines, a cultural amalgam unique to this tiny corner of Southeast Asia.

And KL offers big bang for the buck, too. Visitors find meals and accommodations reasonably priced, and Malaysia boasts a favorable international exchange rate. Political instability in neighboring Thailand and soaring prices in Singapore make Kuala Lumpur all the more attractive.

The award-winning Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, a multipurpose facility conveniently located in the Central Business District, hosted a record 1,759 events in 2014, an 11 percent increase over the previous year.

MICE:
meetings,
incentives,
conventions and
exhibitions

KLCC general manager Alan Pryor attributes the growth to "having a world-class facility, strong industry relationships and awareness of industry trends."

He adds that he relies on "a knowledgeable and profes-

sional team that remains committed to meeting and satisfying clients' evolving meetings needs through the delivery of innovative products and services across the board."

With 40,387 square feet of exhibition space, a grand ballroom, three conference halls and 20 meeting rooms, KLCC is fully equipped to meet a broad range of requests.

Plenary Hall, the centerpiece of the sprawling facility, offers tiered auditorium seating for 3,000; an innovative sound and light system; and an interpretation system for up to six languages, making it the venue of choice for keynote sessions and concerts.

KLCC looks to the future with an expansion that kicked off in April and is slated for completion in 2018. Lot 91, as the mixed commercial development project is called, will not only add convention space, it will also incorporate an office tower and retail areas. The design allows for seamless integration with the existing convention center.

The Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur has long been the last word in luxury,

DOUBLE DELIGHT : *Fountain show at night in front of Petronas Twin Towers and Suria KLCC mall*

PHOTO: © EERMAKOVA | DREAMSTIME.COM



but after an extensive renovation, this stellar property in the heart of the financial district raised the bar higher still. Eleven enhanced meeting suites with state-of-the-art audiovisual technology facilitate flawless presentations in an inviting, functional space. Some provide sweeping views of KLCC Park, a verdant, 50-acre garden. Groups requiring a larger venue can book the Grand Ballroom, the largest in the city.

Another popular hotel option is the Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur, conveniently located next to the KLCC and just a short walk from the Golden Triangle shopping and entertainment district. The property offers 35,530 square feet of dedicated meeting and event space in seven venues. At 11,248 square feet, the Grand Ballroom houses the largest meeting space in the hotel, a favorite venue for annual conferences.

Other suitable 5-star hotels with plentiful meeting space include The Westin, the Shangri-La and the recently refurbished InterContinental.

For a one-of-a-kind setting that embodies the spirit of Malaysia, schedule your next meeting or exhibition in a space surrounded by ancient treasures from the Islamic world. The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, the largest museum of its kind in South-east Asia, houses more than 8,000 artifacts, including calligraphy-inscribed pottery, jewel-encrusted swords, embroidered prayer mats and much more.

In many ways, the building itself is a work of art, with a contemporary, four-story structure topped by an imposing turquoise dome — an architectural marvel and a city landmark.

The Inverted Dome Pavilion, named for the dome that seems to hover above the galleries instead of protruding outside, frequently hosts meetings and product launches. Attendees appreciate the light-infused, airy feel of the 2,125-square-foot space, and floor-to-ceiling glass provides spectacular views of the city.

For a memorable post-conference tour or incentive travel, head eight miles north of KL to Batu Caves, a Hindu temple complex devoted to Lord Muragan. Wear your walking shoes: Visitors climb 272 steps to the main cave where Hindu ceremonies take place. Wander through a mystical, incense-perfumed world where sari-clad women pay homage to their god as the hypnotic tunes of the *shehnai*, a traditional wind



instrument, echo throughout the limestone cave.

Malaysia's tropical heat and humidity make walking an unappealing option, so consider a taxi, even for short distances. Kuala Lumpur offers two kinds of taxi service: standard and executive. Flag down standard taxis from roadsides or at taxi stands; drivers usually charge a reasonable metered fare, but some charge a flat rate. For a cleaner, more comfortable ride, catch a slightly more expensive executive taxi, usually plentiful in the financial and shopping districts.

A word of caution: Traffic jams are a fact of life in Kuala Lumpur, so hopping on a train is preferable for longer trips. The KL Monorail provides access to the city's main hotel and shopping corridors, including stops at KL Sentral, Imbi, Bukit Bintang (the main shopping strip) and Raja Chulan (along Jalan Sultan Ismail, the location of many hotels).

Forget about renting a car. Driving British-style on the left side of the road proves the least daunting of the myriad challenges faced by American drivers. As is common in this part of the world, countless motorbikes crush into narrow lanes, swerving hazily around cars and buses, occasionally going against traffic. To the uninitiated, it may seem traffic laws either don't exist or are ignored by the majority of drivers.

ARTISTIC ENDEAVOR: *The Islamic Arts Museum*

PHOTO: © WESLEY K.H. TEO

Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur
grand.hyatt.com

InterContinental Kuala Lumpur
ihg.com

Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia
iamm.org.my

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre
klccconventioncentre.com

Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau
myceb.com.my

Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur
mandarinoriental.com

Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur
shangri-la.com

Tourism Malaysia
tourism.gov.my

The Westin Kuala Lumpur
starwoodhotels.com

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BUSINESS destinations

50

MANILA

56

TUCSON

58

GUANGZHOU

60

BERLIN



LEISURE destinations

61

SINGAPORE

64

SEOUL

68

MURCIA

72

BERMUDA



Turning the Tide

Manila surges with economic growth and a rising population.

BY CHADNER NAVARRO

Manila is bustling. The Philippines capital city is in the middle of an economic boom thanks to a galvanized English-speaking population, a promising local stock market, a stable debt rating and eager international investors looking to capitalize on the upswing.

Manila has always been a major player in the region and a coveted stronghold for many empires — Spain, the United States, China and Japan all conquered the city at one point. This created not only a diverse cultural makeup but also a local populace adaptable to changing circumstances. And at the moment, circumstances are good.

In 2014, the Philippine economy showed a gross domestic

product growth of 6.1 percent, lower than the government target of at least 6.5 percent. Despite missing that goal, however, the Philippines is performing well compared to the rest of the continent. In 2014, its economy was second only to China when measuring growth. In December 2014, Moody's raised the Philippines' grade to a notch above minimum investment, signaling the opportunities available in the Southeast Asian country.

A rapidly rising population was once seen as a detriment to the Philippines' often unstable economy. As the number nears the 100 million mark, the country now owns the largest working-age pool in its part of the globe, with more than 60 percent of the nation between 15 and 64 years old. And in the greater Manila area (a region with nearly 22 million inhabitants, expected to reach a staggering 30 million by 2025), most of this workforce serves the business process outsourcing industry — more specifically, employed in voice-based customer service centers. With English matching Filipino as the country's official language, the country overtook India in 2011 as the world's leading location of outsourced call centers, with global banks and mobile providers accounting

ON THE HORIZON:

Skyline of Bonifacio Global City business district

PHOTO: © SIMON GURNEY | DREAMSTIME.COM

for most of the business. From 2008 to 2014, revenue from this sector more than doubled to approximately \$18 billion for the entire country.

Economic growth receives a further boost via strong remittance from Filipinos living abroad. An estimated 10 million Filipinos live and work outside the Philippines, and most consistently send money back home. In 2014 that totaled more than \$24 billion, a record sum expected to remain strong this year and next. Factors exist that support a rising middle class. According to research performed by AC Nielsen, by 2020 the Philippines' middle-class market will double in growth to 72 percent, outpacing neighboring countries like Malaysia and Thailand. This growth continues to strengthen the country's status as a market for premium products.

Metro Manila's cityscape is as much about future buildings as it is about current ones, with construction all over town responding to an increased demand for high-end real estate as well as commercial properties. Among the industry's high rollers, local developers such as Megaworld Corp. and Ayala Land Inc. will construct thousands of housing units in the next few years, amounting to record highs in apartment construction. More than 50,000 units will likely enter the market in 2015, while construction for future keys (hundreds of thousands) will

LODGING

Makati Shangri-La, Manila

The classic high-end interior might be too traditional for some, but Shangri-La is a popular brand in the Philippines, and its Makati location remains among the most glamorous, see-and-be-seen spots in the country. *Corner of Ayala and Makati avenues, Makati City* \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

The Peninsula Manila

There isn't a more iconic hotel in the Philippines than this 497-room "Jewel in the Capital's Crown," featuring a dramatic fountain out front. Sophisticatedly decorated guest-rooms often look out to the city skyline. *Corner of Ayala and Makati avenues, Makati City* \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Raffles Makati/Fairmont Makati

The first luxury hotels to open in the capital region in years, Raffles and Fairmont share one building with two distinct personalities that orbit around spectacular service. *1 Raffles Drive, Makati Avenue, Makati City* \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

DINING

Gallery Vask

Chef J. Luis Gonzales plied his trade at three of the world's best restaurants (El Celler de Can Roca, Mugaritz and Arzak, all in Spain) before opening his Basque *pintxos* spot in trendy Taguig. *5F Clipp Center, Corner of 11th Avenue and 39th Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig* \$\$\$

Lusso

Margarita-Forés' chic kitchen turns typical comfort dishes from around the world into luxurious treats, like a foie gras croque-monsieur. Located in the middle of Makati, it's a popular business-meal destination. *Greenbelt 5, Makati City* \$\$\$

Romulo Café

Its two stylish locations in metro Manila have become the most sought-after Filipino dining rooms in the area, where you can indulge in the bold flavors of the local cuisine. *32 Scout Tuason St., Quezon City; and 148 Jupiter St., Makati City* \$\$



ART IN MOTION: Jeepneys, known for their kitschy decorations, are a popular means of public transportation in the Philippines.

PHOTO: © BRANDON PIKE | DREAMSTIME.COM

CHECKING IN WITH MONIQUE TODA

Director of Communications, Raffles and Fairmont Makati

What makes Manila the perfect fit for brands like Raffles and Fairmont?

