

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

travel

SPAN

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Discover
Historical
Bazaars of
Istanbul

**Business
tourism**

continues to
contribute to
Dubai's economy

CURIO

collection by Hilton
debuts in South East
Asia, with opening of
SAii Lagoon Maldives

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and the wisdom of ancient ways,
to find answers in the
mystery of mountains and
strength in free, soaring lives.

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Connecting Vistara's strong domestic network with Lufthansa's global reach gives European airline customers immediate access to many more Indian cities than ever before

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Takes total value of Emirates' firm aircraft orders announced at the 2019 Dubai Airshow to US\$ 24.8 billion. HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Emirates Chairman and Chief Executive, signed the agreement with Stanley Deal, President and Chief Executive Officer for Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

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DWTC's large-scale exhibitions, trade events, conventions and conferences attracted over 2.5 million attendees in 2018. ... 1 billion, equivalent to 3.3 per cent of the emirate's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), added in incremental retained economic value by DWTC



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There are several historic bazaars in Istanbul, and many ultra modern shopping malls. Discover the four bazaars of Istanbul and explore the many colorful and vibrant shops they have to offer.

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More and more, tourists from India are traveling to the US to visit places connected with music now and in the country's history. Jason Pacheco, Global Trade Development Consultant for Brand USA, and James Namude, Director of Global Sponsorships for Brand USA, were in India to promote America's music heritage.

44 HOSPITALITY AND FOOD: CURIO collection by Hilton debuts in South East Asia, with opening of SAii Lagoon Maldives

Curio Collection by Hilton, a free-spirited tropical escape that offers sun, sea, style and sustainability, creating a playful getaway for groups of fun-seeking friends, couples and families.

48 HOSPITALITY AND FOOD: Discover one of the oldest wine regions in the world in Azerbaijan

Most of the wine regions are located north of the country, south of the Caucasus. ... let's get on with it and let's discover the wine regions of Azerbaijan!

54 HOSPITALITY AND FOOD: Thai Golf pass is all set for Season 3

Amazing Thailand also has Amazing Golf facilities. More than 200 golf courses are ideally located throughout the country, by the sea, by the mountains, by the lakes, inside the cities, even beside the airports. Top-quality courses, reasonable green fees, friendly caddies define the Thai golfing experience.





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Zurich Airport to develop Delhi's second airport at Jewar

Zurich Airport has emerged as the highest bidder to develop and build the second international airport of Delhi-NCR at Jewar in Uttar Pradesh with a bid of Rs 400.97 per passenger. The airport has been awarded for a concession period of 40 years. "Besides the necessary capital investments in the infrastructure, Flughafen Zürich AG shall pay a fixed passenger fee to the state-owned authority starting on the sixth anniversary of the commissioning of the new airport. Flughafen Zürich AG currently holds 100 percent of the project," Zurich Airport said.

Zurich Airport has surpassed the bids submitted by Adani group and GMR to win the construction award. While Adani group had submitted a bid of Rs 360 per passenger, Delhi International Airport had submitted a bid of Rs 351. While GMR Group had the right of first refusal for this airport as it is being built within a 150-km radius of the existing airport in Delhi, its bid was over 10 percent lower than the highest bid and hence, the award went to Zurich, sources said. The fourth player in the race was Anchorage Infrastructure Holdings Ltd with a bid of Rs 205 per passenger.

"The above financial bid of Zurich airport international AG will be put up before PMIC (Project monitoring and implementation committee) on December 2, 2019," A positive development for the sector with an International developer emerging as the preferred bidder. "It will be important that all the external connectivity are addressed on a war footing and an unencumbered site for development is also given to the concessionaire at the earliest. Also

imperative that the overall aviation growth trajectory comes back to low teens at the earliest,"

On May 5, 2018, the union civil aviation ministry had granted in-principle approval to the state government of Uttar Pradesh for setting up of a Noida International Greenfield Airport near Jewar.

The first phase of the airport will be spread over a period from 2022-23 (April-March) to 2026-27 and will invite cost of Rs 4,588 crore. During this period, the airport will be able to handle 12 million passengers per annum. The second phase will incur an expenditure of Rs 5,983 crore and will be completed over a period from 2030-31 to 2031-32, raising the airport capacity to 30 million passengers per annum.

The third phase will start in 2035 and will continue until 2037 with an expenditure target of Rs 8,415 crore and will increase its airport capacity to 50 million passengers. The last phase will be conducted over a period of 10 years and an amount of Rs 10,575 crore is likely to be spent in that period, taking the annual capacity of 70 million passengers per annum.

"Flughafen Zürich AG is committed to offer the highest service quality to the passengers, airlines and other involved stakeholders in the new Noida International Airport," the airport said.

Zurich Airport is not new to Indian aviation space. It had a stake in Bengaluru airport as well, which it completely exit in 2017. Currently, it is involved in eight airports in Latin America. Besides India, countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines are among the future focus markets, the airport said.

We are on



DEVENDER GROVER

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Cairo joins the Emirates A380 network

Following the recent debut of its flagship A380 aircraft to Cairo, Emirates will introduce a regular scheduled commercial A380 service to the Egyptian capital starting from 27 October 2019, four times a week. The only airline to operate a scheduled A380 service to Cairo, Emirates will replace the 777-300ER aircraft currently operating EK923 and EK924 on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with its flagship aircraft.

Earlier this year, Emirates announced it will also increase the frequency of flights between Dubai and Cairo, adding four additional flights a week to its existing thrice-daily service, starting 28 October, 2019. The four new flights EK921 and EK922, operating on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, will take the total number of weekly Emirates flights serving Cairo, to 25. Along with the new A380 service, Emirates will now offer 9,200 seats per week in each direction, offering Egyptian travellers even greater connectivity to the world, and boosting trade and tourism into Egypt.

The Emirates Airbus A380 aircraft serving the Dubai-Cairo route will offer a total of 489 seats in a three-class





configuration, with 399 spacious seats in Economy Class, 76 fully flat-bed seats in Business Class and 14 First Class Private Suites. Emirates award-winning entertainment system, ice, offers up to 4,500 channels of audio and visual entertainment, including live TV, movies, TV shows and music. First Class passengers can relax and revitalise in one of the two A380 Shower Spas, and First Class and Business Class passengers are welcome in the Onboard Lounge to enjoy an extensive range of beverages and delicacies.

Premium customers, and Platinum and Gold Skywards members can additionally enjoy the dedicated Emirates Lounge in Cairo airport which opened in 2018. Popular destinations on the Emirates network for Egyptian

travellers include cities in Asia, the Americas and Australia such as Beijing, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Sydney, Shanghai, New Delhi, Mumbai, New York and Washington DC.

Emirates started operations to Cairo in April 1986 with three flights a week and since then, has carried more than 7.3 million passengers to and from Cairo. Operations have steadily grown with increases in both frequency and capacity between Cairo and Dubai to match customer demand. Today, Emirates operates 21 weekly flights between Cairo and Dubai, soon to grow to 25 weekly flights. Globally, the airline employs more than 2,000 Egyptian nationals in a variety of roles across the Emirates Group, including over 1,000 cabin crew.



Emirates

announces US\$ 16 billion order for 50 A350 XWBs at Dubai Airshow

Fleet investment strengthens airline's business model, and signals confidence in Dubai and UAE's strategy of international connectivity

Emirates, the world's largest international airline, today announced a firm order for 50 A350-900 XWB aircraft worth US\$ 16 billion (AED 58.7 billion) at list prices at the Dubai Airshow 2019. Powered by Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engines, delivery of the first Emirates A350 XWB is expected in May 2023, and will continue until 2028.

HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Emirates Chairman and Chief Executive, signed the deal with Guillaume Faury, Chief Executive Officer from Airbus.

This purchase agreement replaces the heads of agreement signed in February where Emirates announced its intent to purchase 30 A350s and 40 A330Neos.



HH Sheikh Ahmed said: “we are pleased to sign a firm order for 50 A350 XWBs, powered by Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engines. This follows a thorough review of various aircraft options and of our own fleet plans. It is Emirates’ long-standing strategy to invest in modern and efficient aircraft, and we are confident in the performance of the A350 XWB.

“Complementing our A380s and 777s, the A350s will give us added operational flexibility in terms of capacity, range and deployment. In effect, we are strengthening our business model to provide efficient and comfortable air transport services to, and through, our Dubai hub.”

Sheikh Ahmed added: “This US\$ 16 billion deal reflects our confidence in the future of the UAE’s aviation sector, and is a strong affirmation of Dubai’s strategy to be a global nexus

This purchase agreement replaces the heads of agreement signed in February where Emirates announced its intent to purchase 30 A350s and 40 A330Neos.

connected to cities, communities and economies via a world-class and modern aviation sector.”

“We are honoured by Emirates’ strong vote of confidence in our newest widebody aircraft, taking our

partnership to the next level. The A350 will bring unbeatable economics and environmental benefits to their fleet,” said Guillaume Faury, Airbus Chief Executive Officer. “We look forward to seeing the A350 flying in Emirates colours!”

The A350 will enable Emirates to serve a range of new markets, not only in region but also on long-haul missions of up to 15 hours of flying time from Dubai. Emirates intends to equip its A350s with its latest products, and offer different cabin configurations including Premium Economy.

Emirates currently operates an all wide-body fleet of efficient and modern aircraft, comprising the iconic Airbus A380 and the popular Boeing 777. From its hub in Dubai, the airline serves over 150 cities on six continents, offering award-winning inflight and on ground services.

Etihad Airways relaunches award-winning Etihad Guest Loyalty Programme

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates – Etihad Airways, the national airline of the UAE, has relaunched its award-winning loyalty programme, Etihad Guest. The redesigned and upgraded reward scheme now offers its members significantly enhanced benefits. There are currently more than 6.5 million Etihad Guest members worldwide, enjoying the benefits of one of the travel industry’s leading reward programmes.

- Relaunched with new design and refreshed ‘look and feel’
- Coming soon: Etihad Guest miles will no longer expire
- Exclusive rewards and discounts for members
- Chauffeur service in Abu Dhabi for reward seats

Members will soon be able to pay with Etihad Guest Miles for more travel ancillaries, using either their miles or a combination of miles and cash, and ancillaries like economy space, extra baggage and insurance through the *etihad.com* booking engine. Upgrades and related services, such as excess baggage and taxes, will also be available with miles on Etihad.com.

Robin Kamark, Chief Commercial Officer, Etihad Aviation Group said: “We are very proud of the Etihad Guest programme and through its well-timed relaunch are striving to deliver new and more innovative ways of rewarding the loyalty of our millions of guests worldwide, by removing restrictions wherever possible, and by providing a

wider range of superior benefits and products, delivered to them with the style and professionalism they have come to expect from Etihad Guest.

“We will continue to engage with our members, whether existing or new, on an even greater personal level moving forward, so Etihad Guest can evolve based on the needs of our customers, and also to cater to developing global travel trends.”

Guests with Gold and above tier status will be offered a complimentary one-way chauffeur service to or from Abu Dhabi International Airport, when travelling in Business and First on miles redemption tickets.

In a further planned enhancement to the programme, Etihad Guest Miles will no longer expire and will remain valid as long as one eligible transaction is made every 18 months. Discounts for purchasing Wi-Fi and seat selection will be available exclusively for members and they can pay for Wi-Fi with miles.

Etihad Guest’s top tier Platinum members will now benefit from a dedicated contact number for premium guest service agents who are available to assist.



Over 33,000 visitors treated to the Emirates experience as airline wraps up another successful **2019 Dubai Airshow**



Emirates has successfully wrapped up the 2019 edition of the Dubai Airshow with over 33,000 people visiting and experiencing Emirates' commercial and training aircraft displays, exhibition stand and chalet this year.

For the 2019 edition of the Dubai Airshow, Emirates showcased its latest Airbus A380 and Boeing 777-300ER with the 'mobility' (blue) and 'opportunity' (orange) themes of the Expo. The Cirrus SR 22 and Embraer Phenom 100 jets utilized for training flights by the Emirates Flight Training Academy were also on display to visitors.

Emirates was also honoured to welcome **His Highness Sheikh**

Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, and His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE and Minister of Presidential Affairs, to its Emirates A380 static display.

Emirates received over 10,000 people at its modern exhibition stand, which featured the game-changer Boeing 777-300ER First Class suite exhibit.

During the Dubai Airshow, Emirates

announced firm aircraft commitments totalling US\$ 24.8 billion, including an order for 50 A350-900 XWB aircraft worth US\$ 16 billion and a full purchase agreement for 30 Boeing 787-9 aircraft, worth US\$ 8.8 billion at list prices.

In addition, Emirates signed several agreements with suppliers and partners for MRO services, training programmes, and other supporting business and operational functions. Emirates signed an MOU with Sanad Aerotech to collaborate on MRO services as well as to enhance training and dedicated repair capabilities. The Emirates Group and GE Aviation signed an MOU to extend GE's development and leadership training programmes to UAE National employees at the Emirates Group. The Emirates Flight Training Centre and CAE also announced the deployment of a new Bombardier Global 7500 full-flight simulator at the airline's training centre in Dubai, to further expand pilot training capacity on offer.

Emirates treated airshow visitors with a stunning flying display to open up the first day of the event with a special fly past comprising of an Airbus A380 adorned with green livery representing the 'sustainability' theme of Expo 2020, followed by the UAE's air-display team, Al Fursan.

UAE in Space Livery makes its operational debut

The Emirates A380 'UAE in Space' mission livery made its official operational debut today, 22 November as it took off to its first destination Melbourne, Australia as flight EK 408. The aircraft will continue to fly across the Emirates A380

network of more than 50 destinations over the course of the next year.

Paying tribute to the UAE's first space mission and celebrating the nation's ambitions to become a hub for space exploration and research, Emirates' flagship A380 is adorned

with an image of an astronaut in front of Earth and the International Space Station (ISS), as well as a quote from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, which says: "The sky is only the beginning."



Etihad Aviation Group appoints new Senior Vice President Global Sales and Distribution

Etihad Aviation Group (EAG) announces the appointment of Duncan Bureau as Senior Vice President Global Sales and Distribution, who will report directly into the group's Chief Commercial Officer, Robin Kamark. The role will be instrumental in driving the group's commercial strategy globally.

Duncan Bureau, a well-known and respected figure in the aviation

industry, joins the airline with more than 25 years' experience and most recently held the position of President at Air Canada Rouge, the low-cost subsidiary of Air Canada. Prior to this, he was Vice President Global Sales at Air Canada between 2014 and 2018, with responsibility for generating revenue from all points of sale, and worldwide sales distribution strategies.

Duncan also spent ten years at Canadian carrier, WestJet, rising to Vice President Sales and Airline Partnerships, and two years in Kuala Lumpur as Senior Vice President Global Sales and Distribution at Malaysia Airlines.

Duncan will assume his new position immediately, based at Etihad's global headquarters in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates

United Airlines

Inaugurates Nonstop Service Between New Delhi and San Francisco

- *United is the first U.S. airline to serve San Francisco from New Delhi and the only airline to offer flat-bed business seats on this route*
- *New route is United's third nonstop flight from India to the U.S.*

United Airlines inaugurated its daily nonstop seasonal service between Indira Gandhi International Airport and its hub at San Francisco International Airport today. The flights will operate on a daily basis during the winter months and three times weekly during the summer season.

United's new flight is the first to be operated by a U.S. carrier between the two cities and is the airline's third daily nonstop service from India in addition to the existing daily, year-round services from Mumbai and New Delhi to New York/Newark.

Marking this special occasion, customers, guests, United employees



and crew joined Marcel Fuchs
- United Vice President Sales
International, Thorsten Lettnin
- United Managing Director
Continental Europe & India, Harvinder

Singh - United Country Manager
India, and Jitendra Singh - Delhi
International Airport Ltd. Vice President
& Head - Airline Marketing & Route
Development, for a special ribbon

New Delhi (DEL) – San Francisco (SFO) from December 7, 2019 to March 27, 2020

UA 105	Daily	DEL - SFO	3:50 a.m.	6:00 a.m.	Boeing 787-9
UA 104	Daily	SFO - DEL	7:15 p.m.	12:45 a.m. +2 days	Boeing 787-9

New Delhi (DEL) – San Francisco (SFO) from March 28 – October 23, 2020

UA 105	Mon/Wed/Sat	DEL - SFO	2:55 a.m.	6:10 a.m.	Boeing 787-9
UA 104	Mon/Thu/Sat	SFO - DEL	7:45 p.m.	11:45 p.m. +1 day	Boeing 787-9

Schedules subject to change

cutting ceremony before the departure of United Flight UA105 to San Francisco.

"We are excited to inaugurate our daily, nonstop seasonal service between Delhi and our San Francisco hub," said Harvinder Singh, United Country Manager India. "This new flight strengthens our international route network and provides our customers from India with even greater travel choice as well as the option of our new Polaris business class service, with flat-bed seats. With a network of connections from San Francisco to almost 40 other destinations across the U.S. and Canada, the new service is opening up new opportunities for both business and leisure travellers alike."

