

Gostelow Report Live

exclusively for ILTM/Reed Travel Exhibitions

SPECIAL REPORT

Singapore, May 28, 2019

Welcome to the second ILTM Asia Pacific here in stunning Singapore. Gostelow Report Live – at the request of Reed Travel Exhibitions, organisers of ILTM – gives exclusive insights and news items on this momentous event. Once again, this brings international and regional suppliers of luxury travel products who will meet with buyers from Asia Pacific and the rest of the world. This year's gathering, which runs May 27-30, 2019, sees 560 exhibitors meeting up with 560 top-flight buyers.

Oh what a party that was last night, on the covered-over pool of Ritz-Carlton Millenia (the cover-up was personally designed by hotel GM Peter Mainguy, who has seen the concept since copied by Bulgari Dubai and also here, in Singapore, at Marina Bay Sands). Mainguy started the day celebrating with a breakfast birthday cake of lucky-8 pancakes, in his hotel's super 32nd floor Ritz-Carlton club lounge. At the very next table, Filipina marketing guru Cathy Feliciano-Chon was already getting ready for her later Forum appearance, talking wellness, a market that is growing at 33% annually (Feliciano-Chon's one of those honest people who admits she is probably among the least fit physically – she relies on sleep, transcendental meditation, plant-based foods and surrounding herself with positive, happy people • Other Forum speakers similarly shared off the stage, so to speak, wellness thoughts. Osteopath Julien Paccaud, former French barefoot water-ski champion and now heading Ecologie du Corps, needs 8.5 hours' sleep a night. Keep well, Julien? He drinks plain water, masses of it, he believes in deep breathing and, as a Frenchman, he adores food – though after an excess of rich food he makes sure he cuts basically, drastically • And as for global design icon Bill Bensley, he is a one-off. To accommodate a 13-1/2EEEE shoe size he goes bespoke (he loves the mix-match suedes he had made in Salzburg, and this a mix-match globalist who deliberately sews, in haphazard style, embroidered badges on to a faithful travel backpack): he keeps fit biking-hiking, and Four Seasons Tented Camp in the Golden Triangle is a special favourite). Dr Parag Khanna had already told some of us in Shanghai in June 2017 that the rest of the world doesn't economically equal Asia - there are over 3,500 special economic zones spread across the region and China is top trading partner for 124 countries (the US can claim only 56 and China's One Belt One Road will connect Asia as the most vital area of today's world). Last night, this self-confessed masochist who keeps fit through brutal HIIT sessions and more gentle tennis, continued his belief that new Asian values are shaping the entire global conversation.

Look at some of the buyer statistics. For the first time, there are buyers from Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus and Moldova. Of the total 560 buyers, 49% are new to the entire ILTM Portfolio and 61% are first-timers at ILTM Asia Pacific: there are also significant increases in buyers from Australia, up 9% over 2018; Korea, up 21%; Malaysia, up 33%; New Zealand, up 133%, and Philippines, up 38%. And what about the exhibitors? It is noteworthy that first-time exhibitors at ILTM Asia Pacific include Melia Hotels, Minor Hotels, Radisson, Resorts World Sentosa, Rwanda, Seabourn Cruises, Singapore Tourism and Visit Florida. Among those who have significantly expanded their space are African properties, Catalan and Turespaña, Kempinski, Kerzner, Korea Tourism, Quark Expeditions and XO Private.

According to Agility Research & Strategy, top travellers' reasons to travel are shifting from status and recognition to personal growth and better quality of life. But who ARE these people? Knight Frank's 2019 Wealth Report states that Global UHNWI population - those with £30 million plus in net assets – is forecast to rise by 22% over the next five years, with eight of the top 10 fastest-growing wealth populations in Asia. The number of billionaires globally is set to rise above 1,000 by 2023 (Asia will account for more than a third of the world's billionaire population of 2,696). India, with +39%, leads in terms of increase over the next five years, but the Philippines is right on its heels, at 38%, and China, at 35%, is not far behind (India is expected to be the fastest growing luxury travel market through to 2025 with some 660,800 millionaires expected by 2026). Interestingly, of the 59 countries and territories included in wealth forecasts, eight of the top ten countries by future growth are in Asia (the other two are Romania and Ukraine).