Raffles and Fairmont Makati opened at the perfect time in 2014 in the Philippines. After a drought of almost two decades of new luxury hotels in the metropolis, the opening of two iconic international brands (found in one tower) signified the tourism industry was back in business. There was a new government and new leaders, and the economy was starting its boom. Manila is a mixture of East and West, with English predominantly spoken and the people naturally hospitable. It is a perfect destination for travelers.

How do Raffles and Fairmont give guests an authentic local experience?

The hotels highlight facets of Philippine culture in various ways. The Raffles Makati displays more than 1,600 commissioned artworks of Filipino artists. It is a virtual museum of local art. In fact, we have a program called Art Concierge where in-house guests can request a tour of the major art pieces. At both hotels we strive to bring about authentic local experiences through food, whether as a welcome amenity that includes native fruit or with pastries and dishes using local ingredients. This includes Café Macaron's specialty macarons with flavors like ube (purple yam), *queso de bola* (Edam cheese) and mango.

What most surprises visitors about Manila?

First, that it is safe. Like any other city in the world, there are known areas to avoid. Otherwise, people are helpful and kind. Second and most importantly, the people are so nice and hospitable, always smiling. I have encountered foreigners who visit and don't want to leave. When the Department of Tourism says, "It's more fun in the Philippines," it truly is. There is a love of fun and enjoyment from the people. We are always celebrating and, based on some [published] articles, have a high happiness quotient.

How does Manila differ from other cities in the region?

The Philippines is quite Westernized. Though Asian in many ways, we were colonized under the Spanish and Americans, which has had lasting effects. It is a pot of many cultures and traditions which include Malay, Chinese, Spanish and American. The cities may not be as modern or organized as those in nearby countries in terms of infrastructure, but it is the people who make a positive impression on visitors.

Why has Manila become such a "hot" city?

It's a confluence of a stable economy; a better reputation; new establishments opening, from hotels to gaming facilities; foreign companies investing; successful Filipinos who have made a name for themselves internationally — and even Filipino food, which is getting to be quite popular in other countries.



STAY AND PLAY: *City of Dreams Manila exterior (top), and casino (bottom)*

PHOTO: © CITY OF DREAMS MANILA

also start in the next 12 months.

Building projects are also on the rise to support a promising tourism market. While the Philippines never reached the sort of superstar status enjoyed for years by Thailand and Vietnam, tourism authorities are confident that tide will change. For one, the country launched the Visit the Philippines Year campaign in 2015 to lure a record 10 million foreign travelers to its 7,107 islands with year-long programming. Although most travelers are seduced by beaches and rice terraces (none of which are found in the capital), the Manila area experiences a steadily rising demand for accommodations and other tourism features, leading to the announcement and opening of several high-profile hotels and venues. Starwood (looking to develop three hotels in the area), Hilton, Accor Group and Wyndham are just some of the global brands interested in breaking into this expanding market. That's on top of brands already in place including Peninsula, Fairmont, Raffles and Shangri-La.

Manila also looks to bolster the local gaming industry in the coming years. Several foreign brands recently opened Philippine satellites of popular gaming outposts in Manila. The first

integrated resort took a bow near Ninoy Aquino International Airport in 2009 with the unveiling of Resorts World (a sister casino resort to those in Singapore and Malaysia). Now Entertainment City is establishing itself as a Vegas-like strip in the city of Parañaque. Most recently, the complex welcomed City of Dreams Manila (a sister to the one in Macau), bringing 380 gaming tables; 1,700 slot machines; and 1,700 electronic table games to Manila. Nobu Hotel also revealed its second-ever location here in May after the Las Vegas original. So busy is Manila with gaming possibilities, rumors have already started to surface regarding plans to create similar enterprises in other locales like the equally promising region of Cebu, about 530 miles south of Manila.

For decades, the Philippines bore the name “Sick Man of Asia” due to a laundry list of economic, social and political turmoil that painted an unstable picture. But in the last five years or so, the country turned itself around, leading

many economic researchers to wonder if we’re seeing the emergence of a new Asian Tiger. The possibilities are endless, most obviously so in the capital region of Manila.

DIVERSIONS

Most Filipinos say there’s not much to do in Manila, often recommending farther-flung Philippine destinations to travelers. The iconic rice terraces in the north as well as the azure waters of island beaches toward the south certainly grab more attention. But the capital district does offer something else entirely: a glimpse at how modern Filipinos live today.

Know that shopping malls play a significant role in everyday life here. Countless monoliths dedicated to shopping exist all over the metro Manila area, many of them housing more than just boutiques and restaurants — they offer bowling alleys, medical facilities, spas and more and attract everyone from affluent fashionistas to uniformed high-school students.

Try the Filipinos' dessert of choice, halo-halo, a shaved ice confection packed with local fruits, beans, flan, purple yams and more.

FRESH TAKE: An assortment of fruit juices and refreshments in Market! Market! in Bonifacio Global City

PHOTO: © JUNPINZON | DREAMSTIME.COM





CITY OASIS: Serendra Park in Bonifacio Global City

PHOTO: © JUNPINZON | DREAMSTIME.COM

And in a city where the weather vacillates between rainy-hot and dry-hot, air-conditioned malls provide all the necessary protection from stifling tropical heat. The most luxurious of the bunch is Greenbelt, home to some of the country's best restaurants as well as the biggest names in fashion, such as Hermès and Prada.

Head over to Bonifacio Global City (colloquially known as The Fort) in Taguig. It recently became the hottest neighborhood in the Philippines, welcoming new hip cafés, trendy bars, colorful boutiques and high-end homes almost weekly. Here the country's

burgeoning middle class spends most of its time.

More traditional sights include family-friendly Rizal Park and the walled Intramuros, Manila's oldest district. Construction started back in the 16th century during Spanish colonization, and today it is one of the only places in the capital where you can see architectural remnants of Spanish-era Manila.



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/d1manila to read about Manila's local art scene.

JUST THE FACTS

Time Zone: GMT +8

Phone Code: Country code: 63 City code: 2

Currency: Philippine peso

Entry/Exit Requirement: U.S. citizens must have a passport valid for six months to enter the Philippines. No visa is required for travelers staying 30 days or less. All passengers departing from Ninoy Aquino International Airport pay an airport terminal fee of about \$17.

Official Languages: Filipino, English

Key Industries: Business process outsourcing, construction, tourism, communications, real estate, manufacturing

INFO TO GO

Located between the cities of Pasay and Parañaque, Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL) lies about seven miles southwest of Manila and south of the Central Business District of Makati. Taking a taxi remains the most efficient way to get into the city from the airport. The official yellow taxis at hotel terminals cost approximately \$12 to most of the hotels in Makati.

Bonifacio Global City

bgc.com.ph

City of Dreams Manila

cityofdreams.com.ph

Fairmont Makati

fairmont.com

Gallery Vask

galleryvask.com

Greenbelt

ayalamalls.com.ph

Makati Shangri-La, Manila

shangri-la.com

The Peninsula Manila

peninsula.com

Philippine Tourism

itsmorefuninthephilippines.com

Raffles Makati

raffles.com

Resorts World Manila

rvmanila.com

Rizal Park

nationalparks.ph/rizalpark

Romulo Café

romulocafe.com



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Hot Time in Tucson

A revitalized downtown radiates with creative possibilities.

BY RON BERNTHAL

Entrepreneur magazine named Tucson one of the five best U.S. cities for young entrepreneurs.

Several times a week, Tucson resident Veronica Furlong climbs aboard a brightly colored Sun Link electric streetcar at the Avenida del Convento stop on the city's west side and rides across town to her job as an archivist at the Arizona State Museum. "I started using the streetcar as soon as service started; it's a great option for me and other workers to get to our jobs," Furlong said as a new streetcar approached her stop, hardly making a sound.

The city's four-mile streetcar line began operations in August 2014 and recorded its millionth passenger in May this year, putting ridership way ahead of predictions as local commuters and visitors enjoy gliding through downtown Tucson in the comfort of an air-conditioned, non-polluting streetcar.

Seven new housing projects have been or will be approved this year, all located near the streetcar line. The Sun Link project, which has already brought more than \$200 million in private investment to downtown, is just one of Tucson's current revitalization efforts transforming the city's downtown neighborhoods. This year the city council approved tax incentives for several crucial downtown commercial projects including the Johnny Gibson grocery store, the first downtown food market since 1952. The

GOING PLACES: Mercado San Agustín Public Market (left); and the historic Rialto Theatre (right)

PHOTOS: © KATHERINE ROBERTS/CITY OF TUCSON, © STACEY HALPER/CITY OF TUCSON

Tucson Convention Center completed a \$9 million upgrade, Comcast is adding 1,100 jobs at a new customer support center, and the Art Deco-era Fox Tucson Theatre's restoration draws people downtown for evening concerts.

Next year, the downtown opening of the urban lifestyle hotel brand AC Hotel by Marriott will spur even more development. This sunny Southwestern city — long known for its golf and spa resorts in the desert mountains and as a quiet retirement destination (fourth best in the nation according to a recent Gallup poll) — is finally catching up with Austin, Seattle, Denver and Portland, Ore., whose design-driven, eco-friendly downtowns draw tech-savvy millennials and their entrepreneurial ambitions. This phenomenon is not lost on Tucson's movers and shakers.

"We are focusing on driving the market to continue attracting the millennials," said Michael Keith, CEO, Downtown Tucson Partnership. "Downtown has to capture the young, creative people, and of Tucson's present downtown entrepreneurs, 75 percent are under the age of 40."