Commenting on the inaugural United Airlines flight from Delhi, Mr. Videh Kumar Jaipuriar, CEO-DIAL said, "At Delhi Airport, we are delighted to welcome United Airlines' non-stop flight service between New Delhi and San Francisco. This route will provide individuals another opportunity to fly non-stop between the two countries. This route will not only help improve the business-related travel experience but also encourage personal visits by a large Indian diaspora based in San Francisco."

The Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner

The revolutionary design of the Dreamliner offers customers many features for increased comfort such as large windows, spacious overhead storage and modern LED lighting to simulate a full day, helping passengers adjust their internal clock on the trans-Atlantic flight. In addition, a lower cabin altitude, cleaner air and smoother ride help customers feel rested on arrival.

The aircraft features a total of 252 seats – 48 flat-bed seats in United Polaris business class, 88 in United Economy Plus and 116 in United Economy.

United Polaris business class, the airline's new business cabin, features a reimagined, sleep-enhancing experience for intercontinental travellers. The Polaris service is now

available onboard, featuring an elevated inflight food and beverage experience, custom bedding from Saks Fifth Avenue and exclusive amenity kits with products from Sunday Riley.

United Economy Plus offers added legroom and increased personal space. Located near the front of the Economy cabin, the seats give the added benefit of a swifter exit from the plane on arrival. Economy Plus seating is available on all trans-Atlantic flights.

United Economy offers complimentary food, soft drinks, juices, beer and wine, tea, coffee and inflight entertainment. On most aircraft, seats feature an adjustable headrest and a personal on-demand entertainment system.

United in India

United has served India since 2005. In addition to the new service from New Delhi to San Francisco, United offers its customers from India year-round daily nonstop flights from New Delhi and Mumbai to New York/Newark. Flights are conveniently timed to connect at United's U.S. hubs with an extensive network of services to destinations throughout the Americas. United customers in India can book flights by visiting united.com or contacting United reservations on 91-22-40908000 (Mumbai), 91-124-4315500 (Delhi), or their travel agent.

United in San Francisco

San Francisco International Airport is United's premier gateway to the Pacific. United, together with United Express, operates 290 daily flights from its San Francisco hub to over 100 destinations throughout the U.S., Europe, Middle East, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada. In 2018, United opened its new Polaris lounge in San Francisco's International Terminal G and in 2019, the lounge was voted 'Best Business Class Lounge in the World' by the 2019 World Airline Awards from Skytrax. This highly-coveted award was voted for by more than 21 million airline customers representing over 100 nationalities.



Every customer. Every flight. Every day.

In 2019, United is focusing more than ever on its commitment to its customers, looking at every aspect of its business to ensure that the carrier keeps customers' best interests at the heart of its service. In addition to today's announcement, this year United:

- Announced that MileagePlus award miles will never expire
- Gave Economy customers a choice of complimentary snacks on domestic flights
- Made DIRECTV free for every customer on more than 200 aircraft
- Released a new version of the award-winning, most downloaded app in the airline industry
- Launched a new tool called ConnectionSaver, dedicated to improving the experience for customers with connecting flights
- Partnered with CLEAR on free or discounted memberships for MileagePlus members
- Announced PlusPoints, new upgrade benefits for MileagePlus Premier members
- And introduced products in its amenity kits made exclusively for the airline by luxury skincare line Sunday Riley

Virgin Atlantic hosted “Business is an Adventure” with Sir Richard Branson, to celebrate the launch of its new daily service between Mumbai and London

Mumbai. Virgin Atlantic hosted the event “Business Is an Adventure” to mark its expansion in India, with the start of a new connection between Mumbai and London and the addition of its second daily flight between Delhi and London from March 29th, 2020. This expansion will make India Virgin Atlantic’s third largest market after the UK & US. The event saw the presence of prominent business personalities including the founder of Virgin Atlantic, Sir Richard Branson.

Virgin Atlantic also announced their introduction of their new Indian flying icon called Aria which will feature on the side of their aircraft from 2020. Aria is the name of Sir Richard’s great, great, grandfather’s wife who was from India. This forms part of a series that have been created to showcase the diverse range of men and women that represent modern Britain. Virgin Atlantic’s use of the Flying Lady was inspired by figureheads that have decorated ships since the 16th century and the original version was inspired by the pin up girls made famous by Alberto Vargas in the 1930’s and 40’s and this move represents the changing face of one of Britain’s most loved brands.

The event kick started with a panel discussion on ‘Business is an Adventure’ where eminent business leaders including Dhruv Shringi – CEO, Yatra Online, Devita Saraf – Founder & CEO, VU Technologies, Falguni Nayar – Founder, Nykaa and Ronnie Screwvala – Co-Founder & Chairman, upGrad, where they highlighted the adventures they have had in business over the years which have helped them get to where they are today.

The discussion was followed by a

lively fireside chat on ‘Learning from failure’ between Sir Richard Branson and Anand Mahindra. The session proved to be insightful with anecdotes from their entrepreneurial expeditions. The session culminated in some school children asking Sir Richard Branson and Anand Mahindra their burning questions.

Sir Richard Branson, Founder, Virgin Atlantic, said, “India holds a very special place in our hearts and we are excited to be celebrating 20 years of flying here in 2020. We thought that the best way to celebrate this milestone would be by adding more choice of routes for our customers to fly directly between Mumbai & Delhi to London. We are committed to this market and will continue to invest and grow our operations at the same time as offering an unrivalled service for those choosing to fly with us to the UK and onto the US.”

With the additional daily flight to Delhi and the newly launched Mumbai service, Virgin Atlantic will offer more choice to India than ever before. Together with Delta Air Lines, Virgin Atlantic will offer seamless connections between Delhi and New York JFK, Boston, Detroit and Atlanta via Heathrow.

Virgin Atlantic is celebrating the launch of its new route from London to Mumbai.

There is now a daily service linking the two cities with complimentary food and drink and more than 300 hours of entertainment onboard the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner. Customers can also stay connected throughout their flight as all of the airline’s Dreamliners are fully Wi-Fi enabled.

Travellers will also be able to make

seamless connections between India and the US via London Heathrow.

Virgin Atlantic is expanding its offering and this is the third new route announcement this year – following on from Tel Aviv and São Paulo.

Juha Jarvinen, executive vice president of commercial at Virgin Atlantic, said: “2019 marks a significant period of growth for Virgin Atlantic and I’m delighted that we’re expanding our route network by returning to Mumbai.

“Along with our long-standing route to Delhi, we are now able to provide travellers with an increased offering to the thriving Indian market and an opportunity to experience our award winning service between the UK and India. Together with our partners at Delta, we offer an excellent choice of connections to the USA via Heathrow Airport.”

Dave Hodges, commercial manager for India at Virgin Atlantic said: “We are really excited to now have a daily flight serving Mumbai-London. Amidst the festive season in India, it is a special time to start the flight and we are confident that Mumbai is going to love the best of Bollywood entertainment and the best Indian food onboard our state of the art 787-9 Dreamliner.”

As well as flying customers, Virgin Atlantic continues to see increased demand for cargo. This fast cargo service will offer new opportunities for companies looking to export and import goods between Mumbai and prime markets in the UK and US.

It’s also an exciting time for Virgin Atlantic as they have taken delivery of their first Airbus A350-1000 aircraft – helping to transform the fleet into one of the quietest and most fuel efficient in the sky.

Etihad Airways and tourism Malaysia partner to promote travel to Malaysia

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, today announced a partnership with Tourism Malaysia to attract visitors from Europe and the Middle East to Malaysia, via the airline's Abu Dhabi hub. The agreement was signed at the World Travel Market in London, attended by representatives from both organisations and trade partners.

The agreement between the two organisations will support the tourism board's Visit Malaysia 2020 marketing campaign which has been developed to encourage tourism from Europe and the Middle East to Malaysia.

Etihad Airways began flying to Kuala Lumpur in 2007 and has since flown

2.7 million passengers to the Malaysian capital. Today, Etihad Airways operates a daily flight to Kuala Lumpur which is operated by the airline's Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Hareb Almuhairey, Senior Vice President Destination and Leisure Management, Etihad Aviation Group commented: "Tourism Malaysia has been a proud partner of Etihad's for many years and Kuala Lumpur remains one of the most important destinations in our global network. The Southeast Asian country continues to be a popular choice for travellers in the UK and Europe as well as the Middle East, and visitors will benefit from the convenient connection through Abu Dhabi."

Datuk Musa Hj Yusof, Director General, Tourism Malaysia, commented: "The campaign aims to welcome tourists from Europe, Middle East and beyond to Malaysia as well as to promote the Visit Malaysia 2020 initiative, which seeks to attract 30 million tourists and around RM 100 billion (GBP 18.56 Billion) in tourism receipts by the year 2020."

Malaysia is an attractive and diverse country for tourism, giving visitors the chance to explore experiences as varied as the cosmopolitan capital Kuala Lumpur, the stunning islands of Penang and Langkawi, prehistoric rainforests, and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Kinabalu Park, amongst many other world-class attractions.

INDIA / STATE TOURISM / KERALA

Holiday at Chembarikka Beach - A Golden Experience to Cherish

No one can deny the fact that sea waves fill hearts with peace and joy!

The waves on the shimmering blue Chembarikka beach do just the same and perhaps more. They soak you in pure bliss.

Situated in a sleepy hamlet in Chemnad grama panchayath, Kasaragod district, Kerala, India, Chembarikka is a wonderful blend of sandy beach, small rock clusters and a refreshingly quiet atmosphere.

Be it to swim in its shallow waters, play beach games, enjoy the stunning view or simply take in the sound of lapping waves, Chembarikka serves as a perfect option for a pleasant holiday. A seemingly endless expanse of golden sand with frothy waters gently

caressing your feet, Chembarikka beach is a place-not-to-be-missed, if you are an ardent Nature lover. Among the finest and cleanest beaches in Kerala, Chembarikka is the best haven for those who love solitude.

This is one less-explored destination in Kasaragod district where you can enjoy peace. Lined with swaying coconut palms, this beach is bound to mesmerize your holidaying family with spectacular views and a magical ambience.

The beach also offers you options to relax and recharge by soaking in the summer sun and walking through the lovely little sea-side hamlets. Of

course, it also offers something that the beaches of God's Own Country are most famous for: tranquillity.

Chembarikka is a family-friendly beach that will reward you with unique experiences, and is a quiet venue to spend some meaningful time with your loved ones. Besides the beach, Noombil River popularly known as Chembarikka River also adds beauty to this place.

The longest railway tunnel in Kerala, Kalanad Tunnel – constructed 110 years ago by the colonial British – is situated in Chembarikka village.

Make this a fantastic trip and get some unique pictures for your Instagram!

SriLankan Airlines

forges ahead with Business Turnaround Plan



SriLankan Airlines has made significant progress in its efforts to become a sophisticated customer-centric airline intent on achieving financial success, by implementing a wide-ranging Turnaround Plan under the leadership of its Board of Directors with the unstinted support of its employees across all divisions.

Following the appointment of a new Board of Directors in April 2018, the majority on an honorary unrecompensed basis, SriLankan

began implementing a wide range of initiatives to curtail losses and improve the customer experience, despite many challenges including the impact on tourist arrivals from the Easter Sunday attacks, volatile fuel prices and depreciation of the rupee.

The airline will expand its presence in the important Australian market by commencing operations to Sydney next year and further strengthen its position as the largest foreign carrier in India with the launch of services to Ahmedabad. SriLankan also intends

to stretch its wings in Southeast Asia with a new service to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) in Vietnam, while plans to return to Frankfurt, Paris and other earlier destinations continue to be under consideration.

A considerable effort is being made throughout the organization in order to provide the most pleasant and user-friendly experience in terms of both products and services, across all customer touchpoints. These enhancements, supported by latest cutting edge technology, will focus on

complementing traditional SriLankan hospitality while blending the comforts of contemporary air travel. The onboard passenger experience is being greatly enhanced, including significant changes to the content and user-friendly aspects of the inflight entertainment system; revamping of the Business Class product and service; improved ranges of meals and beverages; and plans to introduce more comfortable seating in the Business Class cabins of the narrow-body fleet including the NEO aircraft serving the Far East.

Enhancements are being effected to the internet booking engine to provide a more customer-friendly experience. With the introduction of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool, the airline will be able to enhance its offering to the frequent flyer members through FlySmiLes and provide greater rewards for its loyal customers.

One of the first steps that was firmly implemented by the new Board was the restructuring of the National Carrier's Management Team, with proven experts in the aviation industry being inducted into key positions including those of Chief Executive Officer, Chief Technical Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Commercial Officer, and Chief of Service Delivery. With the full support of the staff, the Management Team rolled out multiple initiatives, introducing budgetary controls for all cost lines, inculcating a cost-conscious culture and driving financial acumen across the organization. However, great care was taken to ensure that the cost optimizing did not adversely impact the product and services enjoyed by customers.

This has resulted in the financial performance for the six months ended 30th September 2019 showing an upward trend by reducing losses by more than 50%, with a loss of USD 19 MN before interest and withholding tax against a loss of USD 39 MN for the same period in the previous year.

After interest and withholding tax, the half yearly group loss was USD 76 MN, a USD 10 MN improvement over the USD 86 MN loss in the previous year.

This was achieved despite an overall decline in Group Revenue of USD 43 MN, 70% of which was due to a drop in passenger and cargo revenue. The reduction in ground handling and catering revenue also impacted the shortfall, as other airlines reduced their operations following the Easter Sunday attacks. However, in the second half of the year, Group Revenue is projected to increase significantly with the enhancement in operations by SriLankan and customer airlines.

The decline in income was offset by the considerable reduction in operating expenditure amounting to USD 55 MN due to the efforts of

revenue stream was re-established with SriLankan Engineering, the airline's aircraft maintenance arm, regaining its Type-145 global certification from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and thus resuming third party maintenance services for customer airlines. This is projected to generate revenue of USD 1.1 MN in 2019/20.

Over USD 2 MN in savings were achieved through initiatives introduced pertaining to distribution cost by the Commercial team.

The company also focused strongly on the importance and user-friendliness of its online direct sales channel www.srilankan.com and

The airline will expand its presence in the important Australian market by commencing operations to Sydney next year and further strengthen its position as the largest foreign carrier in India with the launch of services to Ahmedabad.

the staff of the entire organisation in cost saving initiatives to enhance productivity and reduce admin costs and wastage. The airline's corporate offices in Colombo were relocated to existing space in Katunayake resulting in significant savings and enhancing operational efficiency. Negotiations with state banks to reduce interest rates are ongoing through the State Minister, and consultations continue with the major shareholder - the Ministry of Finance - to seek exemption on the imposition of withholding tax.

Savings in the area of engineering and maintenance for the aircraft fleet have been significant, and a cost reduction of USD 8 MN was realized in 2018/19, with a further USD 23 MN earmarked for 2019/2020. There has also been a noteworthy improvement in fuel performance of the NEO aircraft fleet. An important

succeeded in increasing its contribution to overall revenue up to 15% from the previous 11%.

A host of international accolades restored much pride to the National Carrier, including the global award for 'Best Marketing Innovation' from the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX), the prestigious 'Asia's Leading Airline to the Indian Ocean' title for the third consecutive year at the World Travel Awards Asia & Oceania, and a coveted PATA Gold Award in the 'Marketing-Carrier' category. SriLankan also secured an APEX Four-Star rating in the 'major airlines' category for the 3rd consecutive year. Vigorous commitment to service quality and efficiency resulted in SriLankan being named the 'World's Most Punctual Airline' twice during the last 12 months. Congratulations to all involved.

Lufthansa joins forces with Vistara to boost its Indian network



- *Leading European airline group enters into comprehensive codeshare agreement with Indian full-service carrier Vistara*
- *As part of the new agreement customers benefit from 126 weekly flights connecting ten key Indian cities to the Lufthansa Group network via Delhi / Lufthansa and Vistara in final stages on enabling customers being able to earn miles flying with both airlines*
- *George Ettiyil: “By partnering with Vistara we boost our position as the leading European airline in India and significantly increase our offer in one of the most important aviation markets in the world.”*

Lufthansa and Vistara, one of India's leading airlines have of late started offering its customers codeshare flights. A new partnership that adds 126 weekly flights to ten key Indian cities. This will be in addition to Lufthansa's current schedule of 56 weekly international flights to and from the major Indian hubs of Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai with ultra-modern aircraft like the Airbus A350. It is planned to subsequently add more destinations of Vistara's network under the umbrella of the codeshare agreement in 2020 and beyond.

Connecting Vistara's strong domestic network with Lufthansa's global reach gives European airline customers immediate access to many more Indian cities than ever before. At the same time this partnership offers customers from ten key Indian cities like Kolkata, Goa and Pune unlimited access to the Lufthansa Group's worldwide network, including top-tier destinations in Europe, Canada and the United States. Further, Lufthansa and Vistara are in the final stages on enabling customers being able to earn miles flying Vistara or Lufthansa. Vistara joins Air India as the second Indian airline having a codeshare agreement with Lufthansa.

George Ettiyil, Senior Director Sales for the Lufthansa Group

Airlines in South Asia emphasizes the strategic importance of taking the existing interline agreement with Vistara to the next level. “This marks Lufthansa's commitment to offering its Indian customers world-class international travel experiences and will enable them to use their preferred mileage program on codeshare routes. By teaming up with Vistara, we will strengthen and expand our position as the leading and most popular European airline in India – a country all set to become the third-largest aviation market in just a few years' time.”

Commenting on the momentous partnership between Lufthansa and Vistara, **Mr. Vinod Kannan, Vistara's Chief Strategy Officer**, says: “As a growing global carrier, one of our key goals is to offer an extended international network to our customers through such strategic associations. This also lets inbound travelers experience Vistara - India's only five-star airline. Our codeshare with Lufthansa is another important step in this direction and helps us widen our customer base outside of India. We are delighted to strengthen our partnership with Lufthansa, an airline we share many things in common with, and bring to our customers a delightful, world-class flying experience.”

Qatar Airways and Sri Lankan Airlines Announce Significant Codeshare Expansion



- *The agreement will open more destinations on the Qatar Airways network to Sri Lankan Airlines' passengers*
- *Flights to the island of Gan in the Maldives will be available to Qatar Airways' passengers for the first time*



Qatar Airways is pleased to announce expanded codeshare cooperation with Sri Lankan Airlines, starting from 23 December. This new codeshare agreement will strengthen the two airlines' strategic partnership, first initiated in 2016.

The expanded codeshare agreement will be rolled out in phases and once fully implemented will allow Sri Lankan Airlines' passengers to book travel to 33 additional Qatar Airways destinations* in Europe, America, and Africa. Combined with the two airlines' existing codeshare agreement, this brings the total Qatar Airways destinations offered under Sri Lankan Airlines' flight numbers to 53.

Phase one has opened for sale today for travel starting on 23 December with Sri Lankan Airlines passengers able to book travel to eight additional Qatar Airways' destinations – Athens, Greece; Belgrade, Serbia; Brussels, Belgium; Dublin, Ireland; Helsinki, Finland; Munich, Germany; Prague, Czech Republic and Thessaloniki, Greece.

Qatar Airways' passengers will benefit from access to exciting new destinations in the Maldives thanks to the expanded codeshare agreement. They will now be able to book travel on Sri Lankan Airlines' flights to the island of Gan in Addu Atoll, the southernmost point of the Maldives. The new destination complements the existing Sri Lankan Airlines' routes available to

Qatar Airways passengers – Colombo in Sri Lanka and Malé in the Maldives.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "Since 2016 both airlines have witnessed the significant benefits codeshare cooperation has brought, providing passengers with unrivalled service and seamless connections. The expansion of codeshare cooperation between Qatar Airways and Sri Lankan Airlines is a natural next step in the strengthening of our close partnership."

Sri Lankan Airlines Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Vipula Gunatilleka,

said: "We are delighted to further strengthen the bonds of our long-time partnership with our fellow oneworld member Qatar Airways, and feel certain that the valued passengers of both our airlines will reap the benefits of this close co-operation."

Qatar Airways began flying to Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1994. Today, it is one of the airline's most popular routes, served by a four-times daily service. In 2016, Qatar Airways and Sri Lankan Airlines announced a codeshare agreement to provide greater connectivity and new destinations to their passengers.

A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was named 'World's Best Airline' by the 2019 World Airline Awards, managed by the international air transport rating organisation Skytrax. It was also named 'Best Airline in the

Middle East', 'World's Best Business Class', and 'Best Business Class Seat', in recognition of its ground-breaking Business Class experience, Qsuite. It is the only airline to have been awarded the coveted "Skytrax Airline of the Year" title, which is recognised as the pinnacle of excellence in the airline industry, five times.

Qatar Airways currently operates a modern fleet of more than 250 aircraft via its hub, Hamad International Airport (HIA), to more than 160 destinations worldwide. The world's fastest-growing airline has added a number of exciting new destinations to its growing network this year, including Rabat, Morocco; Izmir, Turkey; Malta; Davao, Philippines; Lisbon, Portugal; Mogadishu, Somalia; and Langkawi, Malaysia. The airline will add Gaborone, Botswana, in 2019 to its extensive route network along with Luanda, Angola; and Osaka, Japan, in 2020.

Sri Lankan Airlines serves 109 destinations in 48 countries from its hub, Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo (CMB). As oneworld alliance partners, customers of both airlines are ensured recognition of their frequent-flyer status and benefits including access to lounges worldwide, through check-in, extra baggage allowance, plus accrual and redemption of miles, priority check-in and boarding across the carriers' networks.

**Subject to regulatory approval.*

Emirates

Emirates, the world's largest international airline, today announced that it has signed a full purchase agreement for 30 Boeing 787-9 aircraft, worth US\$ 8.8 billion at list prices, at the Dubai Airshow 2019. Under its agreement with Boeing, Emirates has exercised its right to substitute the B777x with B787s.

This deal includes Boeing 787 Dreamliners, with deliveries commencing in May 2023 and continuing for the next five years. For the B777X, Emirates will enter into discussions with Boeing over the next few weeks on the status of deliveries. This takes Emirates' total order with Boeing to 126 Boeing 777X aircraft.

HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Emirates Chairman and Chief Executive, signed the agreement with Stanley Deal, President and Chief Executive Officer for Boeing Commercial Airplanes. Including the US\$ 16 billion Airbus A350 order on Monday, this latest announcement takes the total value of Emirates' firm aircraft commitments at the 2019 Dubai Airshow to US\$ 24.8 billion.

HH Sheikh Ahmed said: "I am pleased to announce a firm order for 30 Boeing Dreamliners. This is an important investment and addition to our future fleet and network requirements, providing us the agility, flexibility and spread of seat segments when it comes to overall capacity to serve a range of destinations as we develop and grow our global route network. This also reflects Emirates' continued efforts to provide the best quality air transport services to our customers.

The 787s will complement our fleet mix by expanding our operational

**firms up
US\$8.8
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order for
30 Boeing
787s at
2019 Dubai
Airshow**

*Takes total value of
Emirates' firm aircraft
orders announced at the
2019 Dubai Airshow to
US\$ 24.8 billion*

flexibility in terms of capacity, range and deployment to connect new city pairs and expand frequencies. We are also pleased to reaffirm our commitment to the Boeing 777x programme and look forward to its entry into service."

Sheikh Ahmed added: "Our Boeing fleet is key to our business model to serve international demand for travel to and through our Dubai hub, as we continue to contribute to the UAE's strategy to become a global destination for business and tourism by providing high quality air connectivity."

Stanley Deal said: "We are excited to finalise this important order from one of the world's leading airlines. Our agreement solidifies Emirates' plan to operate the 787 Dreamliner and the 777X, which make up the most efficient and most capable wide-body combination in the industry. It is an honour to build on our successful partnership with Emirates and continue to sustain many jobs at Boeing and our supplier partners."

Emirates is a powerful engine for American aerospace manufacturing jobs. Applying the US Department of Commerce jobs multiplier (every \$1 billion in US aerospace exports supports 5,200 American jobs), this order will create and support over 45,000 additional jobs in US aerospace manufacturing – not only with Boeing, but also with the thousands of other suppliers in the value chain across the US, many of which are medium and small-sized businesses.

Emirates' partnership with Boeing spans decades. Emirates is by far the largest Boeing 777 operator on the planet with 155 777s in service today.

Emirates currently operates an all wide-body fleet of efficient and modern aircraft, comprising the iconic Airbus A380 and the popular Boeing 777. From its hub in Dubai, the airline serves over 150 cities on six continents, offering award-winning inflight and on ground services.

Etihad and Boeing

announce global partnership, centred on 787 Dreamliner and sustainable aviation

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, has joined forces with Boeing in an industry-leading strategic partnership centred on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, and focused on innovation, cost efficiency and minimising the impact of aviation on the environment.

- Companies to share knowledge, experience and resources
- Commercial, technical agreements of approximately AED800m/US\$215 m
- Themed 787 to reinforce Etihad-Boeing partnership and the environment

The Abu Dhabi-based airline, which received its first 787 in December 2014, now operates 36 Dreamliners – the largest number in the Middle East – which comprise more than one third of its total fleet and will reach 50 per cent by 2023.

At the 2019 Dubai International Air Show, **Tony Douglas, the Group Chief Executive of Etihad Aviation Group**, and **Stanley Deal, Executive Vice President of The Boeing Company, and President and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes**, signed a comprehensive agreement through which the companies will share knowledge, experience and resources to continuously improve the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, and reduce aircraft carbon emissions, a major challenge across many industries today.

Etihad and Boeing also jointly unveiled a special ‘Greenliner’ livery for one of the airline’s 787 Dreamliner

aircraft to highlight their shared commitment to more sustainable aviation, and to test new products, procedures and initiatives designed to reduce fuel consumption.

The partnership will be underpinned by commercial and technical agreements valued at approximately AED 800 million (\$US 215 million) encompassing a broad range of services including a landing gear overhaul program, high value airframe components, and maintenance planning optimisation tools.

Mr Douglas said: “Innovation, productivity and sustainability are core values and objectives of Etihad Airways, and of Abu Dhabi, and the Boeing 787 is a key enabler of all three. Etihad and Boeing see great opportunities to share our combined knowledge of this incredible aircraft, and to work with other aviation stakeholders to explore opportunities for more innovation and less environmental impact.”

Mr Deal said: “The 787 Dreamliner and its revolutionary design have enabled carriers such as Etihad Airways to significantly reduce fuel use and emissions. It is the perfect platform for advancing our industry’s commitment to sustainable growth. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Etihad Airways and identifying more ways to improve efficiency across commercial aviation.”

The companies commit to build upon the significant technical capabilities which Etihad has

developed to support both its own 787 Dreamliners, and those of a growing number of other operators, as well as engineer exchanges with a focus on further developing the skills and experience of UAE nationals.

Activities under discussion include training for pilots, cabin crew and maintenance technicians, secondment of pilots between Etihad, Boeing, and other operators, and development in Abu Dhabi of Maintenance and Repair Organisation capabilities for the type.

Mohammad Al Bulooki, Chief Operating Officer of Etihad Airways, said the Etihad-Boeing agreement demonstrated a level of collaboration rarely seen in the airline industry, to deliver value not only to these companies, but also to other 787 Dreamliner operators and the broader industry.

“These agreements complement our wider partnership and support future collaboration between Etihad and Boeing on supply chain management and both line and predictive maintenance, further reinforcing the airline’s commitment to reliability,” he said.

“They also strengthen Abu Dhabi’s credentials as a global innovation hub, a key pillar of the Emirate’s 2030 economic and social vision. As a next step, Etihad and Boeing will explore partnerships with universities in both Abu Dhabi and Seattle, home to Boeing’s largest assembly facilities, to further increase capabilities which support development of the aerospace sector in Abu Dhabi, and elsewhere in the UAE.



Dubai World Trade Centre drives record AED 13.1bn in net economic value and 3.3% impact to city's GDP in 2018

Gaura G Bahl, Group Editor, Travel Span in conversation with **Steen Jakobsen** - Vice President, Dubai Tourism

Q *Events at DWTC generated total economic value of AED 23 billion with a high AED 13.1 billion retained within Dubai's GDP, representing an impressive leakage ratio of under 43% for a largely import-based economy*

A Dubai's economy continues to experience sustained growth from the contribution of business tourism, thereby driving the nation's economic diversification agenda prioritised in the UAE Centennial 2071 strategy. As such, the Dubai World Trade Centre's (DWTC) portfolio of businesses and the activities enabled by events hosted, organised and delivered at the venue, generate high returns for ancillary industries across the MICE ecosystem, while continuing to serve as an economic catalyst for the country. The company's latest Economic Impact Assessment report for 2018 saw a record AED 13.1 billion, equivalent to 3.3% of the emirate's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), added in incremental retained economic value by DWTC. The study estimated the total corresponding gross output of these

activities at AED 23 billion, resulting in a high 57% locally retained impact – marking a 3% increase over 2017.

Q *Dubai's business events sector has grown exponentially over the past decade, what have been the key investments in major events infrastructure, including new meetings space and upper mid-scale and luxury hotel accommodation that appeals to business visitors.*

A Dubai's business events sector has benefitted from wider investments into tourism infrastructure over recent years, from increased connectivity through Dubai International Airport to the incremental growth in hotel room inventory, as well as the ever-growing suite of options when it comes to dining, entertainment, relaxation and adrenaline. Among the latest hotel offerings to open in Dubai have been the Mandarin Oriental, Waldorf Astoria Dubai International Financial Centre and Radisson Blu Dubai Waterfront, options that span from mid-scale to luxury, adding to the diversity of

options for planners and delegates. Meanwhile, over recent years new venues such as Dubai Opera and the QE2 have opened up, providing unique options to host events in, as well as the custom built theatre that houses the La Perle show. Coming up on the horizon, the Dubai Exhibition Centre, co-located within the Expo 2020 Dubai site, will provide 45,000 square metres of event space that will remain as part of the Expo legacy.

Q *Why is India an important market for Dubai on business events and Business and Leisure segment?*

A India is Dubai's number one source market for international overnight tourists, with more than 2 million visitors a year, and this position has been reflected in the business visitor segment. A strong affinity for Dubai among Indian tourists, combined with the historic ties between India and the UAE, has been reinforced in recent years by extensive marketing efforts, reaching out to both potential travelers and the trade audience.

From a meeting planner's perspective, proximity and extensive flight connectivity means it is a logical choice for clients looking for unique, inspiring gatherings that have a strong pull to groups and potential delegates.

Q *What are some of the significant things Indian Corporates and Business Travelers, can expect to find in Dubai that makes it the 'destination of interest' in terms of business events?*

A When Indian business travellers come to Dubai, they can expect a comfortable and streamlined experience with excellent services at every touchpoint and all the factors in place to help facilitate events that meet and exceed expectations. And while the key hygiene factors may be in place, there are also a range of unique offerings and experiences which repeatedly pull groups to Dubai. Among these are the opportunity to explore the souks and museums around Dubai Creek, to go up the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa, and of course experience Arabian hospitality under the stars with a desert safari. Other options to create unique itineraries include watching La Perle, a one-of-a-kind live show performed in a state of the art aquatheatre, a flight on a seaplane over Dubai's skyline and manmade islands, racing at Dubai Autodrome to get the adrenaline going, and of course shopping at the city's world class malls, including Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates.

Q *The most talked about Expo 2020 is slated to boost UAE's reputation as events destination. Kindly elucidate.*

A Expo 2020 Dubai is set to demonstrate on a global stage the city's ability to host world class events, with 25 million visits expected over the course of the six-month event. For the business events sector, Expo will be important for a number of reasons: during the course of the Expo, planners have the opportunity to incorporate it into their

events, whether that is by taking their groups to visit the themed and national pavilions or making use of meetings facility there, including the 45,000 square metre Dubai Exhibition Centre; as part of the legacy of Expo, DEC will remain and become a core proposition in the city's business events offering, while the rest of the site – 80% of which will be repurposed post-Expo – will include a number of hotels and other facilities.

Q *Dubai offers a global tourism platform, nay Luxury Travel Platform - How has Dubai enhanced its reputation as a global business events destination?*

A Dubai continues to enhance its reputation as a global business events destination by bringing major conferences, meetings and incentives to the city. An important aspect of Dubai's success has been the willingness of stakeholders across the public and private sectors to collaborate to attract and host these events, creating attractive opportunities for planners and fulfilling experiences for delegates.

Dubai is a popular destination for corporate and Business Leisure travellers and benefits from a strong hotel offering across all segments. Could you please advise the number of rooms Dubai offers in this segment and what new properties are slated for the following years.

In Dubai's hotel sector, at the end of August 2019 there were 119,035 rooms across 712 establishments, with robust offerings across multiple categories and hotel types, from five-star luxury resorts overlooking the sea to lifestyle hotels in the heart of the business district. By 2022 there are forecast to be 148,000 rooms, supporting the expected growth in visitation to the city over the coming years.

Q *Being a major contributor to the tourism industry, what percentage of tourists do you get in terms of business events and Business leisure.*

A In 2018, approximately 12.2% of the 15.92 million visitors to Dubai came for business, including for meetings and events.

Q *Do you have any India-centric plans to attract business events and Business Leisure tourism for 2019 and 2020.*

A As our number one source market, we will continue to put a strong focus on our marketing efforts across the board in India, to attract visitation of all types. For business events in particular, we have been engaging closely with meetings industry professionals in India through in market activities and by bringing them across to experience Dubai. Our permanent presence in the market also means we are always on hand to provide planners with the support they need and assist them in ensuring they can create the best events possible.