Fletcher McCusker, a longtime business leader and one of Tucson's major philanthropists, spoke about the mission to protect the city's historic assets while allowing some vertical density. "We have created a blended community that is part art, part tourism, part business, education and government, and at night it converts to an entertainment zone," he said. "This delicate balance has

to be maintained by developers and others so we can keep attracting young and innovative people.” With affordable commercial and residential real estate, a business-friendly environment, plenty of hiking and biking trails, 37 professional golf courses and the southernmost ski area in the United States on nearby Mount Lemmon, Tucson’s attractiveness to young entrepreneurs is growing. In addition, Tucson’s conveniently located airport offers non-stop service to 15 major U.S. cities.

Startup Tucson, founded in 2011, has been instrumental in supporting the launch and growth of new, high-impact businesses in Tucson. Many of these startups — including HTG Molecular, Metropia, Pinged and KorkBoard — use high technology in new ways, while others, like RBar Energy (nutrition bars) and BlackRock Brewers (craft beer) are finding hot new markets in the Tucson area for more traditional products.

In addition, the city and the University of Arizona formed an alliance to incubate local technology startup firms. The Tech Launch Arizona program engages local talent and expertise from UA and elsewhere to work with area startups.

Many of the city’s 17 historic neighborhoods, all close to downtown, are gentrifying as new housing restorations, shops and restaurants pop up in formerly neglected areas. A startling housing project designed by architect Stefanos Polyzoides, the “Godfather of New Urbanism,” is in development with PureBuild as a Mediterranean-style village with fountains, pedestrian-only lanes and brightly painted masonry houses.

The city’s fledging solar industry is also heating up. This year, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, a major city employer,

completed the largest solar installation in the Department of Defense, expected to save about half a million dollars a year. The Tucson Unified School District is installing solar at 43 schools, providing 80 percent of each school’s power needs. Residents and businesses are also taking advantage of the city’s high annual sunshine rating by installing solar panels whenever possible.

Tucson’s iconic resorts, including The Westin La Paloma, Tubac Golf Resort & Spa and the newer Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain, all located in stunning desert terrain outside the city, continue to draw leisure travelers and corporate meeting groups. But with so many new restaurant and entertainment options downtown, along with a plethora of innovative startups and the convenient streetcar, the dynamics of visiting the Tucson metro area will surely change.



SCENIC DRIVES

With high desert peaks in every direction, perhaps the prettiest city drive is to head west on Speedway Boulevard, which becomes Gates Pass Road as it climbs into the Tucson Mountains and Saguaro National Park West. Cacti dot the foothills, and a scenic overlook at 3,172 feet offers great views of the surrounding terrain. Continue another few miles to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and walk through the indoor/outdoor live exhibits of desert wildlife. Enjoy lunch at the museum’s restaurant before returning to the city to complete the 30-mile roundtrip.

For a full-day excursion, take I-19 South to Tubac (45 miles). Founded by the Spanish in 1752, the town of 1,200 year-round residents boasts cafés, galleries and craft shops. Nearby is the Tubac Golf Resort & Spa, built in 1959 on the site of the Otero family’s 1789 hacienda, which still stands. Continue south on I-19 toward Nogales, almost to the border with Mexico, but follow signage to Route 82 North, where Patagonia (population 900) with its friendly, anti-establishment vibe, eclectic artist studios and holistic body treatment practitioners is a throw-back to the 1960s. A little farther, Sonoita (population 800) is known for its wine trail; about a dozen wineries produce excellent southern Arizona wine and are open for tastings. At Sonoita, take Route 83 to I-10 West and return to Tucson. Routes 82/83 pass through the Santa Rita Mountains and Coronado National Forest; the roundtrip from downtown is 142 miles.

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
desertmuseum.org

Downtown Tucson Partnership
downtowntucson.org

The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain
ritzcarlton.com

Sonoita Wine Trail
arizonawine.org

Startup Tucson
startuptucson.org

Sun Link
sunlinkstreetcar.com

Tech Launch Arizona
techlaunch.arizona.edu

Tubac Golf & Spa Resort
tubacgolfresort.com

Visit Tucson
visittucson.org

The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa
starwoodhotels.com

UP AND COMING: *New houses in the Mercado District near downtown (left), and an artist’s rendering of the AC Hotel Tucson (below)*

PHOTOS: © RON BERNTHAL,
© AC HOTEL TUCSON



**TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS:** Exhibitors at the Canton Fair 2014

PHOTO: © PINDIYATH100

Social Graces

Nurture business relationships at Guangzhou's elegant venues. BY SHARON KING HOGE

Guangzhou has focused on “strictly business” since the city’s early years as the major port of the southern Silk Route and in the 17th to 19th centuries as a major harbor of European trade. The foreign outpost on Shamian Island still exists today but principally as a historic district of graceful parks and colonial buildings. Business activity in China’s third-largest city transferred to three principal areas of town: the gigantic sprawling exposition area which is the site of the two giant annual Canton Fair trade shows; the traditional midtown Tianhe business district; and, most recently, the extensive ultramodern riverside Zhujiang New Town, being created to accommodate high-rise office towers housing Fortune 500 companies from around the world.

While the business of Guangzhou is business, foreigners who come to work in town are advised to soften the Western approach of forthrightly “getting down to business.” Cultural competence calls for observing Chinese *guanxi*, a more graceful approach with a dynamic based on personalized networks. Developing relationships is an essential prelude to commerce,

and facilities around town are designed to accommodate that practice with elegant venues for fraternizing, impressing clients at private meals and receptions.

Since 1957 Guangzhou has been the site of the China Import and Export Trade Fair. Held twice a year, it boasts the highest assortment of products, attendance and resultant trade deals of any other show in China. Those attending the annual “Canton Fairs,” will find staying at the Shangri-La Guangzhou ideal. The only off-site hotel located adjacent to the mammoth Guangzhou Baiyun International Convention Center, it combines business services with the comforts of an urban resort. Within walking distance of the 12-million-square-foot sprawl of the convention halls, the Shangri-La spares guests the wear and tear of hailing taxis and wasting time in traffic. During the spring and fall shows, its expansive marble lobby is mobbed to such an extent hotel executives do “double duty” — the hostess escorting you to your seat in its comfortable Lobby Bar may be the director of marketing and communications.

Dinners served in Shangri-La’s elegant Summer Palace restaurant impress local clients, and casual dignitaries may get a kick out of sampling authentic North Carolina barbecued spare ribs or Peking duck pizza at its popular down-home RIBS café. Poised on the riverfront, the hotel’s park and poolside deck opening off the Lobby Bar provide ideal sites for business cocktail receptions and buffets in a verdant setting, a convenient and

welcome escape from the convention chaos next door.

After the decline of Shamian, the city's Central Business District became Tianhe, the heart of Guangzhou's shopping, dining and entertainment venues, these days bustling with familiar chains like KFC, IKEA, Pizza Hut and H&M. Airlines and other established businesses still operate from this locale, and the Hilton Guangzhou Tianhe is an elegant find in the busy commercial district. Past its expansive outdoor fountain pool, the cool marble lobby offers a gracious refuge from all the streetfront activity. Its Sui Xuan restaurant can serve Cantonese cuisine in 13 private dining rooms, and Italian-themed Il Ponte includes two private suites for a business lunch or dinner. Its soothing, neutral function rooms can host meetings, and the pillarless ballroom impresses for large, seated meals. Steps away around the corner is the Guangzhou East Railway station and metro stop; from here, the No. 3 line takes you to Baiyun Airport in about a half hour for just more than \$1.

A few stops farther along metro line No. 3 lies a warren of shops and cafés under the giant towers housing local and overseas corporations in Zhujiang New Town, the concentration of office buildings and luxury hotels purposely built as the city's new Central Business District. Covering two and a half square miles, a central plaza stretches nearly a mile south to the Pearl River, where a group of monumental municipal structures anchor the district: the Guangzhou Library, Guangdong Museum and the sweeping, freestanding concrete "double boulder" Guangzhou Opera House designed by noted architect Zaha Hadid.

Steps away, a cluster of international 5-star hotels accommodate visitors. On the street level and lower floors of a tapering tower beside the library, The Ritz-Carlton boasts traditional décor with opulent brocades, upholstered club chairs, golden

tassels, dark wood cabinets and Oriental carpets, with a large marble central lobby fountain. For entertaining, Lai Heen restaurant serves some of the city's finest Cantonese cuisine in curvy booths which provide desirable privacy.

Literally above the fray, the Four Seasons — "an icon of style in the sky" — occupies floors 74 to 98 of the 103-story Guangzhou International Finance Center, one of the world's tallest buildings. Coolly elegant, the hotel's gray and white décor seems to merge with the clouds outside the windows. Besides its all-day Japanese and seafood restaurants, Yu Yue Heen serves a Chinese/Cantonese menu in the main restaurant room and in eight private rooms under giant crystal chandeliers, all with magnificent views when unobstructed by clouds.

At the nearby Grand Hyatt, even competitors laud the cuisine. Locals stand in line on weekends to partake of The Market Café's magnificent buffet, where chefs at eight open-kitchen stations chop vegetables, crack crabs, simmer soup, slice beef, heap lobsters and spoon ice cream. It's an extravagant event, and hosting guests with an advance reservation makes a favorable impression. Hyatt's The Penthouse serves authentic Cantonese cuisine; its 12 exclusive private dining rooms are designed with sofa seating areas, libraries and other residential features. The Grand Hyatt also provides impressive outside catering for tailor-made events, with Apple, Dior, Martel and Porsche among the firms engaging hotel chefs to create menus for events at the Opera House and other local landmark sites.

Companies attending Canton fairs are advised to reserve ahead, almost as soon as one fair concludes, with discounts up to 35 percent for early bookings. Regular business is best conducted between fairs, when local hotels and facilities aren't overcrowded and impressive venues are easy to book.