Q *Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) set up a division called Dubai Business Events (DBE), with a clear aim of further developing and increasing Dubai's share of the international business events and special events markets, whilst maximizing the economic prospects of Dubai, kindly advise what has been the contribution of Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) towards Dubai's economy in the last three years and what are your expectations for 2019 and with Expo 2020 coming in next year.*

A Since being established in 2003, Dubai Business Events has played a crucial role in the growth of the city as a destination for meetings, conference, congresses and incentives, attracting events from around the world to complement the homegrown calendar of annual exhibitions and other events. A key part of our role is to work with stakeholders across the public and private sectors in the city, to ensure we have an aligned offering that allows groups and businesses to maximise their opportunities in Dubai.



My Value Travel (MVT), a B2B travel company, organised its first MVT Mega Awards

From a mere 70 agents in 2009, today My Value Travel (MVT) has become a complete B2B brand increasing its strength to 7,000 partners in last 10 years without having a single sales and marketing team





My Value Travel (MVT), a B2B travel company, recently organised its first MVT Mega Awards 2019 onboard Jalesh Cruises. The two-night sailing witnessed close to 200 participants including 110 top performing travel agents from 40 cities in India. The event also had a delegation of 14 hotels, two activity company, and one theme park from Mauritius and seven hotels from Maldives.

Speaking about the event, **Deepak Agarwal, Managing Director, MVT** said, "We were looking to do an out-of-box event worthwhile for our stakeholders. We have travel agents, hotels, and media here for the first MVT Mega Awards. We decided to host a networking event and awards on Jalesh Cruise as it would be an industry first event. On the selection criteria of the awards Agarwal said, "We have selected 110 top performing agent partners from 40 cities in India. We have a total of 14 hotels from Mauritius and seven from Maldives and 2 activities and 1 theme park from Mauritius. Organizing this event

has now set as a benchmark in the industry. Next year, we intend do a much larger event for our partners."

The group which pre-dominantly focused on Mauritius for around 20 years has witnessed significant success with 70 agents in 2009 to 7000 in 2019. The company has further added Maldives and Bali to its portfolio which is still at a nascent stage.

The group is now looking to expand its team across India to further add more agents. Also, MVT is now looking to further add experiential destinations to its portfolio. "Our online package booking system is one-of-its-kind. We are not looking to be physically present with offices in any city in India. We will hire people in all major cities and will also look to add more destinations. We are now looking at experiential destinations. Egypt, Turkey, and South Africa will be our next three destinations. Our online system has the capability of doing 10 city customised package at one click. Our agents can book these through our dynamic website," he informed.

INTERNATIONAL



Historical Bazaars of *Istanbul*



Shopping centres continue to populate every city around the world as great recreational areas. These centres are not just for shopping, they have been used as a place to socialise and spend time for centuries. Istanbul holds a very important place in the history of shopping. As one of the most important points throughout history, Istanbul is home to the oldest shopping centre of all history: the Grand Bazaar.

The shops of Istanbul will be swept with a brand new breeze during the Istanbul Shopping Fest, which will be ringing the bells for a much different experience that blends modern and traditional aspects. Now let's take a look at Istanbul's authentic shopping areas. See what there is to explore!

Lets discover the five bazaars of Istanbul and explore the many colorful and vibrant shops they have to offer.

The grand bazaar is one of the oldest covered markets in the world. It was a meeting point over the years from traders and merchants alike. Browse the authentic, traditional goods, or drink some tea with the locals and hear the fascinating stories. Here you can find out more information on the historical bazaars of Istanbul.

Grand Bazaar

The Grand Bazaar, located in Beyazıt, is the oldest shopping center in the world, and has retained all its vitality and beauty over the centuries. Building of the Grand Bazaar was ordered by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror in 1461, though much of its complex structure was built during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. Due to this great development in commerce, Istanbul's economy acquired a new identity. The bazaar grew over time and is now made up of 60 streets, 3,600 stores and 14 "han" (a commercial building) and covers a whopping 110,868 square meters. The Grand Bazaar is undoubtedly a testament to the Ottoman's expertise when it came to trade, and visitors today can browse its myriad goods and walk below its stained-glass windows. The shops are brimming with fabrics, valuable stones, antiques, carpets and much more. It really is like something out of a fairytale and has to be seen to be believed. The Grand Bazaar is one of the most visited places in the city, and a great place to pick out gifts for your loved ones. It should definitely be on top of your list of things to do in Istanbul.

Spice Bazaar

The Spice Bazaar is one of the oldest historical spots in Eninönü. The moment you step foot in the Spice Bazaar, you're hit by a symphony of aromas. The building itself was constructed using proceeds from taxes levied on Egypt (Mısır is the Turkish word for Egypt), and it is part of the New Mosque complex. Istanbul finds itself on what was known as the Spice Road, and the Spice Bazaar played a significant role in turning the city into a commercial powerhouse. Though it was previously known as New Bazaar and Valide Bazaar, it was in the 18th century that the bazaar became known as Mısır Çarşısı, or "Egyptian Bazaar", because the spices being imported from the East generally passed through Egypt on their route to Istanbul. There are six entrances to the bazaar, and all of its streets are connected to the





central Dua Square (Dua Meydanı), where you'll also find the impressive Ezan kiosk. Like many of Istanbul's other iconic buildings, the Spice Bazaar has suffered blazes over the centuries. Its present appearance is largely the result of restoration work carried out by

the Istanbul City Municipality in 1940. Treat yourself to a vivid experience of vibrant colors and beautiful aromas of natural medicines, seeds, herbs, and roots. In the bazaar, you can also find a variety of dried fruits, local goods and buy souvenirs for you loved ones.

Arasta Bazaar

Arasta Bazaar (Arasta Çarşısı) is one of the tidiest bazaars or "çarşı" in Istanbul, and it was where goods used by cavalymen were sold during the Ottoman era. It's for this reason that it's also known as Sipahiler Çarşısı ("sipahiler" being the Turkish for cavalymen). The bazaar, which was thought to have been part of the Byzantine Palace, suffered a blaze in 1912, causing significant damage, and it had to undergo a long period of restoration. During excavations carried out in the 1930s, mosaics belonging to the Byzantine Palace confirmed the notion that it was part of the palace complex. The bazaar underwent further restoration work in 1980, carried out by the General Directorate for Foundations, and it was that work which gave it the appearance you'll see today. Shop in an atmosphere of authentic history at the bazaar's 70 stores, for traditional rugs, carpets, İznik tiles and a range of other goods from Turkish and Ottoman culture.





Borsa Gold Grand Bazaar

A remnant of the Ottoman Empire from the 15th century, the Sahaflar Bazaar is a gathering place for all book-lovers. The second-hand book market of Sahaflar Bazaar is the oldest book market in the city and sits just behind the Beyazid Mosque. Second-hand books used to be sold in the Grand Bazaar, but over time the market slowly moved over to its current location. The earthquake of 1894 and subsequent fire accelerated this move and the entire market was relocated in front of the Sedefçiler Kapısı gate, where it still operates today. The profession of second-hand bookselling, or “sahaf” in Turkish, began with Orhan Bey in Bursa in front of major mosques. The profession grew and came to be the traditional craft of a man named Basralı Abdullah Yetimi Efendi. Booksellers were an important part of Istanbul’s intellectual scene during the period of the Ottoman Empire, and later became a critical part of the educational system. Sahaflar Bazaar is more than

just a place to buy books, it’s a social setting to discuss the ideas within. If you want to breathe in the atmosphere of literature and make some new discoveries, be sure to spend a little time in Sahaflar Bazaar.

Architect Sinan Bazaar

The complex was built as a Turkish bath in the name of Nurbanu Sultan, the mother of Sultan Murat III. during 1574-1583 by the famous Turkish architect Sinan. It was named after Architect Sinan after its restoration in 1966. Serving

as the largest public Turkish bath in Üsküdar for many years, the structure was shut down in 1917, leading to the deterioration of the marble structure. The last owner of the building, Gümülcineli Mehmet Bozkurt, had the sections of the structure which had deteriorated in time restored and transformed the market place to what it is today. Famous for being the last Turkish bath built by the world-renowned Architect Sinan, the Architect Sinan Bazaar is one of the historical places you must see while visiting Üsküdar.



Brand USA enticing Indian tourists through music



- *The USA has many attractions for tourists and locals alike, but perhaps one of the lesser-known ones is music which has been a part of the American tradition since its beginnings.*
- *Brand USA Launches Giant Screen Film “America’s Musical Journey” on GoUSA TV*
- *International audiences can stream the film and new companion series, “America’s Treasures: Musical Cities” subscription-free, ahead of the holiday season*



Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, recently announced the global streaming launch of “America’s Musical Journey,” presented in partnership with Expedia Group and Air Canada, on Brand USA’s travel entertainment network, GoUSA TV. The film, which first premiered in IMAX® and giant screen theaters in 2018, stars Grammy Award®-nominated singer and songwriter Aloe Blacc. Throughout the film, Blacc takes audiences on a cross-country adventure exploring the musical heritage of the United States and the cultural cities where American music was born. To celebrate the streaming launch, Brand USA hosted the premiere event in New Delhi on Nov. 19 and in Mumbai on Nov. 21.

Also coming to GoUSA TV on Nov. 21 is “America’s Treasures: Musical Cities.” The new, four-episode series was created and produced by award-winning filmmakers MacGillivray Freeman Films, who also produced the documentary. The series is an extension of “America’s Musical Journey” and delves deeper into iconic music cities such as Memphis, Tennessee; New Orleans, Louisiana; Miami, Florida; and Chicago, Illinois.

• **Memphis:** Known as the home of blues and the birthplace of rock ‘n’ roll, viewers will discover awe-inspiring local street dancers and resident Barney Stoll who has been sky diving and jumping out of airplanes dressed as Elvis alongside the skydiving Elvis team.

• **New Orleans:** Viewers will uncover the tales behind the city that created jazz. From a vibrant live-music scene to the spicy, melting pot of French, African, and American culture and history, “The Big Easy” will dazzle taste buds and ear drums.

• **Miami:** In a city deeply tied to Latin-Caribbean heritage, Miami’s culture unfolds across traditional Latin Afro Cuban musical influences, such as salsa and merengue, to the modern electronic sounds of today. Emily Estefan, daughter of music icon, Gloria Estefan, is also featured.

• **Chicago:** A bustling metropolis with cultural pioneers such as jazz pianist Ramsey Lewis and dancers Eddie “Pause Eddie” Martin Jr., and Donetta Jackson. Eddie introduces viewers to a unique dance form called “Chicago Footwork” which combines African tribal influences, breakdancing, and tap.

“GoUSA TV offers us the ability to stream inspirational, USA-specific content to people around the world,” said Christopher L. Thompson, president and CEO of Brand USA. “America’s Musical Journey” and “America’s Treasures: Musical Cities” provide a lens into how our music is engrained in the fabric of cities and towns across the country and will motivate viewers to come and experience these destinations for themselves.”

GoUSA TV is available for streaming on Roku, Amazon Fire, and Apple TV,

or via the iOS store and Google Play on smartphone devices.

“These films help us in our mission to increase international travel to the United States,” said **Jason Pacheco, Global Trade Development Consultant, Brand USA**. “They drive interest and travel to the United States; enhance our relationships with our stakeholders; and illustrate that Brand USA is as a strong global citizen and an organization fueling our nation’s economy. Brand USA looks at the film as an opportunity to “inspire” millennials to explore new destinations while in the country, and at the same time “re-inspire” those who have been to the US in the past to visit again, and relive the whole musical experience. “We want to connect the richness of American music with the travel experiences of people visiting the US,” he said. He also believes that the movie will help them in promoting destinations beyond the key gateway cities.

“We are super excited to reach out to the global audience through the universal language of music. The selection of Delhi to start the global streaming of the film shows the importance that we bestow to India as an important source market,” said **James Namude, Director – Global Sponsorships, Brand USA**.

India is #10 source market for inbound arrivals to the United States with 1.4 million visitors spending \$15.8 billion (#6) in 2018.

Tourism Fiji

Appointments Country Manager for India Market

Tourism Fiji recently announced the appointment of its new Country Manager for India, Mr. Sunil Menon.

In his previous role, Mr. Menon championed strategic planning, sales, marketing and enhancements across Tourism Boards, DMC's in Greece, Jordan, Vietnam, Kenya, Australia and New Zealand, Hotel chains like Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts – Sri Lanka and Maldives and Jumeirah Group of Hotels.

In welcoming Mr. Menon to the position, Tourism Fiji Regional Manager Asia, Ms. Kathy Koyamaibole said that India is a strategic market for Fiji. Ms. Koyamaibole said, "Visitor arrivals from this market has seen continuous growth over the last few years. We look forward to building on this success through new leadership in the market with the appointment of Sunil."

"Mr. Menon initially started his career more than two decades ago in the airline industry and possesses



a competent handle in elevating destination Fiji's presence in India. His track record speaks for itself and enables him to strengthen and grow destination Fiji's presence within India and travel trade circles," she said.

Mr Menon began work in his new role from December 2nd 2019 and is based in Mumbai, India.'



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PATA Working Together to Improve CBT in Thailand

On November 26, 2019, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) held its first community-based tourism (CBT) working meeting at the PATA Engagement Hub in Bangkok, Thailand.

The meeting brought together government, civil society and the private sector to improve CBT product offerings and the marketability of tourism in remote and indigenous communities, with the goal of providing authentic experiences and meaningful encounters that are beneficial to all.

"Tourists visiting remote and indigenous communities in Thailand have often been criticised for abusing rather than empowering local communities. The overall result is that less tourists are taking part in CBT activities fearing exploitation of the local communities," said PATA CEO Dr, Mario Hardy. "Nevertheless, there are villages that would still like to

supplement their income and preserve their culture through CBT. These communities face many barriers as the issues are complex, ranging from citizenship, ownership, infrastructure, carrying capacity and marketability."

During the meeting, PATA Director of Sustainability and Social Responsibility, Graham Harper, led a panel discussion exploring the challenges and various aspects of CBT. Panelists included Watcharee Churugsa, Director of Office of Community-Based Tourism, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA), Charlotte Louwman-Vogels, Founder & Director, Fair Tourism, Chi Ngo, Educational Travel Executive, DISCOVA, and Jakrapol Baesuvan (Joe), Senior Director of Marketing & Strategy, Local Alike.

Ms Churugsa noted that, "DASTA CBT Models show that CBT makes local people proud of their identity, their culture and their natural resources;

harmonises the community, and uplifts the quality of their lives. Meanwhile visitors gain unique and authentic experiences, and the exchange of cultures. Our end goal is for CBT to bring happiness to both communities and visitors."

Ms Ngo added, "To make CBT products sustainable, for-profit companies always need to be thinking about creating benefits for the community, the tourists and company. That is why we are always talking about 'Win/Win/Win', a win for the community, a win for tourists, and a win for the company. This is how for-profit companies can make CBT sustainable."

Some of the points from the panel discussion included DASTA's mission and operations, how they go about certifying communities, and the challenges they face in creating a sustainable CBT product in Thailand; Local Alike's business model as a social



enterprise and how they measure impacts in the communities they work with; DISCOVA's process in balancing profit-making with community benefits, and their advice to other tour operators, and Fair Tourism's mission in assisting the Huay Pu Keng village in training, the challenges these communities face in marketing their product offerings, and how CBT tourism should be empowering rather exploiting.

After the panel discussion, the participants broke off into smaller groups to discuss the multi-stakeholder actions that are needed to strengthen CBT, which included: DMC's need to have a list of communities, what

activities they do and where they are regionally in order to market CBT; communities and local tour guides need training to successfully execute CBT, The Thai government should promote CBT as an experience that all tourist should have when visiting Thailand, Barriers such as lack of infrastructure, access and marketability need to be addressed so that the whole value chain can be strengthened, Trust and a mindset of working with communities as a partner rather than a supplier are necessary for CBT to be beneficial for all. "The Thai Government has recognised the potential of CBT to support the livelihoods of some of

the most vulnerable communities in Thailand and have created policies to encourage it. PATA believes that community-based tourism is an effective way to share the benefits of tourism to underserved areas and that this can start by forging partnerships for change. Properly done CBT can alleviate poverty, protect minority cultures and local environments," said Mr Harper. "The CBT Workshop was an initial step to build bridges amongst PATA members from government, civil society and private sector. The goal being, to provide authentic experiences and meaningful encounters that are beneficial to all."

Macao emerges as a preferred short-haul destination for Indians

Indian travellers are constantly on the lookout for offbeat destinations to spend their breaks. In an effort to cater to this demand, SOTC Travel, recently announced holiday packages for travellers to explore the Vegas of China – Macao.

Macao uniquely known for its extraordinary culture has a fusion of eastern and western lifestyles that is reflected in every element of this beautiful destination. Right from the architecture and age-old monuments to its flavourful cuisine. For the Adventure-Seekers, Macao brings with it the world's highest commercial bungee jump, along with the Skycap cable car, which commences its journey from the foothills of the Machicang Mountain. For the Family Memory Builders, the Panda Pavilion located in Coloane is a must-visit hotspot. Travellers and their loved ones can enjoy making remarkable memories through the enthralling sight of playful and adorable giant pandas at the Seac Pai Van Park. The anomalous cuisine of Macao is a combination of Portuguese and Cantonese flavours, that

seamlessly blends together to present an unforgettable experience.

Macao is rapidly becoming an extremely popular short-haul destination, especially because of their visa-on-arrival facility. The new-age Indian Traveller has an evolved set of preferences, and is focussed on creating magnificent memories with their loved ones. Through insights gained from the SOTC India Holiday Report 2019,

- 53% of Gen Z, 59% of Gen Y, 50% of Gen X and 32% of Senior Citizen travellers prefer taking multiple short breaks in a year

- 59% of Gen Z, 50% of Gen Y, 42% of Gen X and 27% of Senior Citizen travellers find Exploration and Adventure as a priority while picking holiday destinations

- 82% of Gen Z, 76% of Gen Y, 72% of Gen X and 56% of Senior Citizen travellers wish to sample both Indian and Local cuisine while on holiday

Daniel D'souza, President and Country Head, Leisure, SOTC Travel said, "With the emerging travel trend towards short travel breaks,

there has been a tremendous increase in travellers opting for short breaks and destinations that offer visas on arrival have emerged most popular. From experience-seeking millennials to travellers who wish to spend time with family and friends, Macao is an exciting destination that offers immense possibilities of adventure, sightseeing, shopping and more. At SOTC Travel, we have curated attractive tour packages to suit our traveller segments imbibing vibrant festivities and sights that Macao is known for. And with our On-The-Go feature, our travellers have the choice of picking unique experiences that they wish to witness, and include it in their itineraries while on holiday."

Arzan Khambatta, Head, MGTO India said, "With excellent air connectivity, world-class luxury and availability of Indian food, Macao is a perfect short-haul destination for Indian travellers. It is also a visa free destination for Indians making it an ideal getaway. We hope that partnering with SOTC will further encourage more Indian travellers to visit and experience the opulence of Macao"

Tourism Drive

San Francisco
aims to increase the
length of travellers
staying duration



San Francisco Travel Association is planning to focus on increasing the length of the stay of Indian visitors in San Francisco. For this, it aims to target the newer group of travellers. "We look at the spending

pattern of the travellers because we want to be environmentally sustainable destination. Our strategy is to have fewer travellers staying for longer duration. It is a sustainable form of tourism," said **Joe D' Alessandro**,

President and CEO, San Francisco Travel Association.

Average length of the stay for an Indian visitor in California is about 14 days. According to an estimate, on an average an Indian stays in San

Francisco for a week, he added.

In his presentation **Joe D' Alessandro said**, around 2.06 lakh Indians travelled the destination in 2018 the number which is likely to reach 2.16 lakh travellers in 2019-- an increase of 5 per cent. In 2020, it is anticipating that the number would go up to 2.30 lakh.

"India is the seventh largest market for us in terms of total travellers. On the other hand, in terms of spending, it is the third largest market and in the coming two-three years it will become the second largest market after China," he said.

Top markets for San Francisco are China, UK, Germany while in terms of expenditure China is ranked number 1 followed by UK and India.

San Francisco Travel is the city's official destination marketing organisation which promotes the destination for conventions, meetings, events and leisure travel.

Looking at the total Tourism perspective, San Francisco Travel is reporting a total of 25.8 million visitors to the city in 2018, up 1.2 percent over 25.5 million in 2017.

Total spending by visitors was \$10 billion, up 2.3 percent over \$9.8 billion in 2017 (including spending on meetings and conventions).

"This is the ninth consecutive year that San Francisco has reported record-breaking outcomes for San Francisco's tourism industry. The 25.8 million visitors and \$10 billion in spending created 82,538 jobs and supported services for people throughout the city and the entire Bay Area," he said.

"San Francisco is an incredible city that continues to draw people from all over to visit and enjoy the City we all know and love. These visitors explore our neighborhoods, shop at our small businesses, enjoy our restaurants, and help support our local economy."

"While visitor growth last year was modest, we saw a larger increase in visitor spending. We are optimistic for the rest of 2019 and currently have more room nights on the books than ever before, thanks to the recently expanded Moscone Center,"

D'Alessandro said. "In the year ahead, we are looking forward to continued growth in convention bookings."

San Francisco International Airport

San Francisco International Airport (SFO) also had a record breaking year in 2018. SFO served a total of 57.8 million passengers. Passenger enplanements increased by 3.1 percent overall, with a 2.2 percent growth in the domestic sector and a 6 percent increase in the international sector.

Hotel Occupancy

Average hotel occupancy was 82.2 percent for 2018, down 1.4 percent, while average daily rates were \$264.53, up by 6.2 percent. The loss in occupancy is attributed to the closure of the Moscone Center during construction of the \$551 expansion that was completed in January 2019. Average hotel occupancy is projected to rise 1.2 percent for 2019 to 83.2 percent while average daily rates are expected to average \$276.66 for 2019, and increase of 4.6 percent.

International Visitor Volume

"Our focus on having a global footprint with representation in 13 international markets, integrated sales efforts and digital marketing programs in key places like China makes San Francisco and the region stronger and able to weather influences beyond our control," D'Alessandro said. "Working closely with our regional partners is a big part of this effort."

International visitors again comprised 28 percent of overnight visitors and 61 percent of all overnight visitor spending in 2018. San Francisco welcomed 2.9 million international visitors in 2018, very similar to the number in 2017.

The top five markets for visitor volume in 2018 were Mexico, China, the United Kingdom, Canada and Germany. The fastest growing international markets were Brazil, France, India and Taiwan.

For 2019, international visitor volume is expected to grow by 3 percent with growth expected from

China, South Korea, Brazil, India and Canada.

International Visitor Spending

International visitors spent \$4.9 billion in 2018, up 2 percent from \$4.8 billion in 2017. International markets with the most growth in spending were China (up 4.8 percent), India (8.0 percent), France (9.7 percent), Brazil (8.5 percent) and Australia (4.8 percent)

According to D'Alessandro, international tourism levels were affected by a variety of factors:

- A stronger U.S. dollar, increasing the cost of visiting the United States
- Negative perceptions of the U.S. caused by uncertain travel-related policies and messaging of the administration
- International trade wars
- Completion of the Moscone Center expansion
- Tightening credit

For 2019, **San Francisco Travel is forecasting** a total of 26.5 million visitors to the city, an increase of 2.5 percent. Total spending by visitors in 2019 is projected to reach \$10.3 billion, up 3.4 percent, including spending related to meetings and conventions.

Far Reaching Economic Impact

According to the Visitor Study, visitor spending equated to \$25.5 million daily or \$1.06 million per hour. The average visitor spent \$360.17 per day. Convention attendees spent an average of \$567.25 per day.

The number of jobs supported by tourism in San Francisco rose 1 percent to 82,538 jobs in 2018.

There was an average of 70,829 visitors in San Francisco each day.

The tourism industry generated \$771 million in taxes and fees for the City of San Francisco in 2018, an increase of 8.0 percent over the previous year. Major contributors to that figure include hotel tax (51 percent) and property tax (22 percent).

On a per capita basis, visitors spent \$10,534 per San Francisco resident. Visitors generated \$2,089 in taxes per San Francisco household.



New Team takes over OTOAI as members get elected Unopposed

A new team has taken over the reign at the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) wherein Riaz Munshi, Managing Director, N. Chirag, has been elected as the President for the term 2019 – 2021. “I have been working with OTOAI in one capacity or the other since inception and irrespective of the post, I will continue to contribute to the success of the association and growth of the outbound industry in India,” said the newly-elected President.

Himanshu Patil, Managing Director, Kesari Tours Pvt. Ltd. will continue his stint as Vice-President of the Association. Shravan Bhalla, Managing Director, High Flyer who was earlier in the Executive Committee (EC) will now serve as the General Secretary, OTOAI followed by Vineet Gopal who has once again entered the working committee as the Joint Secretary for the term

2019 – 2021. The post of Treasurer has been retained by Sidharth Khanna, Partner, Khanna Enterprises.

The EC has seen women participation growing strong. While it has retained its previous two members – Ankush Nijhawan, Managing Director of Travel Boutique Online a Unit of Lap travels and Adl Abdul Karim, Director, Creative Tours & Travels India Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai; Ms. Arshdeep Anand, CEO, HMA Spectrum and Ms. Monia Kapoor, Proprietor, Travel O Holidays have increased the ratio of women participation in the association. Gurdeep Gujral, Director, Gujral Tours and Travels Pvt. Ltd. and Mahendra Vakharia, Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays Pvt. Ltd. complete the EC count with their participation. Sanjay Datta, Managing Director. of M/s. Airborne Travels was the Election Officer of the OTOAI Elections 2019 –2021.

Jyoti Mayal will lead TAAI Along With a Strong Team of Office Bearers for the term 2019-2021

In her previous role, she was the Sectarary-General of TAAI for the term 2017-2019.

AN EXPERIENCED industry veteran and one of the familiar faces of the industry, Jyoti Mayal, has been elected as the President of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) for the period 2019-2021 at the 68th Annual General Meeting held at Hotel Sahara Star, Mumbai.

In her previous role, she was the Sectarary-General of TAAI for the term 2017-2019. Mayal was also the lead of Northern Region of TAAI during 2009-2013 and was elected to TAAI's Managing Committee in 2013 and thereafter she was actively involved



in the conduct of the last two annual conventions of the association.

"I am humbled and honoured to have the strength of my members to support me to achieve my goals and vision to

take TAAI to next level in this testing time," said Jyoti Mayal.

Lokesh Bettaiah, Triway Travel, Bangalore has been elected as the new Secretary and Shreeram Patel, Unicorn Travels as the Treasurer while Jay Bhatia, Tulsidas Khimji Holidays has been elected the Vice President of TAAI.

The Managing Committee members got elected for the next two year term are: Anoop B Kanuga (Bathija Travels, Mumbai), Rajan Sehgal (Airborne Travels Delhi), P. Murugesan (Pioneer Aero Travels Chennai), Devesh Agarwal (Victoria Travels Kolkata), Paras Lakhia (Utopia Travel Services Ahmedabad), Sunil Notani (Air Amani Travels Bhopal) and R Venkatachalam (Naveen Air Travels Trichy).

OTOAI announces its 5th Convention from March 15 – 18 in Antalya, Turkey

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) is happy to announce its 5th Annual Convention in Antalya, Turkey this year. The convention will be held from March 15 – 18 and will be accompanied by optional Pre and Post Convention Tours (3 days each) to experience places in an around Antalya, such as, Istanbul, Cappadocia, Pamukkale and Izmir. The airline partner of the Convention is Turkish Airlines, which offers convenient connections between India and Turkey.

Regarding the theme and the topics for the Business Sessions, Himanshu Patil, Vice President, OTOAI and Convention Chairman 2020, said, "The travel and tourism industry is going through a challenging phase. The theme and mood of the convention will focus on how to make consumers have more faith and confidence in an outbound tour operator

and suggest and work on ways and plans to help an agent / tour operator grow his business in these challenging times. A Travel Agent must realise that if he is able to win the Trust of the customers, they will never go elsewhere for their travel booking needs." Alongwith Mr. Himanshu Patil, Mr. Vineet Gopal, Joint Secretary OTOAI will be Co-Convention Chairman.

The theme of the convention is yet to be finalised along with topics for invigorating Business Sessions and list of panellists who will discuss and debate on issues prevalent to the industry. "Our aim at OTOAI is to bring the outbound tour operators from various parts of the country together and showcase a new destination to them each time. Antalya and the region around it has much to offer to the discerning traveller and once our tour operators will experience the destination first hand, they will be able

to sell it better to their clients in India," said Riaz Munshi, President, OTOAI.

Active OTOAI Members can opt for the following options:

- 3 Nights of either Pre or Post Convention Tour + 3 Nights of OTOAI Convention is available for Rs. 54,990/- + applicable GST (Ex Mumbai / Delhi) on twin sharing basis and Rs. 69,990/- (Ex Mumbai / Delhi) for Single Supplement
- Early Bird Booking offers discount worth Rs. 5000/- on the package and is applicable for bookings done till January 15, 2020. The discount is valid on both categories

*Other details will follow soon
For more details please contact
Meenu: +919999852890*



Quilon

retains Michelin star for thirteenth successive year



Taj's prestigious Indian restaurant, Quilon, in the heart of the iconic Taj 51 Buckingham Gate Suites and Residences, London has been awarded a Michelin star for the thirteenth successive year in the Michelin Guide for restaurants in 2020.

Quilon prides itself on South-west coastal Indian cuisine and was first awarded a Michelin star in 2008, putting the restaurant firmly on the international food-lovers map. It has impressively held this prestigious accolade ever since. Quilon's menu fuses traditional elements of home-style cuisine with a contemporary twist,

giving a different perspective on the dishes. The culinary experience at the restaurant, mostly designed for sharing, offers tailor-made tasting menu options along with a world-class wine list.

Digvijay Singh, General Manager, St. James' Court & Taj 51 Buckingham Gate, Suites & Residences, London stated, "We feel immensely proud of Chef Sriram and the talented team at Quilon for retaining a Michelin star for the 13th consecutive year. The experience the restaurant delivers to guests and visitors at the hotel is absolutely unrivalled, and the team works tremendously hard to produce

authentic Indian cuisine that is the best in the city. We'd like to thank all of our loyal and new customers at Quilon, who have supported the restaurant's journey over the years."

Multi award-winning Chef Sriram launched Quilon when it first opened its doors in 1999, and has been leading the restaurant from strength to strength ever since. Using only the freshest of ingredients, the team at Quilon has been delivering signature dishes, from Black Cod and Coconut with Asparagus and Snow Peas to Mangalorean Chicken and Masala Dosa.

Rasas

of Indian Art on display at The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa

Art Spice gallery, in collaboration with Art Magnum is displaying art works by Indian Masters and contemporary artists in a group show, 'Rasas of Indian Art' at The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa in New Delhi. The works trace the journey of Indian artists both in the pre-and the post-independence era, providing an insight into how the Indian art scene has evolved

The exhibition displays a wide-ranging, rare and unique collection of works by artists including S.H. Raza, M.F. Husain, Ram Kumar, F.N. Souza, T. Vaikuntam, K.G. Subramanyan, Ram Kinker Baij, Jamini Roy, Suhas Roy, Arup Das, Jatin Das, Jogen Choudhury, Manu Parekh, Paresh Maity, Neeraj Goswami, Hemen Mazumdar and Satish Gujral.



Speaking about the exhibition, **Babita Gupta, Director, Art Spice Gallery**, said, "It was a pleasure to associate with Art Magnum and bring together artworks of the leading artists both from pre & post-independence era. This exhibition brings the great Indian masters and contemporary artists under one roof and showcases an enchanting collection of elucidating artworks."

Saurabh Singhvi, Director, Art Magnum added, «Both Art Magnum and Art Spice share the same vision and objectives and are committed to further the cause of Indian art and culture. The exhibition becomes a platform for both to unite and celebrate the vibrant facets of Indian art and present such a fabulous show.» event at the capital was attended by celebrated guests like Neelam Pratap Rudy, Artist Neeraj Gupta, Art Curator Alka Raghuvanshi, Artist Shridhar Iyer, Artist Manisha Gawade, Artist Ruchi Chaddha, Art lover and collector Rama Sodhani, Monisha Gupta, Founder Craft House, Mr.Vipul Gupta, Executive Director, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, Art Gallery owner, Saurabh Singhvi, Mr. Kavin Gupta, Director, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, amongst others.

The show was inaugurated by Mr. Nitin Arora, the renowned Actor, Host and Managing Director, Katalyst Entertainment.

The show continues till January 3, 2020

Time – 10 am – 7 pm (All Days)

Venue – Art Spice Gallery, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, New Delhi



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will form part of the
first integrated resort in the
Maldives*

- *The playful island retreat invites fun-seeking friends, couples and families to unwind in style at CROSSROADS Maldives*
- *The resort is Hilton's third property in the Maldives, strengthening the global company's presence in the popular destination*

Hilton has announced the opening of SAii Lagoon Maldives, Curio Collection by Hilton, a free-spirited tropical escape that offers sun, sea, style and sustainability, creating a playful getaway for groups of fun-seeking friends, couples and families. Nestled within the idyllic Emboodhoo Lagoon, SAii Lagoon Maldives forms part of CROSSROADS Maldives, the country's first and only integrated resort and game-changing retreat.

The opening of SAii Lagoon Maldives also marks the debut of Curio Collection by Hilton in South East Asia, and the fifth Curio Collection by Hilton property in Asia Pacific. With a total of 198 rooms and villas, the resort will be Hilton's third property in the Maldives, making the global hospitality company the largest and longest-running international hotel operator in the Maldives. Hilton opened the country's first internationally branded resort in 1997, and today, it operates Conrad Maldives Rangali Island which features 151 villas, suites and THE MURAKA Residence, as well as the 122-villa Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi, which was recently unveiled in July 2019.