*Mix business with
pleasure at the
Canton Fair.*

**China Import
and Export Fair**
cantonfair.org.cn

**China National
Tourist Office**
cnto.org

**Four Seasons Hotel
Guangzhou**
fourseasons.com

Grand Hyatt Guangzhou
grandhyatt.com

**Guangzhou Baiyun
International
Convention Center**
guangzhoubicc.com

Guangzhou Tourism
www.visitgz.com

**Hilton Guangzhou
Tianhe**
hilton.com

**The Ritz-Carlton,
Guangzhou**
ritzcarlton.com

**Shangri-La Hotel
Guangzhou**
shangri-la.com



ONLINE EXTRA
Jump to gtravmag.com/95guangzhou to read about
sightseeing while on
business in Guangzhou.

ARCHITECTURAL GEM:
Guangzhou Opera House
PHOTO: © DEJIA GAO | DREAMSTIME.COM



Up All Night

An 'early' night in Berlin means seeing the sun rise. BY CARLEY D. THORNELL



Almost everyone in Berlin speaks fluent English, but there is one phrase that doesn't translate: "Just one more."

My friends and I head to Avenue Club at Café Moskau (an ode to the city's former Russian occupation) after sipping more than a few gin and tonics at the posh and plush-cushioned Liberate bar — the concept of pre-gaming at 2:30 a.m. is more norm than exception in Germany's capital.

We started exploring at the modest hour of 7 p.m., noshing on artisanal pizzas paired with local Riesling at Neue Heimat, a former industrial space that brings the food-truck concept indoors; because eateries rotate, no experience is ever the same. The hip vibe differs greatly from the quintessential German beer hall, and you're more likely to toast with stemware than a stein across Berlin.

Black Forest-made Monkey 47 gin features at Monkey Bar at Bikini Berlin, a concept mall with pop-up stalls for startup labels. Fun day or night, it proves a great place to shop or view the antics of the neighboring Berlin Zoo's animals. Open for just over a year, Monkey Bar is still cool; Berliners' focus on what's new is so valued that the handbills for Spindler, an excellent dinner pick, don't promote its menu but just say "new restaurant." The mindset applies to neighborhoods, too, and one can easily see why Spindler's location in lovely

riverside Kreuzberg ranks as one of today's hottest.

Each of Berlin's 12 expansive boroughs offers a different scene, and one of the fastest ways to cover a lot of ground is on two wheels. Berlin on Bike hosts both day and night tours, and my cheerful guide got amped sharing details of partying at live-music club YAAM and Berghain, where crowds always snake around the block. In a metropolis that reinvented itself from the rubble of World War II, it's not surprising its people have the same spirit. As the adopted home of Ziggy Stardust-era David Bowie, the city is open-minded toward the LGBT community, especially in the Tempelhof-Schöneberg and Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg neighborhoods. Aptly named Chamäleon Theatre also makes for a fun night, updating Berlin's cabaret legacy with dance acrobatics, live music and dynamic staging.

Midnight snacks after the show are inexpensive and easy to find at any number of *doner* kebab stands, owing to Berlin's large population of Turks. Or for creative Japanese cocktails and desserts, check out Zenkichi's intimate space, just right for hammering out business deals. You'll feel like you're in the Land of the Rising Sun before realizing it's altogether possible the sun literally *is* rising when your night ends. Berlin truly is a city for night owls, whether they're in club gear or suit and tie.

VARIETY SHOW: *Chamäleon Theatre* (left), and *Berlin on Bike* tour (right)

PHOTOS: © ANDY PHILIPSON; © BERLIN ON BIKE

Avenue Club at Café Moskau
avenue-club-berlin.com

Berlin on Bike
berlinonbike.de

Chamäleon Theatre
chamaeleonberlin.com

Monkey Bar
25hours-hotels.com/de

Visit Berlin
visitberlin.de

YAAM
yaam.de

Zenkichi
zenkichi.de



Surreal Singapore

Discover the spectacular awe of Marina Bay. BY MARLENE GOLDMAN

ArtScience Museum

marinabaysands.com/museum

Gardens by the Bay

gardensbythebay.com.sg

Marina Bay Sands

marinabaysands.com

Singapore Flyer

singaporeflyer.com

Singapore Tourism Board

yoursingapore.com

ART IMITATES LIFE:

Helix Bridge (left), and the ArtScience Museum (right)

PHOTOS: © TANGJANS | DREAMSTIME.COM,
© PLATONKOH | DREAMSTIME.COM

Sprouting from a 1970s land reclamation, Singapore's Marina Bay transformed what was once part of the sea into an arts and culture hub. Its attractions draw an equal mix of locals and tourists as well as transplants whose finance and high-tech office buildings sit nearby.

Architectural dazzle spans all directions, from the lotus-shaped ArtScience Museum that seemingly floats on the bay and the DNA-inspired Helix Bridge linking Bayfront and Marina Centre to the oversized durian-shaped twin buildings of the Esplanade Theatres on the Bay containing a concert hall and performing arts theater.

Anchoring the skyline are the three hotel towers of the Marina Bay Sands casino resort, connected 57 stories up by the boat-shaped SkyPark which stretches longer than the Eiffel Tower is tall.

The open-air SkyPark Observation Deck and SkyPark's two restaurants, Sky on 57 and Cé La Vi, lend some of the best vantage points of Marina Bay, especially for sunset or the nighttime lights. SkyPark is also known for its hotel guest-only infinity pool that looks as if it's dripping off the edge of the tower.

Inside Marina Bay Sands sprawl the seemingly endless walkways of upscale boutiques and brand-name stores at The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands, as well as the Marina Bay Sands

Casino. At night, the Wonder Full 13-minute laser and electric lights show outside incorporates high-tech visual effects by the waterfront as it traces the journey of life, all to the backdrop of a pre-recorded 140-piece symphony orchestra.

Another prime vantage point for Marina Bay views, the Singapore Flyer, an observation wheel modeled on the London Eye, stands nearly 500 feet tall. One rotation takes about 30 minutes, enough time for a cocktail in a capsule shared with as many as 28 people.

On ground level, Marina Bay's highlights ring a two-mile promenade around the bay, merging into a more than seven-mile waterfront route around Marina Reservoir. The route passes the showpiece of the Marina Bay district, Singapore's futuristic park, Gardens by the Bay, including its often-photographed metal trees.

Spanning 250 acres, Gardens by the Bay comprises three gardens: Bay South, Bay East and Bay Central. Bay South, the largest waterfront garden, is home to the surreal "supertrees," vertical gardens measuring up to 16 stories that also function to collect rainwater and generate solar power. A suspended walkway among the trees offers views over the gardens.

For all the glitz entailed in Marina Bay's new constructions, there is one link to Singapore's past. Merlion Park, near the Esplanade Bridge, features the popular statue of a merlion, with the body of a fish and head of a lion. First unveiled in 1972, *The Merlion* sculpture was originally located at the mouth of the Singapore River before being moved in 2002 for better viewing. Its body symbolizes Singapore's beginnings as a fishing village, a reminder to all taking in the awe of Marina Bay how far this Lion City has come.

Lotte Hotel Assumes Operation of Landmark New York Hotel

LOTTE HOTEL CEO YONG-DOK SONG signed the acquisition contract for The New York Palace Hotel, located in the center of midtown Manhattan in New York City last May. With this acquisition, Lotte Hotel became the only Korean chain to possess a hotel in the center of Manhattan, and is expected to set a new milestone in the Korean hospitality industry.

The New York Palace Hotel, the 55-story hotel located at 455 Madison Ave. at 50th Street, is New York's landmark luxury hotel featuring 909 guestrooms and 23 event spaces.

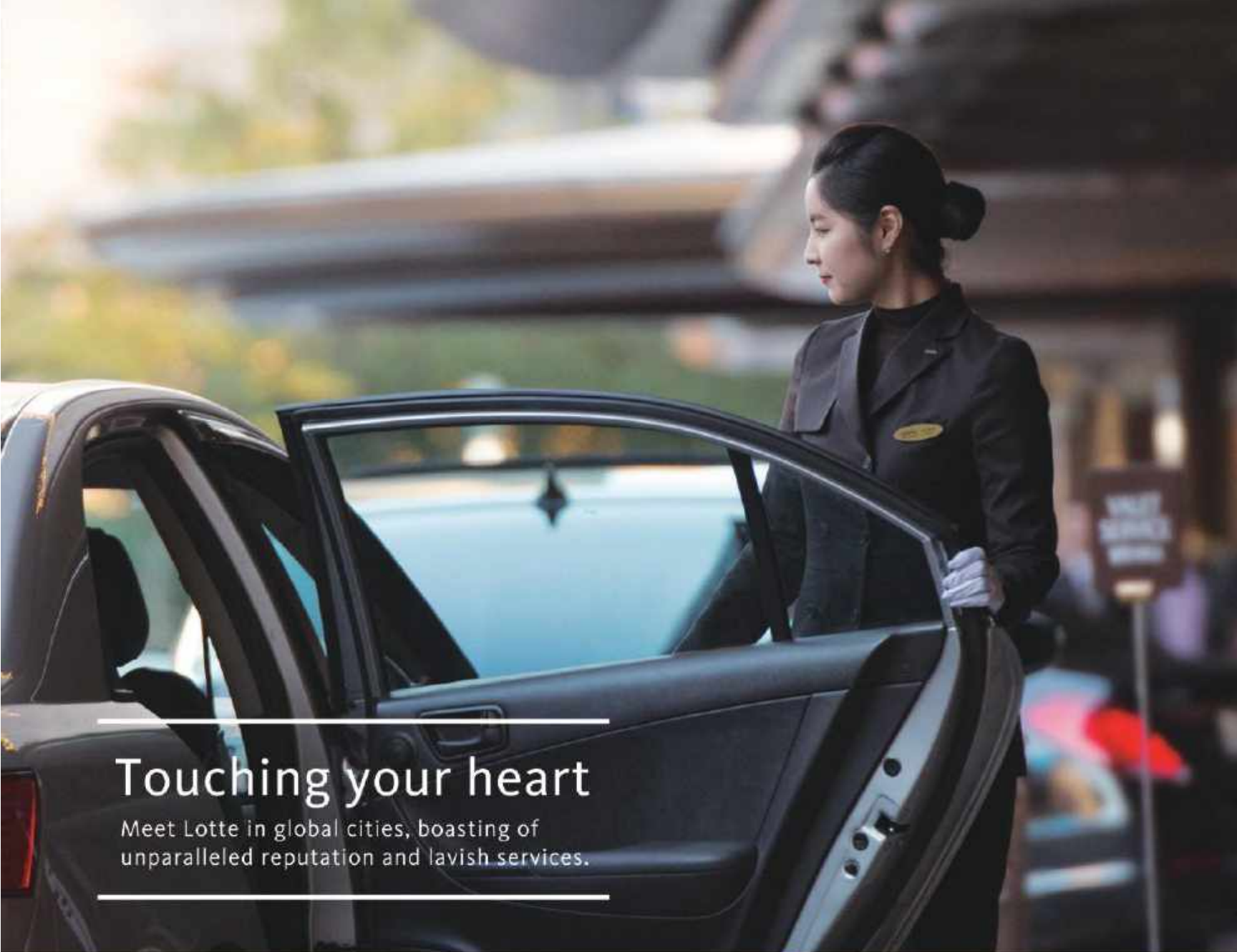
The hotel's roots trace back to the Villard Mansion of railroad financier Henry Villard, built in 1882, and reopened in 1982 by Harry Hemsley, a real estate billionaire, as Helmsley Palace Hotel until the Sultan of Brunei purchased and renovated the property, naming it The New York Palace Hotel. Even though the owner and the name have changed several times, the beautiful exterior of the hotel, often referred to as a Madison Avenue gem, has been conserved as it has been since 1882.