"For over 20 years, through the many firsts that Hilton has introduced in the Maldives, we have been sparking travelers' imagination of waking up right above the Indian Ocean, or dining and even sleeping beneath the crystal-blue sea. In addition to putting the Maldives on the global map, we have brought meaningful opportunities for employment and we continue to make positive contributions to the livelihood and well-being of local communities said Alan Watts, president, Asia Pacific, Hilton. "With the launch of SAii Lagoon Maldives, Curio Collection by Hilton, we are looking to further deepen 'The Hilton Effect' in the Maldives and continue to set new benchmarks for hospitality through innovation."

Just 15 minutes by boat from Malé International Airport, SAii Lagoon Maldives will be an outstanding option for island vacation-seekers on all occasions – from exotic weekend breaks to immersive extended vacations.

"We are excited to welcome the world to SAii Lagoon Maldives. Guests will be able to experience the exquisite beauty of this destination, with plenty of places to stay and play. The architecture is quirky, and the interiors are daring. And yet, the resort also has a wonderfully inspiring ambience. We want everyone to walk into the resort and instantly feel a sense of excitement and exploration," said Martin van der Reijden, General Manager of SAii Lagoon Maldives and Vice President of Operations of CROSSROADS Maldives.

"The Maldives is a dream destination for global travelers and we are thrilled to pair its tropical charm with Curio Collection's spirit of discovery," said Mark Nogal, global head, Curio Collection by Hilton. "SAii Lagoon Maldives is a breathtaking resort with distinct character and direct access to the fantastic facilities at CROSSROADS Maldives. Supported by Hilton's 100 years of hospitality, guests of this resort are guaranteed memorable experiences in one of the most beautiful destinations in the world."

Every room at SAii Lagoon Maldives is adorned with a bright, contemporarily eclectic design that reflects the archipelago's maritime heritage, complete with natural textures, driftwood décor and marine-inspired hues and views. Guests can choose from a series of rooms and villas, including overwater pool villas.

The resort's innovation is also showcased at its restaurants and bars. *Miss Olive Oyl* is a vibrant poolside Mediterranean seafood grill and bar, while *Mr. Tomyam* is an exciting Thai fusion eatery with an open kitchen and alfresco dining areas. *bean/Co* serves fresh coffee, premium tea and grab and go snacks, including healthy wraps and signature ice cream sticks. Guests will also have access to *Café del Mar*, the world-famous beach club, which will bring Balearic beats, beach parties and international DJs to the Maldives for the first time.

The resort's ocean-view infinity pool and fitness center will allow guests to refresh and recharge in paradise. A wide range of water sports and recreational

facilities will also be available at The Marina @ CROSSROADS, a 30-berth marina and vibrant lifestyle district.

The PADI-certified Watersports & Dive Center will provide regular excursions and private tours into the underwater world. The Marine Discovery Centre will teach guests about the resort's extensive conservation activities, including a Junior Coral Curator program and clownfish release initiatives, and the Maldives Discovery Centre will showcase the culture of this captivating country. Other facilities include the Lèn Be Well Spa and Junior Beach Club and Camp.

The Marina @ CROSSROADS will also house the CROSSROADS Event Hall, which can be accessed directly from SAii Lagoon Maldives via a footbridge. The first dedicated conference center in the Maldives, this state-of-the-art facility will provide options for all types of business functions, whether it be large-scale corporate events or innovative team building breaks.

SAii Lagoon Maldives, Curio Collection by Hilton is also part of Hilton Honors, the award-winning guest-loyalty program for Hilton's 17 world-class brands. Members who book directly through the preferred Hilton channels have access to instant benefits, including a flexible payment slider that allows members to choose nearly any combination of Hilton Honors Points and money to book a stay, free standard Wi-Fi and an exclusive member discount that can't be found anywhere else. Members also enjoy popular digital tools available exclusively through the industry-leading *Hilton Honors mobile app* where Hilton Honors members can check-in, choose their room, and access their room using a Digital Key.

To celebrate the hotel's opening, Hilton Honors members will earn an additional 1,000 Points per night for bookings from now until February 29, 2020 when booking directly with Hilton.

SAii Lagoon Maldives, Curio Collection by Hilton is located at South Male Atoll, Republic of Maldives.

Hilton

appoints Julie Nestor as Vice President of Marketing and e-commerce in Asia Pacific



Hilton has named Julie Nestor as vice president, marketing and e-commerce in Asia Pacific (APAC). In her role, Nestor will drive the marketing and e-commerce strategy for the region, enticing new customers to Hilton's portfolio of award-winning brands and driving growth in direct bookings.

Nestor was most recently at eBay as chief marketing officer for Australia where she was responsible for retaining eBay's position as the top online marketplace in the country and launching eBay's first paid membership program – eBay Plus. Prior to eBay, Nestor spent more than a decade at American Express where she was responsible for launching the first Apple Pay service in Australia, establishing loyalty programs with leading airline companies and upmarket retail brands, and developing tailor made experience programs for card members.

"Today's consumers have rapidly evolving needs and expectations that Hilton is uniquely positioned to fulfill. As we accelerate our growth across Asia Pacific, we're expanding our guest base with breakthrough marketing," explained Kellyn Smith Kenny, chief marketing officer, Hilton. "Julie is a proven expert at building brands that customers love and I'm confident she will bring a fresh perspective that builds on our success and inspires guests to stay with Hilton's nine brands."

"With a large portfolio of award-winning brands, Hilton is on a huge growth trajectory with so much potential in the region. I am proud to be part of a team that strives to bring to life the outstanding experiences and spirit of the Hilton brand to our guests," said Nestor. "As we look towards 2020, I will be focused on driving demand for our properties and working with the team to position Hilton as the hotel of choice, especially in our key destinations."

To bridge the gap between the hospitality company and their consumers, Hilton launched the Expect Better, Expect Hilton global campaign in September 2018. The campaign, targeted at directly addressing the frustrations consumers face when booking their hotel stay, was prompted off the back of a research conducted by Hilton. The research found that many consumers had been conditioned to expect less and approach travel planning with skepticism and the campaign aimed to highlight the benefits consumers will receive when booking direct with Hilton. Expect Better, Expect Hilton was aimed at showcasing the unique benefits that travellers can enjoy when they book directly through Hilton such as better rates, complimentary wifi, flexible cancellation as well as being able to select their own rooms.

Following the success of the Expect Better, Expect Hilton global campaign, local iterations of the campaign were rolled out in Australia, China and Japan. Hilton worked with celebrity ambassadors such as Makiko Takizawa from Japan and Stephy Qi from China on local campaigns that spanned across print, outdoor advertisements and digital platforms.



Discover

one of the **oldest wine regions** in the world in

Azerbaijan



Azerbaijan, an ancient cradle of viniculture. Beautifully balanced wines are made with love from grapes grown on Caucasian slopes, soaked in sunshine and soothed by Caspian breezes.

With the foothills and valleys of the Caucasus country naturally growing vinifera grapevines, the region has produced some fine wines over its celebrated 6000-year wine history.

Azerbaijan, known as the Pearl of the Caucasus, has been one of the bases of the world's viticulture. The capital Baku is buzzing with elegant bars and boasts an eclectic nightlife worth recommending to family and friends. The vineyards of the Caucasus foothills produce a bounty of grapes that soak up the rich sunshine,

producing vintages that are likely to surprise and delight unsuspecting oenologists. Azerbaijan's wine industry has been expanding rapidly over the last decade with extensive investments in top quality technology, and a playful experimentation with internationally renowned grape varieties and many local alternatives. The result is an original and ever improving range of fine wines.

Here is a deep dive into the history of wine making, the best wineries in the region, wine tours for tourists and what the future holds for Azerbaijani wines.

History of wine making in Azerbaijan

Long before the Caucasus region was divided up into nation states, people living there cultivated grapes and soon they hit on the sterling idea of crushing them to make wine. An ever-increasing body of archaeological and micro-botanical research suggests that wine was made in considerable quantity over 6000 years ago at sites along the Arpachay River, a valley in Nakhchivan's Sharur region. Several sites suggest an even older knowledge of wine by the Shulaveri-Shomutepe Culture near Aghstafa, which is today known as Western Azerbaijan. Evidently, the South Caucasus region is one of the oldest centres of wine making anywhere in the world.

In the former Soviet Union, Azerbaijan contributed towards a high share of the overall wine and cognac production. Along with their quantitative growth, the quality of wine products also steadily improved and their range expanded. In 1984, 2.1 million tonnes of grapes were harvested in the country while over 100 million decalitres of raw materials, over 10 million decalitres of wine, 1.4 million decalitres of cognac and 1.5 million decalitres of champagne were manufactured. By the end of the collapse of the USSR, Azerbaijan had 181 wineries with a total capacity of 1.8 million tonnes working mainly for the Russian market.

In Soviet times, there was a separate State Committee for viticulture and winemaking in Azerbaijan. It included 256 private sovkhozes (state-owned farms), eight independent wine processing plants and 10 wine reprocessing plants. More than 300,000 people were employed at the committee's enterprises and revenues from vineyards made up 40 per cent of the Republic's budget. The total share of agriculture in the Azerbaijani state budget was 60 per cent. By comparison, the oil and gas sector currently accounted for over 90 per cent.

In the 19th-century, German colonies played an exceptional role in the development of the Azerbaijani

wine making industry. The Germans became famous in Helenendorf (now Goygol) in the mid-late 1800s for cultivating grapes and producing wine. Until then the local population had cultivated several varieties of grape but only to eat them. Thanks to the services of German settlers - Christopher Vohrer and Christian Hummel, Azerbaijani wines gained worldwide popularity.

Christopher Vohrer, like all colonists, had seven dessiatins of land (a dessiatin was a land measurement used in tsarist Russia. One dessiatin equalled approximately 1.1 hectares) and planted grapes for his family and made wine from some of the produce. As the story goes, in 1856 French silk manufacturers were buying silkworm seeds in Sheki and spent a few days in Ganja on their way back. They wanted to taste some wine after eating local dishes, but it was impossible to find any from the local residents. In Ganja, the French were advised to go to the nearby colony of Helenendorf. They came to Vohrer's house, tasted the wine and commented that it was similar to their wine in Burgundy before leaving with enough for the entire journey. This remark by the French gave Vohrer greater confidence in his work and from that moment on he dedicated himself to the very difficult and challenging, yet attractive and interesting business of wine making.

Two years later, in 1860, Vohrer founded Azerbaijan's first major winery and from that year forth he began to sell wine. In the beginning, he owned 18 dessiatins of vineyards but two years later he created the Vohrer Brothers company and set about expanding them. In the Soviet era, Azerbaijan's production increased dramatically, although often favouring sweet wines, reaching a peak in 1984. Thereafter, however, Gorbachev's anti-alcohol, led to the destruction of a huge proportion with large areas of vines uprooted.

After independence, a series of government initiatives starting in 2002 led to wide scale replanting with a greater emphasis on quality over

quantity. Wineries essentially started all over again helped by expert winemakers from Italy, Moldova and elsewhere. The introduction of popular, internationally recognised grape varieties has also helped in crafting wines with global export appeal while the use of Caucasian endemics allows for experimentation with more regionally specific niche products.

The Azerbaijani wine industry today

In May 2018, the State Programme on the Development of Winemaking in Azerbaijan in 2018-2025 was endorsed. This aims to ensure the sustainable development of winemaking in the country by increasing state support, introducing modern technologies and raising interest in the production and export of wine. It is hoped that this will in turn raise employment levels among the rural population.

Azerbaijan has also begun opening wine houses abroad to promote the nation's brand which should give a big boost to wine exports. The first Azerbaijani trade house opened in Belarus in 2017. Others have since opened in Ukraine and China and more are scheduled to open in the UAE, Poland, Kazakhstan and Russia by the end of the year. In the first half of 2018 alone, exports were reported to have grown 80% following new deals to sell Azerbaijani wines in China. And since 2018, there is a Baku Wine School for training advanced sommeliers.

While some families do make their own wines – notably in the cultural unique village of Ivanovka – most of Azerbaijan's production comes from larger companies with access to a wide variety of vineyards allowing the conditions for a similarly wide variety of grape types to be grown and in turn facilitating some imaginative blending. Azerbaijan's unique wine culture As well as the classics, Azerbaijan also has a fast-growing demand for other non-grape wines, most notably full-flavoured pomegranate-based wines which are a current favourite amongst Baku's younger social circles. The best-known



versions are made from Az-Granata (Agsu) and Tovuz-Baltiya (Tovuz), which can be also tasted during traditional Goychay pomegranate festival held every year in early November.

Azerbaijan's wineries make extensive use of well-known grape varieties including Merlot, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Viognier, and Pinot Blanc. But there are also several important Pan-Caucasian and local varietals. For now, many of those are little more than historical curiosities, though there is a new drive to revive some old strains.



restaurant, grocery store and the small wine/liquor shops that are sprinkled throughout Baku. Perhaps, in the future, Azerbaijani wine may also be found on the shelves of other stores around the world.

A few famous wineries

Chabiant

This is one of Azerbaijan's most appealing destinations for wine tourists. The winery is half hidden amongst hilltop vineyards in a deeply rural corner of Ismayilli district. Also known as Chateau Monolitis, it is one of Azerbaijan's most appealing destinations for wine tourists thanks to a quality guesthouse with open-air swimming pool as well as a splendid tasting room and impressive wine caves designed to look centuries old.

They also organize a harvest festival (late August) and a Vino Nuovo celebration (late November) mimicking Beaujolais Nouveau festivities worldwide. Set at an altitude of around 750m, the naturally rain-fed soils of the terroir produce excellent quality grapes that benefit from sun-soaked days and mildly chilly nights. Over recent years the winemaking here has undergone a major rethink and now aims to "bring new life to local viticulture in Azerbaijan". Most significantly, since 2016, the winery has undertaken a project to seek out and rescue rare or forgotten grape varieties to add to the oenological palate.

Savalan

One of Azerbaijan's most popular ranges of premium quality wine, Savalan winery was founded in 2007. The winery conjures up attractive imagery of crystal-clear Caucasian mountain streams watering its sun-bathed vines which cover very considerable areas of rolling terrain south of the foothill city of Gabala. Set at an elevation of some 400m above sea level, these soak up plenty of daytime sunshine allowing for the cultivation of numerous heat-loving grape varieties including red-fleshed Alicante Bouschet. The company's international winemaking



Wine styles tend to be slightly sweet, including the reds, though there is a trend towards producing dry wines to pair better with food.

Azerbaijan doesn't have strictly defined vinicultural regions like France's AOC (appellation d'origine controlee) system, most major wine producers fall geographically along main routes that fan out from Baku. There are five major wine-growing regions: Shamakha, Ismaili, Gabala, Gandja,



and Tovuz. The future of Azerbaijan wines Currently the growth trend for Azerbaijan wine appears to be positive within the country, though increasing at a modest pace. This progress is due to government support, improved wine quality, and a slump in vodka sales. Also, according to Euromonitor, younger and middle-aged people in the country are consuming red wine.

Wine from Azerbaijan and other countries can be found in almost every

team combine expertise from Italy and Azerbaijan to create a range that includes nearly 20 different wines. Labels are boldly coloured such that regular drinkers can spot their favourite variants in a flash.

Fireland

One of Azerbaijan's foremost new-breed wineries. From the north shore of the Absheron peninsular to the Russian border at the Samur River lies a narrow strip of coastal plain from which rises the 'nose' of the Greater Caucasus mountains. Historically the route of traders and invaders, these lands were guarded by three fortified pinch-points with fortresses whose ruins still create impressive scenes for travellers. As a wine terroir, the land is a curiosity, with a rich minerality, swirling khazri sea breezes and concentrated sunshine producing wines that can be explosively fiery and highly original.

A short drive from Baku, Fireland is one of Azerbaijan's foremost new-breed wineries, welcoming to visitors and producing a growing range of well-balanced wines, many grown in vineyards that lie on the Absheron Peninsula between two salt lakes, close to some intriguing mud volcanoes. As the winery has expanded, it has also sought to include a portfolio of cool-air grapes for which it has additional vineyards in the Caucasian foothill regions of Oguz and Sheki. In all, some 15 grape varieties are now cultivated on 160 hectares of land producing several wine ranges: refined Yalli, premium Terra Caspea and Terra Caucasea plus the softer, easy-drinking Ilkin table wines.

Goygol

One of Azerbaijan's most popular ranges of premium quality wine. This is where it all started. Back in 1860, when the town of Goygol was a small village of German settlers known as Helenendorf, a certain Christopher Vohrer started a joint stock company to expand his vineyards into a fully-fledged wine industry. Within a generation this had become Azerbaijan's single biggest producer of wines as well as the first to export

Azerbaijani wines to Europe.

Renamed Concordia, almost half of all grapes harvested in Azerbaijan were processed here in the 1920s. During the Soviet era the wineries were nationalized, and in the 1940s the region's German population was deported, but today the Goygol winery still traces its origins to the Vohrer original. The company processes 13 varieties of grapes harvested from over 500 hectares of vineyards, and is celebrated for its prize-winning brandies as well as a wine selection at varying quality levels marketed as Xan, Goygol, Yelenendorf and Karabakh.

Meysari

An organic wine producer by EU certification. Branded as Meysari (the name of the company's main base

location), Shirvan Wines is one of Azerbaijan's newest winemakers and the country's first to be considered an organic producer by EU certification. Their first 40 hectares of vineyard were only planted in 2014, with the first harvest in 2017, so as yet,

the 2018 bottling is all we have to go on. But signs are promising. Already the area under vine has grown to some 310 hectares, the brand new processing unit uses first top-quality French equipment made by Pera, and a museum, restaurant and guesthouse have been built to facilitate wine tours.

For now, there are just three wine variants on offer made from a curious mélange of French grape varieties, but the range will expand and change once newly planted vineyards of Caucasian seedlings come to maturity.

WINE EXPERIENCES AND TOURS

Ultimate Culinary & Wine tour Azerbaijan

Taste the best national dishes from Azerbaijani cuisine and taste wines from the best wineries in the country in this 5-day package. This covers transport, accommodation, lunch and dinner, wine tastings with snacks.

Visit:

- AZ-Granata for pomegranate wine
- Shato Monolit Winery for a guided tour through the vineyards to watch the process of wine production and storage in one of the largest wine cellars in Azerbaijan

- Wine tour at Savalan Winery

- Goygol Wine Factory - first winemaking factory in Azerbaijan

Tour includes:

- Guide services
- Wine tasting
- Accommodation
- Full transportation
- Transfer from airport to hotel in Baku + from the hotel to airport

Cost: On request

Duration: 5 days

Wine Crawl Baku

This experience involves visiting three cosy wine bars in Baku, having local wines with snacks and discussing Azerbaijani and other nation's wine traditions.

Cost: On request

Duration: 1 day

Travel with a Glass of Wine

Visit 4 wineries located in different parts of Azerbaijan. Discover Azerbaijani traditions of viticulture and wine making intertwined with modern European technologies, taste local wines and enjoy mesmerizing nature surrounding the vineyards.

Visit:

- Fireland Vineyards
- Chateau Monolit
- Aspi Winery
- AZ-Granata

Tour includes:

- Guide services
- Wine tasting
- Accommodation
- Full transportation
- Transfer from airport to hotel in Baku + from the hotel to airport

Cost: On request

Duration: 5 days

Thai Golf Pass

is all set for Season 3



Left-Right: Mr. Rishi Tomar, COO, SLW Golf Management, Mr Isra Stapanaseth, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand, New Delhi Office, Mr. Chitranjan Bakhshi, Business Head, Golf Holidays, and Mr. Anil Dev, Managing Director, SLW

When it comes to hospitality no country comes closer to perfection than Thailand offering something for everyone of diverse interest, every age and every budget. From pristine sandy beaches to lush jungles, bustling busy cities to traditional villages, Michelin star menus to roadside noodle stalls, historic Buddhist temples to 21st century sky scrapers, Thailand is truly amazing!

Amazing Thailand also has Amazing Golf facilities. Ideally located more than 200 golf courses throughout the country, by the sea, by the mountains, by the lakes, inside the cities even besides the airports. Top quality courses, reasonable green fees, friendly caddies. From the beach resorts in the south such as Phuket to the mountainous surroundings in the north or the bustling cities of Bangkok and Pattaya, there are golf courses to suit every preference.

To promote the Amazing Golf Experience, SLW, the leading Golf Management company had launched the first ever loyalty program for a country in 2017. 'Thai Golf Passport was launched in India to offer Indian golfers a seamless golf experience in Thailand. Indian golfers can be a part of this Amazing reward programs whenever they tee off in Amazing Thailand' said Mr. Anil Dev, Managing Director, SLW. 'More than 150 quality service providers like Thai Airways, Callaway and a number of Golf Courses,

Resorts and hotels have come on board as partners.,' he added.

"I would like to congratulate all the partners of Thai Golf Pass, Mr. Anil Dev and his team for the success of this Project which is in the 3rd edition now. Amazing Thailand, Golf paradise with more than 250 International standard golf courses, professional caddies, warm hospitality, wellness, food and entertainment, we look forward to Indian golfers to be part of this loyalty program and experience services, offers for golfers" said Isra Stapanaseth, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand, New Delhi Office.

"Golf has long been the game of corporate and business people who are also avid travellers. Thai Golf Passport creates a membership that shares common values and interests, and at the same time provides an engaging golfing and networking platform for all stake holders-members and sponsors alike. We are excited to partner with this innovative initiative which helps us reach our customers directly," said Mr. Shashank Chaudhary, Sales & Marketing Director, Callaway Golf India.

Commenting on the initiative, Mr. Chitranjan Bakhshi, Business Head, Golf Holidays, said 'Thailand is the most popular destination got golfers from India. The Thai Golf Pass, which is supported by TAT, is a brilliant scheme to reward the keen golfers to experience this destination!.

Thai Golf Pass also has Thai Airways

as Airline partner and speaking on the occasion Mr. Sunil Kumar, Head of Sales said, 'Thai Golf Pass is a great initiative and Thai Airways being the national carrier it was natural that we be a part of the initiative, we look forward to a successful season 3'.

The inaugural season of the initiative saw the Website Launch, 2 Promotional events in India and an event in Bangkok, 83 Loyalty Partners, 2307 membership registrations. A total of 522 Golfers travelled to Thailand under Thai Golf Pass.

In THAI GOLF PASS, SEASON-3, The activities started from October 2019 with a number of Golfers already experiencing Golf in Amazing Thailand!

The Season three will see a number of roadshows, a Promotional events at the Delhi Golf Club with 3 events in Thailand. Increase Number of Loyalty Partners to 200 and increase membership's base to cover 5000 Golfers.

HIGHLIGHTS of the Program:

- Thai Golf Pass is the first ever loyalty program for any country
- Unique initiative by Tourism Authority of Thailand, New Delhi
- A seamless golf experience exclusive to Thailand
- Amazing rewards on redemption of loyalty points
- User friendly online program
- Brings all the suppliers under one platform

Clarks Inn enters Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh, with 32-key property



New Delhi & Raebareli (Uttar Pradesh): Clarks Inn Group of Hotels, India's fastest growing hotel company, announces its entry to the burgeoning town of Raebareli in Uttar Pradesh with the opening of 32 key Om Clarks Inn. An upscale hotel, the property boasts of city-centre location in close proximity of Raebareli Railway Station and is located in the city's commercial hub along the Civil Lines.

The hotel opened door yesterday, September 30, with a grand ceremony, attended by city's who's who and corporates, announcing the launch of the property. As a Clarks Inn property, the hotel offers the latest in amenities and world class guest services along with spacious and well-appointed rooms. There are 30 Deluxe category rooms along with 2 Executive suites to cater to the demands of discerning guests. The property also boasts of well-planned event space for corporates and for social occasions, along with F&B outlet and more.

Commenting on the latest addition, S N Srivastava, President & Co-founder, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels, said, "We are absolutely thrilled at the launch of Om Clarks Inn at Raebareli, our newest addition to the fast growing portfolio of properties in our chain. Raebareli is a growing town with a growing demand of travel and business opportunities. Besides, the town also is today more prosperous than what it used to be and is looking for quality hospitality experience, a void that we are keen to fill in this historical town. We are confident that this property will be the most sought-after hospitality address of Raebareli in no time."

Furthermore, he informed that Clarks Inn Group of Hotels has made giant strides as a hospitality chain and has emerged as one of the most admired and fastest growing hotel companies in the South Asia region. "Today, we have established our presence in 22 states of India and Nepal with a slew of other developments to unfold in various parts of the country as well as overseas."

Tourism Australia

unveils campaign to drive visitations from India for ICC T20 World Cups 2020

Tourism Australia has launched a campaign to lure more Indian tourists to Australia next year for the Women's and Men's ICC T20 World Cup.



With India having emerged as the fastest growing inbound market for the nation Down Under, Tourism Australia yesterday launched its dedicated campaign to drive Indian visitors for the sports spectacle – ICC World Cups 2020. This time around Australia is playing host to the Women's as well Men's World Cup from February 21 to March 8 and October 18 to November 15, respectively.

Following up on the momentum created by the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015, which was co-hosted by Australia and saw approximately

100,000 international visitors, the latest campaign is aimed at attracting a record number of visitors for the twin tournaments.

Moreover, the focus is also to generate massive interest for the Women's tournament, and as part of this plan, Tourism Australia is working with Indian cricketer Mithali Raj. The final match of the Women's World Cup will be held on March 8 at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Tourism Board is looking to generate similar momentum and stadium presence by the audience enjoyed by the Men's final.

The video campaign showcases the Australian way of life with its culture, food, nature, wildlife, coastal experiences, iconic locations and the 8 venues that will play host to the two tournaments – Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Geelong, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. The campaign features voiceovers from Indian cricket commentator and Friend of Australia ambassador Harsha Bhogle; Indian singer, actress and anchor Shibani Dandekar; and Australian former cricketer Brett Lee.

Australia's Tourism Minister, Simon Birmingham, said "Australia's hosting of

these two T20 World Cup tournaments has the potential to deliver huge benefits for our tourism industry and overall economy.

This campaign is all about encouraging Indian cricket lovers to book a ticket, pack their bags and head Down Under to experience the highs of world-class T20 cricket. Given India is our fastest growing tourism market and currently worth \$1.8 billion to Australian tourism, the T20 World Cup provides an exciting opportunity for Australia to well and truly cash-in."

According to Brent Anderson, Regional General Manager, South and South East Asia, Tourism Australia, "Australia and India have a strong bond through their shared love for cricket. While we have been witnessing impressive growth in terms of visitors and spend from India, the upcoming T20 World Cup provides us with a massive opportunity to take this to the next level. We look forward to welcoming our guests from India for an unforgettable cricket experience at our iconic stadiums and also giving them a flavour of our truly distinct way of life. As part of our plan to make this one of the largest sporting spectacles in the world, a range of offerings and packages are being introduced for travellers from India in partnership with the ICC, official ticketing agents and our key distribution partners."

ICC has appointed five official ticketing agents and two sub-agents, including Bharat Army, Gainwell Sports, Fanatic Sports, Sports Konnect, Cutting Edge, PickYourTrail, and Medallin Sports to sell cricket packages in India.

With five consecutive years of double-digit growth, the 2020 arrivals goal of 300,000 Indian visitors was achieved in December 2017, three years ahead of target date.

Harsha Bhogle, Tony Huber - Australian Consul General (Mumbai, India), Shibani Dandekar, Brent Anderson and Nishant Kashikar - Country Manager (Gulf & India), Tourism Australia, and India Heads of the Australian State Tourism Organisations were present at the campaign launch in Mumbai.

Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata Brings in Abhishek Sachdev as their Hotel Manager

With over 13 years of enriching hospitality experience across multiple hotel companies & varied roles at ITC Limited, Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Indian Hotels Company Limited, he is a recognized individual within the hospitality industry.



ABHISHEK SACHDEV has been appointed as the Hotel Manager of Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata. In his previous role, he was Operations Manager at Taj Fisherman's Cove, Chennai. With over 13 years of enriching hospitality experience across multiple hotel companies & varied roles at ITC Limited, Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Indian Hotels Company Limited, he is a recognized individual within the hospitality industry.

Sachdev started his career as a Management Trainee at ITC Hotels and was associated with ITC Windsor, Bangalore as a Duty Manager before moving on to the pre-opening team of ITC Gardenia, Bangalore as an Asst Front Office Manager. From here on he proceeded to pursue his Master's degree in Hospitality Administration from the renowned École hôtelière de Lausanne, Switzerland in 2011. Consequently, he took charge of international fund raising for Indian Head Injury Foundation under the aegis

of Showtime Events as the Head of Marketing & Business Development by conceptualizing and executing special projects both in India and globally.

He made his return to hotels as a Front Office Manager at Taj Bekal Resort & Spa in Kerala in 2013. Armed with an extensive understanding and knowledge of managerial experience in operations, guest relations, positioning and revenue optimisation, Sachdev will be responsible for not only the successful opening of the hotel but also delivering high levels of customer service. He will play an integral role in the positioning of the hotel by performing diverse responsibilities which include strategic initiatives to boost market profile, align cost heads, staff engagement and overall management of the hotel to secure its leadership position.

An avid trekker, Abhishek also enjoys equestrianism, playing lawn tennis and experimenting with traditional pasta recipes in his personal time.



Meet, Connect & Relax at Kolkata's newest business hotel!

Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata

Marriott international has announced the opening of 182-room Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata, making this the latest addition to the more than 1,000 Fairfield by Marriott hotels across the globe. The brand-new hotel is set to bring the beauty of simplicity and warm hospitality to the urban city of Kolkata by delivering seamless experiences at a great price point.

Supremely located 20 minutes away from the Netaji Subhash Chandra International Airport, across

the Biswa Bangla gate in New Town, while neighboring the IT Hub of the city, Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata is the newest business hotel in the vicinity - a perfect destination with an ambiance well designed to pamper your needs by curating wholesome experiences resulting in a restful stay. Relish signature global cuisines at Kava - the all-day dining restaurant or delve into an array of premium concoctions and sizzling bites at Vertex, our liquid restaurant. The hotel also offers skillfully designed

state-of-the-art meeting rooms and a spacious ballroom for conferences and events, with dedicated support to ensure impeccable service and crafted menu selections. Fitness enthusiasts can keep up with their routine at our well-equipped gymnasium or take a dip in our outdoor plunge pool to recharge after a hard day.

"The opening of Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata marks another milestone for the growth of our mid-tier segment across India," said Neeraj Govil, Senior Vice President, South-Asia, Marriott



International. “We are confident the Fairfield brand will continue to further strengthen our offerings and extend our leading position in India with the reliability and consistency the brand is known for.”

With over 6,000 sq. ft of event space, Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata also offers three intimate meeting rooms, each equipped with new age technology and flexible seating, making it an ideal venue to host business meets and small scale conferences.

“We are excited to introduce the Fairfield brand to the eastern side of India with the opening of Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata,” said Abhishek Sachdev, Hotel Manager, Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata. “We look forward to providing a seamless and stress-free experience to our discerning guests in the ‘City of Joy’. We are certain that our rich legacy will be appreciated by the people of Kolkata, and that it will establish us as one of the most sought-after hotels in the city.”



The Manor

New Delhi



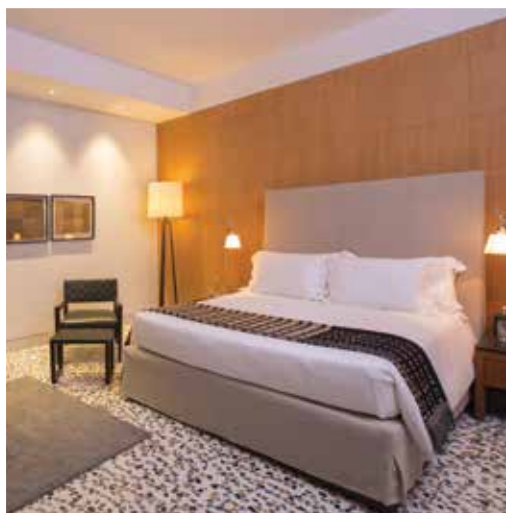
A boutique hotel by Asaya House

The Manor, New Delhi reopens after being restored, renewed and re-imagined for their 20th anniversary

This autumn, The Manor reopened after being restored, renewed and re-imagined for its 20th anniversary. Recreated by the original design team, Shirley Fujikawa and Vinay Kapoor, The Manor steps up to its reputation for a blend of contemporary chic reinterpreted with local materials and craftsmanship, including authentic terrazzo, natural textures, and fabrics paired with rich wood and stones.

The Manor first opened to high acclaim being featured in new and hot hotel lists of 2000 across multiple leading travel publications, with notable mentions of its zen environment and comparisons to the “a la mode” hotels of London and New York. The gentle and careful renovation has taken it to a new level of sophistication, style, and comfort for today’s discerning traveler while retaining what made The Manor special. Each of our twelve rooms and suites has their own unique style making them as individual as our guests.

The enhanced public spaces and amenities include two culinary destinations, in-Q and Noci, an Ayurveda spa, state-of-the-art health facilities. Under the leadership of Chef Aditya Kumar Jha, in-Q is a



contemporary take on Indian cuisine showcasing traditional flavours and ingredients, while Noci offers a stylish yet relaxed Italian cafe experience with its small plates, salads, wood fired pizza and fresh brewed coffee.

Set in nearly an acre of secluded garden space, in one of the smartest tree-lined residential quarters of New Delhi, The Manor has always aimed to take the stress out of travel. Exceptional personalised service has been the hallmark of The Manor and even more so now with our extended wellness offerings. Recharge and maintain your routine at STUDIO60, the fitness center features both high-

energy group classes and private personal training. House of Ayurveda, a wellness spa by Kairali Ayurvedic Group provides a holistic experience well beyond massages and can include consultation, yoga, ayurvedic meals and follow up care for those seeking rejuvenation and transformation. ISAAC Luxe, Dr. Geetika Mittal Gupta’s aesthetic clinic, provides unique skin, hair, weight loss, and wellness solutions.