The luxury hotel offers prime access to a wealth of iconic attractions, such as Central Park, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Time Square and Carnegie Hall and it is well-known and loved among world leaders and all levels of celebrities. The hotel rose to fame when it was featured on the famous American drama series Gossip Girl.

Since its opening of Lotte Hotel Moscow in 2010, Lotte Hotel successively opened international properties in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in Vietnam; Tashkent in Uzbekistan; and Guam; and has ceaselessly strived to become a global leading hotel. Lotte Hotel is currently developing new hotel properties in Shenyang, Yantai and Chengdu in China; St. Petersburg in Russia; and Yangon in Myanmar. With the acquisition of The New York Palace Hotel, Lotte Hotel secured its position among Asia's Top 3 brand hotels, along with Mandarin Oriental, Peninsula and Shangri-La.

Lotte Hotel CEO Yong-Dok Song said, "The acquisition of New York's landmark, The New York Palace Hotel, has raised the brand value of Lotte Hotel to another level," and he expects this acquisition to further strengthen the position of Lotte Hotel as a global leading hotel.



A woman in a dark uniform and white gloves is opening the door of a dark-colored car. She is looking down at the door. The background is blurred, showing a building and some greenery.

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HOTELS & RESORTS



ON DISPLAY: Samsung products (left), and an exhibition of wax soldiers at the War Memorial of Korea (right)

PHOTOS: © QIN0377 | DREAMSTIME.COM, © JACKBLUEE | DREAMSTIME.COM

Seoul Satisfaction

Find something in the capital city to fascinate every generation. BY RICHARD NEWTON

Seoul is a big, vivid, overwhelming city. The language, the customs, the cuisine, the architecture, the sounds and the smells relentlessly bombard new arrivals.

Disorientation is an inevitable symptom (and one of the joys) of international travel. But come to Seoul with your family, and you will discover culture shock is not simply a geographical phenomenon. There is a generational element.

Take your children into Samsung d'light, the three-floor showcase for the latest products of Samsung Electronics at the company's headquarters in the Gangnam district, and you'll soon feel the generational divide. Korean and Western teenagers are united in a common understanding of the shiny new technology, while many of their parents flounder.

Similarly, those of us raised on *M*A*S*H* have an inherent background knowledge of Korea's 20th-century history that our children (and even some young Koreans) probably lack. On a visit to the War Memorial of Korea, the impressive museum built on the site of the former Army headquarters in Seoul, the older generations of Koreans and Westerners unite in common appreciation, while their children struggle to make

contextual sense of exhibits shrouded by the mists of time.

The legacy of the Korean War continues to split the Korean Peninsula along the 38th parallel. Now that Kim Jong-Un established himself as the North Korean despot for the social media generation, all members of the family are likely to be well-aware of the stark contrast and enduring animosity between the two Koreas.

A visit to the Demilitarized Zone separating the two countries is a powerful experience; it's one of the few places in the world in which you get a genuine sense of being on the frontline of history.

DMZ Tours is one of several companies offering daily tours to the border, which Bill Clinton called "the scariest place on Earth." Children under the age of 11 are not permitted on the tours, and all participants must adhere to strict regulations during their visit. This is not a place for selfies or for showing off the latest fashions. Photography is restricted, and everyone is required to dress conservatively.

The compromises are worthwhile. This is the kind of shared experience that instantly becomes part of family folklore. The sight of impassive North Korean army guards gazing blindly at them will equally haunt

parents and children. It offers a rare opportunity to come face to face with one of the world's most oppressive regimes.

While North Korea's unyielding ideology left that country frozen in time, South Korea thrives at the forefront of the developed world's advance into the future. Seoul embraces the latest trends — and often starts them.

One of the city's latest developments, inaugurated in 2014, is the \$460 million Dongdaemun Design Plaza, or DDP, a breathtakingly cutting-edge building designed by superstar architect Zaha Hadid. If *Star Trek's* Starfleet Command built a spaceport in downtown Seoul, this is what it would look like.

The DDP is a multi-use exhibition venue, already established as an attraction in its own right. The sculptured grounds incorporate parts of the old Seoul Fortress, which was rediscovered during initial construction work in 2008.

Seoul has always juxtaposed old and new. In this thoroughly modern city you can travel between centuries simply by passing through a gate. One of the most dramatic transitions takes place when you enter Gyeongbok Palace immediately north of downtown.

There are no generational advantages here. All members of the family will be equally awestruck. In an instant, you leave the high-rises and traffic behind and enter a 98-acre walled garden scattered with ancient buildings, some of which date back to the 14th century.

While Gyeongbok Palace provides a window into the royal dynasties of Korea's past, the adjacent district of Bukchon, immediately beyond the palace walls, offers a glimpse of how the ordinary folk lived. This residential district of narrow alleys and traditional houses dates back more than six centuries and is one of the last remaining urban fragments of old Seoul.

Endlessly photogenic, Bukchon offers a wonderful place for an aimless ramble. But in common with, say, Boston's Beacon Hill, it can feel rather tame and gentrified. The buildings have been meticulously restored, and an abundance

LODGING

FRASER SUITES INSADONG

A great family option: fully serviced, spacious apartments located in Insadong, the antique-store district, in the northeast of downtown. *18 Insadong 4-Gil, Jongno-gu* \$\$\$\$

LOTTE HOTEL SEOUL

With an excellent downtown location and legendary luxury, Lotte is well-established as a favorite for business travelers and ideal for families, too. The famous Lotte Department Store is next door. *30 Eulji-ro, Jung-gu* \$\$\$\$

YOO'S FAMILY GUESTHOUSE

Yoo's Family boasts two *hanoks*, traditional Korean guesthouses, east of downtown. Dedicated family rooms are available. *126-1 Gwonnong, Jongno-gu* \$\$\$

DINING

DAEDO SIKDANG

Although many local restaurants offer cook-at-the-table Korean barbecue, Daedo Sikdang is a barbecue specialist. There are several branches, but the original, east of downtown, is worth seeking out. *Seungdong-gu Hongik-dong 431* \$\$

PHIL KYUNG JAE

Enjoy authentic Korean food in the authentically historic setting of a 600-year-old restored home and gardens located on the southern edge of trendy Gangnam. *739-1 Suseo-dong, 205 Gwangpyeong-ro, Gangnam* \$\$\$\$

NENE CHICKEN

Korean fried chicken (which, in contrast to the American variety, is fried twice) is a relatively new addition to local cuisine and uniquely delicious. NeNe is one of several popular chains. *Outlets throughout Seoul* \$

DESIGN CONTRAST: *Dongdaemun Design Plaza (left), and Gyeongbok Palace (right)*

PHOTOS: © TANAWAT PONTCHOUR | DREAMSTIME.COM, © CHEE-ONN LEONG | DREAMSTIME.COM





TRADITIONAL SEOUL: *Bukchon Hanok Village (top), and Gwangjang Market stalls selling dried fish (middle) and seaweed (bottom)*

PHOTOS: © MICHELLELIAW | DREAMSTIME.COM, © SEAN PAVONE | DREAMSTIME.COM, © SEAN PAVONE | DREAMSTIME.COM



of cafés, art galleries and craft shops line the streets.

For a much more immersive experience, visit Gwangjang Market in all its noisy, frenetic, pungent glory. As you negotiate the labyrinthine tangle of passageways between densely packed stalls, there is no doubt where you are — this could only be Korea — but less certainty about when. As with all good markets, Gwangjang feels timeless, allowing you to tap into the historical lifeblood of Seoul.

In the evening, it provides one of the best places to sample street food. The alleys become clogged with people, the whole place fogged with aromatic steam and smoke. Gwangjang is an easy place in which to get lost or separated, so make contingency plans before plunging in with your family. The main entrance at the market's northwestern corner makes a useful meeting spot.

In Itaewon district, south of downtown on the other side of Namsan Mountain, you can shop and eat in a much more familiar, Westernized environment. For decades, Itaewon served as a popular gathering place for U.S. servicemen stationed at the nearby Yongsan army base, and during my teenage years I came here to buy the latest clothes and music and to play arcade games.

Since then, a lot of Seoul's youth culture has moved away from the streets into rentable rooms known as *bangs*. In these private dens, teenagers can hang out, play video games and sing karaoke. Once again, the divide becomes more generational than cultural. It's cool for Western kids to visit a *bang* with their Korean contemporaries, not so cool to go there with their parents.



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/bpseoul to read about the rescue of Cheonggyecheon stream.

INFO TO GO

Most international flights arrive at Incheon International Airport (ICN), approximately 30 miles west of Seoul. Access to the city is by express train (40 minutes to downtown Seoul), bus or taxi (expect to pay \$43–53). Seoul's former gateway, Gimpo International Airport (GMP), nine miles west of downtown, remains in use, primarily handling domestic and regional flights to Japan, China and Taiwan.

Bukchon Historic District

bukchon.seoul.go.kr

Korea Tourism Organization

visitkorea.or.kr

DMZ Tours

dmztours.com

Lotte Hotel Seoul

lottehotel.com

Dongdaemun Design Plaza

ddp.or.kr

NeNe Chicken

english.nenechicken.com

Fraser Suites Insadong, Seoul

frasershospitality.com

Visit Seoul

visitseoul.net

Gyeongbok Palace

royalpalace.go.kr

Yoo's Family Guesthouse

yoosfamily.com

Completely designed as Korea's most luxurious boutique hotel, THE PLAZA is an exceptionally beautiful independent five-star hotel ideally located in the heart of the business, shopping and entertainment districts of Seoul.


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STAY IN STYLE



T H E P L A Z A



OUTER BEAUTY: Colorful sunrise and a zigzag pier in Mar Menor

PHOTO: © GERÓNIMO CONTRERAS FLORES | DREAMSTIME.COM

One of a Kind

Unearth the unique treasures of Spain's Murcia region. BY KIMBERLY KROL

Tucked in the Iberian Peninsula's southeast corner, Spain's region of Murcia may not be as well-known or as popular as other destinations in the country, but it should be. Accessible from other regions of Spain, including Madrid (the city provided a beginning and end cap for my visit to Murcia), Murcia offers a region of contrasts, from dry plains to mountains and coastlines, begging to be unearthed. As a bonus, its semi-arid subtropical climate and location in the Mediterranean coastal arch guarantee near-daily sunshine.

Begin your exploration of the region in Lorca, immediately recognizable for its elaborate, well-known Easter week celebrations. Carve out time for the Embroidery Museum, which displays the workmanship of the hand-embroidered outfits donned during the

Easter week processions. A visit to Lorca provides a trip through time, with Baroque façades, a medieval castle and old city streets surviving in tandem with the 21st-century pulse of the city.

For a uniquely Spanish experience, use Parador de Lorca as a base throughout your stay in the city. A new build located in the enclosure of the Castle of Lorca — which throughout history served as a meeting place for Islam, Judaism and Christianity — archaeological remains seamlessly meld with the conveniences of a modern hotel. Boasting 76 guestrooms and nine suites, Parador de Lorca features an on-site spa with a therapeutic water circuit. The property is also well-noted for MICE and banquet capabilities as well as superb dining.

Just steps from a traveler's guestroom lie some amazing archaeo-

logical wonders. Discovered in 2003, the Jewish quarter, located to the east of the castle, features excavations of houses dating to the 15th century. The synagogue is the best-preserved building in this area, featuring Gothic-style plasterwork. These excavations led to the development of an archaeological park on the premises of the Castle of Lorca, with three tours offered to the public daily; English-language tours are held Thursdays.

High above the city, Lorca Castle, a defensive fortress and watchtower, was occupied by successive civilizations from the Argaric period to the 21st century. The castle marks the second-largest fortress structure in Spain, dating to the 12th and 13th centuries. Nine archaeological remains can be spotted throughout the parador. Digging here began in 1999, and the *Fortaleza del Sol* has been converted with showcases, workshops, children's areas and more through Lorca's Workshop of Time.

In 2011, an earthquake rocked Lorca, halting some of the city's archaeological explorations. The city continues to rebuild from the devastation of the natural disaster.

For a bit of sun, sand and surf, stop next at Mar Menor, a large saltwater lagoon. A favorite of British tourists for years, Mar Menor, including La Manga del Mar Menor, San Javier, San Pedro del Pinatar and Los Alcázares, boasts 315 days of sunshine per year and an average temperature of around 65 degrees. Beaches in the area include El Mojón, Torre Derribada and La Llana.

Calm waters, reliable winds and a shallow depth make Mar Menor a haven for water sport enthusiasts. In addition to sailing, windsurfing and canoeing, scuba divers delight at the underwater remains of a Roman shipwreck.

San Pedro del Pinatar's Regional Park, another popular spot for outdoor activities, covers more than 2,000 acres between seas. During the Roman times, it consisted of salt flats, some of which still exist, which created pools, dikes, dunes and pine groves. Today, the wetlands provide sanctuary for 100 bird types, with the pink flamingo a standout. Other birds include grebes, guinea fowl, royal herons and owls.

Among the many highlights of Mar Menor, discover the therapeutic qualities of its water and the clay/mud sediments of the sea floor. The climate of the area resulted in the deposit of clay in the region. Analysis of the material shows a high percentage of positive ions, including calcium, magnesium, potassium and fluoride, as well as negative ions such as chlorine and sulfate. Given its make-up, it has great absorption power and is recommended to aid a number of skin conditions.

It may startle you at first to see people covered head to toe in mud while wandering the area, but hop right in and slather your body with the thick, gray mud to enjoy the numerous proven therapeutic effects of the clay. Take heed to start with a few small areas first, letting the mud dry on the skin for about an hour. If there are no side effects, liberally cover yourself, dry in the sun and return to saltwater to rinse. The effects will last for days as you continue your Murcian discovery.

Next stop: Cartagena. Get a taste for the history of the city, which dates back 2,500 years. This Port of Cultures is home to Concepción Castle, with vistas over modern-day Cartagena. Start here to get acquainted with the layout; for those with a fear of heights, avoid the panoramic lift, the easiest way to reach the highest point in Cartagena. If heights don't bother you, the experience and the views are worth a peek.

Back on level ground, stroll the ancient ruins of the Roman theater and the accompanying Roman Theater Museum. The excavation, restoration and construction of the museum allow for an easy flow from the exhibits into the monument, seamlessly blending the remains into the layout of the city while



TOP SPOTS: Cartagena panoramic lift elevator (top), and sword sundial at Lorca Castle (bottom)

PHOTOS: © LUNAMARINA | DREAMSTIME.COM, © FOTOMICAR | DREAMSTIME.COM



BACK IN TIME: Cartagena

Roman theater

PHOTO: © LUNAMARINA | DREAMSTIME.COM

INFO TO GO

Flights arrive to either Murcia-San Javier Airport or El Altet Airport (Alicante). Region of Murcia International Airport is coming soon. Around the region, travelers can easily transit within cities or towns or between different areas by taxi, bus, train, tram and boat services.

Parador de Lorca

parador.es/en

Murcia Tourism

murciaturistica.es

Roman Theatre Museum

teatoromanocartagena.org

Spain Tourism

spain.info

maintaining the integrity.

Roman Cartagena still lies beneath the surface of the city, but further excavations are underway. The Roman forum in the Molinete section is also open for public visits. The main part of the dig site has been converted into an open-air archaeological park with the remaining part of the ancient forum, with two semi-public buildings including a thermal spa dating to the first century.

In between trips back in time in Cartagena, savor a few moments at a local café for an *asiático*. While Licor 43 can be found throughout Spain, in Cartagena it is typically paired with coffee and offers a refreshing reprieve from sightseeing. Cartagena is also ideal for leisurely ambles through the streets and shops. And, as in any port city, take advantage of the water. Cruise ships dock here, and visitors can enjoy beaches as well as the gastronomic delights of the sea.

Wrap up a discovery tour of the region in Murcia, the seventh-largest city in Spain with a population hovering around 500,000. The city's gastronomy highlights fresh fruits and vegetables, various types of meat and fresh-from-the-sea delights. Peruse Verónicas market, built between 1914 and 1917, where many of the stall's roots date to the market's origin. Choose from among the seemingly endless food options to either prepare your own feast or have the vendors do the cooking for you.

For another culinary experience, take a stop-by-stop journey on the Murcia Gastronomic Route. My personal six-stop gustatory walk included city center favorites like Gran Rhin, Las Viandas and Las Mulas. At La Tapa, my last stop, I happily

switched from savory to sweet, indulging in *paparajotes*, a typical dessert of the region — lemon leaves coated with flour and egg, then lightly fried and sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar.

Murcia is home to many Baroque churches, the most important religious building being the Catedral de Santa María. Construction began at the end of the 14th century and contains a number of Gothic elements as well. Its tower was built in various stages between the 16th and 18th centuries. Another fun fact: Its organ is the largest in Spain and among the top 10 in size worldwide.

The city boasts noteworthy architecture of the 18th century, including the Episcopal Palace and old Granary, as well as the 19th century, evident in the Town Hall, the Victoria Hotel and the Casino, a National Monument built in 1847. Take a few moments to wander the interior decorations and the sculptures peppering the façade. The style mimics the Alhambra, and everything in the ballroom is an original.

An original — a great way to describe the region of Murcia, designed to offer a one-of-a-kind experience for visitors and business travelers to Spain. Its many cities and towns are ripe for exploration. Delights abound. Why wait any longer to discover this Spanish gem?



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/murcia to read about wine tasting in Murcia.