Akshay Chawla, General Manager at The Manor, speaking on the launch said “Over the past decade, I have had the opportunity to work at some of the finest luxury hotels in the country, along with traveling and staying at countless hotels in major international destinations. While many regions in India have seen success with boutique hotels, travelers do not have such options in gateways like Delhi. Putting The Manor back on this map after a yearlong renovation is our objective, which with the quality of accommodation, food, and services we offer; we shall graciously fill this gap for visitors entering India through its capital.”

Hyatt Announces

Plans for First Hotel in Iceland with Hyatt Centric Reykjavík



The fastest growing Hyatt lifestyle brand expands into the Nordics

Hyatt Hotels Corporation recently announced that a Hyatt affiliate has entered into a franchise agreement with H176 Reykjavík ehf, a fully owned subsidiary of Icelandic real estate company Reitir fasteignafélag hf, to open the first Hyatt branded hotel in Iceland. Expected to debut in 2022, the 169-room Hyatt Centric Reykjavík will bolster Hyatt's lifestyle portfolio and the Hyatt Centric brand's presence in Europe.

Hyatt Centric Reykjavík will offer modern accommodations, three food and beverage outlets, including a pop-up rooftop bar overlooking Iceland's dynamic capital city, and approximately 2100 square feet (200 square meters) of meeting facilities. With a high proportion of adventurous travelers exploring the Icelandic countryside, Hyatt Centric Reykjavík will boast its own car park for guests to use. Staying true to the Hyatt Centric brand experience, guests will have access to a passionate hotel team, ready to provide local expertise and insider knowledge, ensuring they never miss a moment of adventure.

The hotel will be situated on Laugavegur, the main street of

Reykjavík, located east of the city center in an area seeing rapid growth. The building will be a redevelopment of what locals know as the former headquarters of the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service. A 40-minute drive from Iceland's main international airport and a 10-minute walk to the city center, Hyatt Centric Reykjavík will serve as the perfect launch pad for guests wanting to explore the breathtaking natural beauty of "The Land of Fire and Ice."

"Over the past year we have spent a great deal of time understanding the Nordic market and getting to know the hotel developers and owners in Iceland. Hyatt Centric Reykjavík will mark the first Hyatt hotel in Iceland, an important milestone for us," said Peter Norman, senior vice president of development, Hyatt. "Hyatt Centric Reykjavík not only demonstrates our unprecedented growth in the upscale lifestyle segment in Europe, but also our commitment to expand Hyatt's brand footprint in a market currently dominated by independent, regional players."

"We are thrilled to be working alongside Hyatt to bring the first Hyatt

hotel to Iceland and the Nordics as a whole. Our experience in the Icelandic market and Hyatt's unique, personalized approach to development is the perfect combination to develop a distinct offering in the city," said Guðjón Auðunsson, CEO of Reitir fasteignafélag hf. "With travelers staying in Iceland for an average of five to eight nights all year round, Hyatt Centric Reykjavík will be the ideal base for guests wanting to enjoy a lifestyle hotel whilst taking in the stunning scenery, whether on a hike in summer or while viewing the Northern Lights in winter."

Hyatt Centric Reykjavík will join the growing Hyatt Centric portfolio in Europe with *Hyatt Centric La Rosière*, *Hyatt Centric Milan Centrale*, *Hyatt Centric Murano Venice*, *Hyatt Centric Gran Via Madrid*, *Hyatt Centric Levent Istanbul* and the newly opened *Hyatt Centric The Liberties Dublin*.

For more information on the Hyatt Centric brand and its range of properties worldwide, visit hyattcentric.com.

The term "Hyatt" is used in this release for convenience to refer to Hyatt Hotels Corporation and/or one or more of its affiliates.

Indian visitors to GCC to increase 81% by 2024, says new ATM report



- GCC to welcome 9.8 million Indian visitors by 2024 with CAGR growth of 10%
- UAE to experience highest proportionate increase in arrivals from India

The number of Indian tourists travelling to the GCC is expected to increase 81% from 5.4 million in 2018 to 9.8 million in 2024, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10%, according to the latest data published ahead of Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2020.

As destinations throughout the Middle East prepare to showcase their latest offering at ATM 2020, which is being held at Dubai World Trade Centre from Sunday 19 – Wednesday 22 April 2020, Colliers International predicts more than 20% of India's total outbound market will travel to the GCC by 2024 – with business, place of work and leisure underpinning this demand.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "This influx of Indian visitors to the GCC shows no sign of abating, with every reason to believe India will maintain its position as a top source market as the region prepares to welcome an estimated increase of 81% by 2024, providing a significant boost to the region's tourism industry as we look ahead."

"This projected growth is being supported by a number of key stakeholders in the region, from immigration initiatives and megaevents, to hotels, F&B venues, resorts, theme parks and malls – all of which appeal to Indian travellers.

"ATM is witnessing this growth firsthand, in 2019, 10% of the total buyers at the show were from India. In terms of potential, we are only scratching the surface as the Indian middle class represents just 3% or 40 million of the total Indian population and average real wages set to quadruple between 2013 and 2030."

In 2018, the UAE welcomed 2.89 million Indian tourists with this figure expected to reach 5.29 million by 2024, increasing at a CAGR of 11%, according to ATM's official research partner, Colliers International.

Adding to this, India retained its top spot on Dubai's list of source markets for inbound tourism, with almost 1 million Indian tourists arriving in the emirate during the first half of 2019.

Despite the UAE leading comparative growth, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait are all expected to witness an increase of 10% respectively between 2018 and 2024.

"Driving this growth is a new generation of leisure attractions in the GCC, relaxed visa regulations for Indian nationals, additional airline routes, increasing business opportunities, a renewed focus on Indian weddings and the MICE segment as well as the increasing popularity of adventure and eco-tourism in countries including the UAE and Oman," said Curtis.

Last year, Indian tourists accounted for approximately 26.1 million of total outbound trips made, with reports from the UNWTO estimating this figure will increase by 92% to reach more than 50 million by 2022.

Indian tourists are among the world's highest spenders while travelling abroad, with outbound travel and tourism expenditure to increase from US\$21.4 billion in 2018 to US\$39.3 billion by 2024.

On average, Indian travellers spent approximately US\$1,100 per trip made to the GCC in 2018, according to the latest data from Euromonitor International, with business and experience-seeking tourists likely to spend at least 15% more per trip.

Curtis added: "As GCC travel and tourism companies and destinations look to attract a larger share of the Indian market, ATM 2020 will introduce the India Market Forum as part of the show's new forum & networking series. The session will outline what destinations are doing to attract visitors from this key market while also providing an informal networking event for buyers from India and exhibitors."

ATM, considered by industry professionals as a barometer for the Middle East and North Africa tourism sector, welcomed almost 40,000 people to its 2019 event with representation from 150 countries. Looking ahead, ATM will adopt Events for Tourism Growth as the official show theme for the 2020 edition of the show.



ADTOI

North East Road Show and B2B meeting at IGNCA a great success



With very good connectivity to Guwahati by Air, North East India is poised to take giant leap towards development. ADTOI recently launched its North East Chapter in Guwahati and response have been very good.

As a part of this North East Tourism Festival, that was held from 8th to 10th November ADTOI with the

support of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India and in collaboration with the organisers of the Festival organised a North East Tourism Road Show and B2B Meeting on 9th November 2019 from 2 pm to 6 pm at IGNCA Conference Hall, Janpath, New Delhi.

The Road show was attended by Tourism Secretaries of North East India, officials of Ministry of Tourism, GoI, major tour operators of North East India. The discussion agenda was on major tourism circuits of North East, networking and B2B discussion. 22 Exhibitors from North East participated in the B2B meeting and 120 Buyers participated in the Show. Large number of Press/Media was present during the show and they all met the exhibitors to get more information about their tourism products for promotion. After the meeting, the tour operators were taken to the adjacent venue to witness spectacular culture of North East India, Mask culture, tribal dance, glimpses of Tawang, Sangha festival etc.





Experience an Enchanted Wedding Experience at Shangri-La Bosphorus, Istanbul

Anchored on the European shores of the Bosphorus strait in a historical building from the 1930's; Shangri-La Bosphorus, Istanbul's two magnificent ballrooms can accommodate celebrations for up to 650 guests.

SHANGRI-LA hotels and resorts are renowned for unparalleled wedding expertise, with award winning culinary masters, as well as elegant and inspiring venues; perfecting the fantasy and transforming it into reality, Shangri-La Bosphorus, Istanbul is no exception.

Anchored on the European shores of the Bosphorus strait in a historical building from the 1930's; Shangri-La Bosphorus, Istanbul's two magnificent ballrooms can accommodate celebrations for up to 650 guests. With luxurious surroundings, a world-class team to simplify event planning, and the perfect setting to create timeless moments, the hotel has walked over 500 couples down the aisle from once upon a time to happily ever after.

The culinary expertise of Chef Moret is rivalled only by Shangri-La Bosphorus, Istanbul's 15 master Pastry Chefs who creates craft a-one-of-a-kind dessert buffet straight out of a fairy-tale. The chefs work tirelessly for over 1000 hours to create over 100 dessert dishes, using 150kg of the finest gourmet chocolate.

With a world of fabulous honeymoon possibilities, the newlyweds have over 100 Shangri-La hotels and resorts to choose from, including Shangri-La's Villingili Resort & Spa, Maldives and Shangri-La's Le Touessrok Resort & Spa, Mauritius.



Rahul Maini

has been appointed the General Manager at the Jaipur Marriott Hotel

He is all set to provide leadership and strategic planning to all departments of the hotel. Reliant and resilient, he will also be spearheading highly effective, targeted strategies across sales, revenue management and operations. Furthermore, ensures excellence in guest satisfaction by maintaining the highest standards of quality and service in support of Jaipur Marriott Hotel's culture and ethics.



AN EXPERIENCED hospitality professional with a passion for operational excellence and guest engagement, Rahul Maini has been appointed as the General Manager of Jaipur Marriott Hotel.

Having over 20 years of versatile accomplishments in the hotel and food & beverage operations at some of the most premier hotel properties in India and abroad, Rahul Maini is a results-oriented individual who has consistently delivered

results that has contributed to the overall success of the hotel. He accomplished his performance objectives with his steel grit and determination. This included driving revenue, accentuating digital marketing & creativity, and elevating hotel services.

Rahul holds a Diploma in Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Nutrition from the National Council of Hotel Management. His career with the Marriott brand began with the Marriott Executive Apartments and Renaissance (Mumbai), in March 2001. He moved to various luxury Taj properties like Taj Palace Hotel (Dubai), Taj Mahal Hotel (New Delhi) and Taj Lake Palace (Udaipur). He was later appointed as the Director of Operations at Courtyard by Marriott in Ahmedabad in 2011.

Accomplished and inspirational, Rahul has also helped oversee and mentor pre-opening for hotels. With strong background in operations, Rahul's leadership qualities led him to become the opening General Manager of Renaissance Lucknow Hotel in 2015. A consummate hotelier, Rahul's took over the role as General Manager of Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa in March 2016, armed with his comprehensive perspective on the intricacies of helming luxury hotels, he brought his own inimitable style and extensive market knowledge to successfully open Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa and positioned the hotel as the most preferred luxury desert resort in India. Before moving to Jaipur, Rahul was the General Manager of Westin Kolkata Rajarhat. His remarkable ability to nurture and grow a business while evaluating opportunities, risks and also implement innovative new solutions has been his success throughout.

He is all set to provide leadership and strategic planning to all departments of the hotel. Reliant and resilient, he will also be spearheading highly effective, targeted strategies across sales, revenue management and operations. Furthermore, ensures excellence in guest satisfaction by maintaining the highest standards of quality and service in support of Jaipur Marriott Hotel's culture and ethics.



Virgin Voyages

reveals second ship and destinations

Virgin Voyages has announced that their second ship will be called Valiant Lady and that she will sail seven-night Mediterranean cruises from Barcelona when she debuts in May 2021.

“We are thrilled to unveil the name of our second ship – Valiant Lady – and to deliver on our commitment to offer travellers a sea change in how they can experience cruising in this fantastic part of the world. Our Sailors will fall in love with the places we go and the moments and memories they will be able to create on our gorgeous ship. After all, there is no better way to sail the seven seas than doing it the Virgin way,” said Tom McAlpin, CEO of Virgin Voyages.

Valiant Lady will dock just steps from Las Ramblas at the World Trade Center in Barcelona. This will put Sailors as close to the heart of the port city as possible, meaning they can walk to Barcelona’s dynamic and diverse neighbourhoods. She will set sail in May

2021 but bookings for Valiant Lady’s voyages open on December 19th, 2019

Valiant Lady will embark on three different itineraries from Barcelona, all offering overnight and late night stops across some of the hottest destinations in France, Italy and Spain. The three itineraries from Barcelona are:

Barcelona, Ibiza, Palma de Mallorca, Malaga and the British port of Gibraltar.

Sailors will have the flexibility to make the most of their time in all of these ports and take in all that the destinations have to offer. All sailings feature a Friday overnight stay in Ibiza – perfect for a big night out. But Ibiza is also one of the most beautiful Balearic islands so if a big night out isn’t your scene, you can also enjoy a chilled beach day, bohemian markets, or a serene spa.

Virgin Voyages has also revealed that the name of its second ship was inspired by the latin word ‘valere’ and from the French origin, ‘vaillant’, meaning bold, strong and courageous. Historically, the image of women only graced the bows of ships to bring protection to a vessel, but Valiant Lady embodies the idea that women design, captain, lead and champion change in the maritime industry.

Valiant Lady will continue Virgin Voyages’ Scarlet Squad programme, which is aimed at recruiting, supporting and mentoring female shipboard talent and growing opportunities to access leadership roles in onboard areas such as marine, technical and hotel management that statistically show low numbers of female leadership.

HILTON DALAMAN SARIGERME RESORT & SPA INVITES HONEYMOON COUPLES

to live a wedding in a splendid atmosphere



A landscape showcasing the splendid beauties of Aegean and Mediterranean... A hotel that blends architecture with the surrounding nature, offering an environment of luxury and comfort...sunbathing and relaxation areas in the form of small-scale beach houses on a beach exclusive to the hotel...A dedicated spa centre, where you can leave all tiredness of your wedding behind, designed with a particular manner...A swimming pool where you can enjoy special moments under the bright blue sky from your private terrace...Romantic restaurants that delight the palate.....Bars and performances illuminating your evenings with festivity...An exclusive service manner...

They say, "It continues as it begins". A honeymoon experience where every detail is delicately considered is a unique choice for couples taking their first step in life together at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa, where glorious nature meets maximum luxury. After your wedding, spoil yourself with your one and only...

The Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa invites you to experience service and offers dedicated to making you feel very special, comfort that embraces you with its details, a delicious culinary journey, sumptuous spa treatments... a joyous adventure filled with colour, and natural surroundings formed by the union of blue and green...all together in

your honeymoon, where you will have the most beautiful moments of your life...

Whether you seek a romantic interlude with just the two of you, or a festive time surrounded by old and new friends, our hotel offers privileged services that will transform your honeymoon into an absolute dream... With five restaurants presenting the best flavours in international cuisine... seven bars where drinks and entertainment are simply redefined, outdoor swimming pools with sparkling water and relaxing pools that promise romance and tranquillity... the Elysion Spa offering 6,000 square metres of luxe treatments... a dedicated 650-metre-long beach and gazebos where you can enjoy sea, sun and sand amid a superior service understanding...all awaits you.

A SPECIAL CONCEPT FOR HONEYMOON COUPLES

Services dedicated to honeymoon couples at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa are extraordinary... with the Honeymoon Duplex Suite option other than the standard honeymoon package. In the Honeymoon Suite, you'll find a Jacuzzi, a sauna and a terrace as well as a living room and a plush bedroom. But this is not all: When



you take your first step into your most beautiful journey, you are brought to the hotel with a private transfer service. You are welcomed with Champagne and chocolate as you enter the hotel, and with wine, fruit, and appetizers in your room. As a special treat on to your first day, an in-room breakfast and or breakfast in a private area in the restaurant are just the beginning. Accommodation in a seafront Gazebo House, a massage in your room or the spa centre await you, all there to help you make beautiful memories during your honeymoon and your stay at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa.

Whether you choose to stay in the Honeymoon Duplex Suite or in one of the hotel's comfortable rooms ... all honeymoon couples married within two weeks - without any exceptions - are invited to enjoy dinner in an à la carte

restaurant, accommodation in a Gazebo House for one day, a fruit basket in the room, and other surprises in one day - as you select during your stay, and as you wish.

HILTON DALAMAN SARIGERME RESORT & SPA: THE NEW HONEYMOON DESTINATION FOR INDIAN TOURISTS

In recent months, guests from India have joined us at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa, embracing the unique geography of the region. The Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa was honoured to host a traditional, fabulous Indian wedding, while the happy couple enjoy their honeymoon privileges at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa.



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