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REFRESH: Pink-sand beach at Horseshoe Bay (left), and Dark 'n' Stormy rum cocktail (right)

PHOTOS: © VERENA MATTHEW | DREAMSTIME.COM, © SANNE BERG | DREAMSTIME.COM

A Proper Holiday

Take an island break, Bermuda-style. BY GREGORY D. MCCLUNEY

The tiny island of Bermuda boasts big contrasts. Bankers, lawyers and insurance executives walk the streets in traditional blazers and ties, wearing the famous Bermuda shorts as they head to international business meetings. Along the way, they pass sleek yachts from around the world, sport-fishing boats and tourists in skimpy attire headed to the pink-sand beaches and the beach bars that sell traditional drinks based on the island's legendary rum, Gosling's Black Seal Rum (try a Dark 'n' Stormy). There's even a drink named for the infamous Bermuda Triangle, but you won't disappear if you have just one. In the British tradition, business takes a break for afternoon tea time. It all adds up to a perfect island for the harried business traveler to kick back and relax.

Formed by several volcanoes that erupted in the mid-Atlantic, this subtropical island of some 50 miles end to end isn't a Caribbean island, as many think. Actually it lies many hundreds of miles from its closest neighbor in the Bahamas, some 650 miles east of the North Carolina coast — and only a two-hour flight from several U.S. East Coast cities. All of Bermuda fits in 21 square miles, comprising 181 islands and 75 miles of dramatic coastline, including seven golf courses. Fewer than 10 of the islands are inhabited.

Kicking back in Bermuda can be as luxurious as a suite at the

Hamilton Princess & Beach Club with a gourmet dinner served on your private terrace as the sun sets over the Atlantic, or as casual as a local guest house where you can pick up some fresh fish dockside and cook your own dinner after a day on the pink Bermuda sands. You can tour the island in a private luxury car with driver or rent a scooter, grab a map and learn to drive on the left, British-style. Regardless of your personal style or budget, the islands' history, culture, pink-sand beaches, gin-clear waters, marine life and sunsets all cost the same — nothing. Plus, as only the British could put it, "In Bermuda, we go for *proper fun*."

What was once the largest British naval base outside the United Kingdom, the Royal Naval Dockyard, or "Dockyard" as the locals call it, transformed to a major historical, cultural and entertainment destination on Bermuda. Geography played a critical role as the British sought a naval base in the Atlantic to serve their Caribbean interests between Halifax and the West Indies. They wanted to keep an eye on the newly minted America, too, after losing the American War of Independence in 1783. Bermuda was their only choice. The base remained active until 1951.

The Dockyard lies at the west end of the island, as far from St. George's as you can get. Start exploring at the National Museum of Bermuda, where you'll see 500 years of history housed in the largest

fort on the island. Here you'll find restored British military buildings, the Commissioner's House, tours of Shipwreck Island's Spanish gold and artifacts, and a museum playground for the kids. On certain days, visitors can enjoy a historical re-enactment of life at the fort.

Due to the proximity of the cruise ship docks, the Dockyard offers much more to see than history. Dine at almost a dozen cafés and restaurants featuring everything from brew pubs, beach bars, ice cream parlors and burger grills to sunset seafood dinners and a pub called The Frog & Onion. Visitors can shop 'til they drop at more than 25 shops in the Clocktower Mall, which offers everything from sports clothing to native crafts and jewelry, fine arts and special Bermuda-themed gifts, along with the Dockyard Pharmacy. Many are one-of-a-kind local boutiques and offer custom clothing.

Sports activities centered on the Dockyard near the ocean side of the docks feature golf, dancing at a beachside club, dolphin trips, snorkeling and scuba, reef adventures and cycle and seaway rentals. Visitors usually dedicate a full day to take it all in. Local guides often recommend even more.

In 2017, the oldest trophy in international sports comes to Bermuda: America's Cup, dating from 1851. Racing begins in October this year with the World Series race. The teams will be based in the Dockyard area with special events and race displays. The defending champion, ORACLE TEAM USA, will be on hand for both races. The America's Cup website details all the events, times and places.

No visit to the island is complete without a day in St. George's at the far eastern end. It's like visiting another island, which it actually is. Established in 1612, the UNESCO World Heritage site shines as the crown jewel of Bermuda's history. Take a walk back in time on the narrow cobblestone streets, which remain much as they were centuries ago. Begin your tour on King's Square, the heart of town. You'll be treated to some re-enactments in full costume.

Find the best views across a short bridge to the small island that's home to a full-scale replica of the *Deliverance*, which carried English settlers (those who survived after their ship hit the rocks of Bermuda) on to Jamestown, Va. Take a short walk to the Bermuda National Trust Museum, which U.S. visitors find especially interesting, as it explains the role of Bermuda during the American

LODGING

FAIRMONT SOUTHAMPTON HOTEL

On the pink-sand beaches of the south shore, The Fairmont offers 100 acres of palms and bougainvillea and its own golf course. Enjoy spectacular luxury beachside dining at its Ocean Club. *101 South Shore Road, Southampton Parish \$\$\$\$\$*

HAMILTON PRINCESS & BEACH CLUB

If you love to be in the middle of the action, the Hamilton Princess (managed by Fairmont) is the place. Walk to museums, restaurants and pubs on the picturesque harbor. *76 Pitts Bay Road, Pembroke, Hamilton \$\$\$\$\$*

ELBOW BEACH RESORT

A unique hideaway on the southern shoreline on 50 acres of gardens, Elbow Beach features 98 private cottage-style rooms and suites and four dining options overlooking the beach and a full-service spa. *60 South Shore Road, Paget Parish \$\$\$\$\$*

DINING

1609 RESTAURANT

Share this open-air space with yacht owners as you watch the sunset. The menu is high on seafood with first-rate service. Known for local island cocktails, the restaurant sits over the docks. *Hamilton Princess & Beach Club, 76 Pitts Bay Road, Pembroke, Hamilton \$\$\$*

THE ST. GEORGE'S CLUB

The cottage colony property overlooking St. George's offers two dining options: Griffin's Bistro, with its outstanding wine list and excellent service, and The Beach House, a good beach bar just below the club. *6 Rose Hill, St. George's \$\$\$*

HAMMERHEADS BAR AND GRILL

Relax at the indoor-outdoor bar, catch a sunset and enjoy excellent local and American food. When the sun goes down, the nightlife heats up as Club Aqua opens for dancing. *7 Maritime Lane, The Dockyard \$\$*

ALL ASHORE: *Replica of the historical ship Deliverance in St. George's (left), and a statue of Neptune at the Bermuda Maritime Museum, Royal Naval Dockyard (right)*

PHOTOS: © VERENA MATTHEW | DREAMSTIME.COM, © RUSTY ELLIOTT | DREAMSTIME.COM





SEA VIEW: Bermuda Maritime Museum, Royal Naval Dockyard (above), and Bermuda blue angelfish (left)

PHOTOS: © ROMAN STETSYK | DREAMSTIME.COM , © ANTHONY ANESEE TOTAH JR | DREAMSTIME.COM

INFO TO GO

Most major U.S. airlines fly from their East Coast hubs to Bermuda's L.F. Wade International Airport (BDA) in St. George's. From Europe, you can book service on British Airways direct from London (LGW).

1609 Restaurant

thehamiltonprincess.com

America's Cup

americascup.com

Bermuda National Trust Museum

bnt.bm

Bermuda Tourism

gotobermuda.com

Elbow Beach Resort

elbowbeachbermuda.com

The Fairmont Southampton

fairmont.com

The Frog & Onion Pub and Dockyard Brewing Co.

frogandonion.bm

Hamilton Princess & Beach Club

thehamiltonprincess.com

Hammerheads Bar and Grill

snorkelparkbeach.com

National Museum of Bermuda

bmm.bm

Royal Naval Dockyard

thewestend.bm

The St. George's Club

stgeorgesclub.bm

The St. George's Foundation

stgeorgesfoundation.org

Tobacco Bay

tobaccobay.bm

White Horse Pub & Restaurant

whitehorsebermuda.com

Wong's Golden Dragon Restaurant

wongsgoldendragonbda.com

Civil War. The island served as a staging port for Confederate shipments to England.

If you brought your swimsuit, Fort St. Catherine offers more than a military exhibit. Next to the fort stretches a gem of a beach for swimming and snorkeling — one of the best on this island. For more active water sports, seek out one of the local outfitters of Jet Skis, Boston Whaler or pontoon boats, kayaks, paddleboards or fishing charters and cruise the clear, smooth, turquoise waters protected by the many reefs that brought down tens of ocean-going vessels.

If you enjoy scuba, more than 40 wrecks are mapped around the reefs. Check with your dive shop, as all wrecks are not open all the time. Most lie in shallow water supporting a plethora of sea life — perfect for snorkelers or amateur divers.

Tobacco Bay National Park lies on a sheltered bay, a great spot to spend some beach time, and offers a lively beach bar, café and island barbecue. Try a frozen Dark 'n' Stormy cocktail to cool down.

Shopping on St. George's is part of the experience, and you'll find shops unique in the entire island. Traditional Bermuda-made goods are the attraction at Bermuda Memories and come with a taste of an island favorite, Bermuda rum cake. David Rose shows fine jewelry along with a spectacular view of the harbor. The Bermuda Perfumery makes its own, and you can stop in for a perfume-making class on some days. Or if you're heading back to the water, Just Add Water can outfit you with everything you'll need from sunglasses, underwater cameras and beach clothing to masks and snorkels, all with a Bermuda twist.

If all the walking, shopping and salt air stimulate your appetite, St. George's offers many dining options. Choose from Wong's Chinese take-out to the more formal St. George's Club high on a hill, or watch a perfect sunset at The Beach House and try some sophisticated Mediterranean fare paired with an extensive wine list. In King's Square, explore the quick, simple and tasty island specials at Go Jo's Coffee Shop and the best carrot cake you'll ever taste. Catching up on your sports scores? Soccer and Friends Sports Bar awaits in King's Square. Other dining choices include the Tempest Bistro, Tavern by the Sea and the White Horse Pub. You'll return to your hotel full and refreshed.

Kicking back in Bermuda is a great choice for proper fun, but don't take that as uppity or uptight. It's island time all day and night. Enjoy your Dark 'n' Stormy whenever and wherever you like: beach bar, waterfront club or elegant hotel lobby. Just don't forget your (Bermuda) shorts.



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/hamilton for the latest on fine dining in Hamilton.

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*Price includes roundtrip airfare from Los Angeles to Auckland, NZ, and includes all taxes, surcharges, and 3 nights free hotel in Tahiti. Other conditions apply. Sale starts September 3rd.



TAHITI

LOS ANGELES

PARIS

TOKYO

AUCKLAND

SYDNEY

Illumination Nights

Los Alumbrados lights up Medellín for the holidays. BY BARBARA RADCLIFFE ROGERS



ALL AGLOW:

Festival of lights:

PHOTO: © STILLMAN ROGERS
PHOTOGRAPHY

Colombia Tourism

colombia.travel

*Medellín enjoys
one of South
America's most
active nightlife
scenes.*

Each December, Colombia's second-largest city heralds the holidays with a month-long festival of Christmas lights, Los Alumbrados. It's as though this once-violent city emerged from the dark cloud of drug violence that held it captive until three decades ago and celebrates its freedom anew each year with a great burst of light.

More than 30 million LED bulbs turn parks, gardens, streets, plazas and the Medellín River into a holiday fairyland that springs to life as darkness falls each evening. Christmas ornaments shaped from tiny lights hang from trees arching above streets, twinkling angels fly overhead, and scattered stars dangle in the air.

Parks become magic forests of sparkling trees, clouds of light float overhead, colored beams play across the hillsides surrounding the city, and arches of lights crown promenades and streets. In the Botanical Garden, walkways are lined with borders of fanciful electric flowers blooming in rainbow colors, their glow illuminating the tropical foliage overhead.

The mile-long stretch of the Medellín River between the Guayaquil and San Juan bridges gushes with illuminated water spouts, fountains bathed in lights that change color in time with music. Lights seem to float and spring to life as projections dance in the plumes of water. The reaction of wide-eyed children to this magical scene provides half the fun.

After wandering through the park alongside the river to see

the dozens of giant illuminated Christmas scenes — some as tall as 75 feet — and other holiday-themed displays, board a *chiva* with fellow revelers to tour the city's other lighted venues. These open-air buses are moving parties filled with strangers singing together and vendors clinging precariously to the outside as they sell cold drinks through the open windows.

Each park and square where the *chiva* stops hosts more vendors grilling savory sausages and selling fresh-cooked *buñuelos* (fried dough), roasted ears of corn and skewers of chicken or beef. All of Medellín becomes a citywide block party.

Everyone seems to get into the act. Lights decorate homes in residential neighborhoods while department stores and shopping centers throughout Medellín add their own elaborate indoor and outdoor displays. Office buildings in the city center and on the mountainsides above are bathed throughout the night in moving patterns of colored light.

Throughout the festival, which begins Dec. 1 and continues into mid-January, there are more than 500 different activities in various parts of the city and 80 special events that include concerts by the Medellín Philharmonic Orchestra, the Youth Orchestra of Medellín, choruses and other musical groups. These often take place in open-air venues, with both ticketed seating and free public areas. Lavish fireworks displays kick off the lighting and continue throughout December.



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Fresh and Modern

Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport gears up for a \$430 million upgrade. BY LISA MATTE



Ninety years after Atlanta Mayor Walter A. Sims signed a five-year lease on an abandoned auto racetrack, committing the city to the development of an airfield, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport — the world's busiest airport, based on passenger traffic — is gearing up for a \$430 million modernization project.

Make no mistake, Atlanta's hub is state-of-the-art; its current incarnation debuted in 1980 with the opening of a modern 2.5-million-square-foot terminal complex designed to accommodate up to 55 million passengers a year. But compare that target with Airports Council International's tally of 97,288,418 passengers served in 2014 and clearly an upgrade is on point, even in light of interim improvements.

Currently bids are being submitted for the modernization project encompassing upgrades to the domestic passenger terminal and concourses. In June, the *Atlanta Journal*

Constitution described the initiative as an effort to bring a new, fresh, modern look to the airport, incorporating light-filled concourses similar to those in the airport's Maynard H. Jackson International Terminal, opened in 2012.

The City of Atlanta's 325-page request for proposals, released in June with a deadline of Aug. 12, describes a plan to update the domestic terminal and underground tunnels connecting the original midfield concourses A through D, add curbside awnings at the departure level, improve the airside atrium and replace many of the airport's older jetways.

When plans are final, the project should take three years to complete. Commercial funding will finance the bulk of the \$430 million cost, with passenger facility charges, estimated at \$4.50 per passenger per flight, covering the rest.

An important goal to note: The airport plans to accomplish the modernization project while maintaining regular operations. Time will tell.

ON THE MOVE:

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport

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Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport

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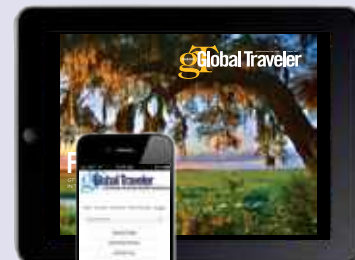
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Preventing Pneumococcus

Vaccination can help protect those at risk. BY MARY B. GALLAGHER, RN, MSN, CCRN

Pneumococcal disease is the leading cause of serious illness throughout the world, caused by the *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacterium. The bacterium spreads through contact with people who are ill or by healthy people who carry it in the back of their nose or throat. In developing countries, pneumococcus is linked to high infant and child mortality rates. Even in more industrialized countries, pneumococcal disease commonly occurs in adults and children. The World Health Organization estimates more than 1.6 million people — including 850,000 children younger than 5 years — die every year from pneumococcal infections. Nearly all these deaths occur in the poorest countries.

Anyone can get pneumococcal disease, but some people are at greater risk. Children at higher risk include those younger than 2 years of age; those in group childcare; and those with illnesses such as HIV, sickle cell disease and chronic heart or lung conditions. Some American Indian, Alaska Native and African-American children may be at increased risk.

Adults age 65 and older have a higher risk for pneumococcal disease. Some adults ages 19 through 64 are at risk due to chronic illnesses such as lung, heart, liver or kidney disease; asthma; diabetes; alcoholism; conditions weakening the immune system (HIV/AIDS, cancer or damaged or absent spleen); living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities; and having cochlear implants or cerebral spinal fluid leaks. Smokers are also at risk.

Pneumococcal bacteria spread from person to person by direct contact with respiratory secretions during coughing, sneezing and kissing. Many who carry the bacteria, especially children, are not ill. In some carriers, however, pneumococcus spreads outside the nose to ears, blood or lungs and causes illness.

Symptoms and complications depend on the part of the body infected. Most infections are mild. Some can be fatal or result in long-term problems such as brain damage or hearing loss.

Pneumococcal pneumonia is the most common form of lung disease. Symptoms include fever, chills, cough, rapid or difficult breathing and chest pain. Older adults may experience confusion or low alertness. Pneumococcal meningitis infects the covering of the brain and spinal cord, causing symptoms of stiff neck, fever, headache, pain when looking into lights and confusion. In babies, meningitis may cause poor eating and drinking, low alertness and vomiting. If the bacteria enter the bloodstream, they can cause pneumococcal bacteremia

and sepsis. Symptoms include fever, chills and low alertness. Pneumococcal bacteria cause up to half of all middle ear infections. Symptoms include ear pain; a red, swollen ear drum; fever; and sleepiness.

Meningitis and sepsis are the most life-threatening pneumococcal diseases and require rapid diagnosis and treatment to prevent multiple system organ failure and death. Pneumococcal meningitis is the most severe form of the disease and one of the most fatal childhood illnesses, killing or disabling 40–70 percent of children with the disease in developing countries.

Diagnosis depends upon the infection site. Your doctor will perform a physical exam and health history and order blood, imaging or lab tests. Treatment is with antibiotics. Early diagnosis of pneumococcal infection and laboratory testing are crucial to receiving proper antibiotic treatment. Pneumococcal infections are becoming more difficult to treat as bacteria become resistant to commonly used antibiotics. Severe cases of pneumococcal infection require supportive care in a hospital with oxygen, intravenous fluids, surgical drainage and even life support in an intensive care unit.

New vaccines are safe and highly effective in preventing pneumococcal disease. Two vaccines are available, one for infants and young children, the other for adults at high risk. Since 2000, when U.S. infants began receiving routine vaccination against pneumococcal disease, the country has nearly eliminated childhood pneumococcal disease caused by serotypes (serologically distinguishable strains) and reduced the spread of the bacteria to adults. If you are at risk, vaccination is the safest, most effective protection.

Because there are more than 90 strains of known pneumococcal serotypes causing disease, a pneumococcal infection will not protect you from future infection; pneumococcal vaccines are still recommended for those who have had the disease. More than 95 percent of pneumococcal deaths in the United States occur in adults, yet about 70 percent of at-risk adults remain unvaccinated.

U.S. hospitals, primary care providers and specialty providers (pulmonologists, cardiologists and endocrinologists) are required to encourage patients to receive the pneumococcal and flu vaccines. The administration or refusal of the vaccines is documented in patients' medical records. All hospitals are required to follow the immunization performance quality measure which offers the pneumococcal vaccine to all eligible patients prior to their discharge.

PREVENTION TACTICS:

- Get vaccinated. Doctors recommend the polysaccharide pneumococcal vaccine (PVC23) for adults older than 65 years and anyone older than 2 years with chronic diseases, including splenectomy.
- Vaccinate your children. Doctors recommend the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) for children younger than 2 years, at-risk children ages 2 to 5 years and those attending a childcare center. Doctors recommend flu shots for children 6 months and older.
- Protect against respiratory infections that can lead to pneumonia. Wash your hands regularly or use a hand sanitizer.
- Strengthen your immune system with good sleep, exercise and a healthy diet.
- Don't smoke. Smoking damages your lungs' natural defenses against infection.

**National Foundation
for Infectious Diseases**
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