Asian millionaires' interests are becoming more sophisticated: city tours, diving, beach, food, amusement parks, spas and hot springs are some of the most mentioned reasons to travel. ILTM expects an increase of interest in art and cultural travel, on the tail of the opening of major museums and cultural institutions throughout the region. Shopping is, however, still an important component. Global retail hotspots will always include Rodeo Drive, where LVMH has just purchased an additional 6200 sq. m space (Louis Vuitton has a Very Important Clients VIC salon offering an extensive terrace with panoramic views). **Beverly Hills Conference and Visitors Bureau** is keen to share updates with Asia Pacific visitors: the 'Burberry Penthouse' includes a private fitting room and personal tailor, and those who buy at Tod's get access to J.P. Clubs globally – similarly, Christian Dior and Saint Laurent offer private salons for optimal privacy, while House of Bijan is strictly by appointment only. Watch out, by the way, for Beverly Hills' BOLD evenings, when stores stay open a further two hours, to close at 8 p.m. The BHCVB also stresses such culinary pinnacles as newly-opened AVRA Beverly Hills – an outpost of the New York favourite – plus Crustacean Beverly Hills (try Chef An's famous garlic noodles) and Estiatorio Louka, on Canyon Drive. And do not forget anything by Wolfgang Puck, Curtis Stone, or Jean-Georges Vongerichten (the last is in, and atop, the gorgeously sumptuous **Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills**, GM Vanessa Williams). Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills' conjoined neighbour, the iconic **Beverly Hilton**, opens an upgraded health and wellness concept this December: in partnership with Upgrade Labs, there will be 15 customized, data-driven technologies targeting physical fitness, cellular recovery and cognitive wellness (treatments include Cold HITT, Cryotherapy, EEG Brain Training, and Pulsed Electro Magnetic Field Therapy).

The 194-room **Mamilla Jerusalem**, a Leading Hotel, is owned by the Alrov family (hotel GM is Sharon Gouvryn): this is the city's art hotel, architect Moshe Safdie, interiors Piero Lissoni and it's a short walk, along retail-lined Alrov Avenue, to the Tower of David and then, through forever souks, to the Wailing Wall • India is on a high following Modi's resounding election success last week. India's ongoing leading hotel family are the Oberois, still headed by detail obsessed MPS (Biki Oberoi): stay at the eponymous hotels in, say, Delhi or Mumbai for superlative service by immaculately-groomed Oberoi School of Hotel Management graduates, the men in pristine Nehru' jackets, or go out of town for such 'vilas' delights as Agra's **Amarvilas**, GM Vishal Pathak – it's only 600 metres from the Taj Mahal (stay in the 175 sq. m Robert Burns Suite, #527, and you feel you could touch it).

Rosewood is here in full force, previewing Yangon as well as showcasing such recent openings as **Rosewood Bangkok**, MD Thomas Harlander, and the vertical city that is Rosewood Hong Kong (MD Marc Brugger) - it opened 17 March 2019 and, as of 29 April, one guest had already returned three times, obviously attracted by Loro Piana cashmere umbrella stands, red safes, and the superlative 40th floor Manor Club lounge, with a pool table overlooking the harbour. Overall, average stay has been 2.3 nights, and with 83% of the 322 rooms overlooking the harbour, Brugger had anticipated the high number of room service orders but he admits he is surprised by his bars' buzz. Mr B earlier also achieved another sterling job with the opening of **Rosewood Beijing** (MD Marc Handl), such a favourite of the Morgan Stanley crowd – if you can't get the 177 sq. m Presidential Suite, take anything with access to the stylish 7th floor Mansion Club, especially if you play billiards.

Among other oh-so-desirable Beijing hotels here is **Urban Resorts'** newly-opened **PuXuan Hotel and Spa** (Pu=jade and xuan=greatness), GM Mark Wouters. The 116-room hotel on floors above Sotheby's owner Guardian Auctions salerooms, is at the north-east of the Forbidden City, at the junction of Dongsu and Wangfujing • **The Regent Beijing** (GM Nick Emery) is above one of the world's highest grossing Rolls Royce dealerships – this is an ideal hotel for those who want proximity both to the CBD, central business district, and Financial Street areas • For those who want to be close to Beijing's peaceful Liang Ma River, where venerable locals gather to talk and fish of a morning, the choices include **Bulgari Hotel Beijing**, GM Antonio Saponara, (an edgy art-filled 119-room property, with a 380 sq. m Bulgari Suite), **Four Seasons Chaoyang** (new GM Christian Poda, formerly in Jakarta), and its immediate neighbour, **Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center**, GM Brice Pean (its 540 rooms have, like the whole hotel, now been upgraded by designers HBA, and it is well worth choosing access to the 15th floor club lounge, run by a real character, long-time manager Tony Liu • Do look, too, at **Nuo Hotel Beijing**, GM Bernhard Wimmer, a highly-successful modern Chinese hotel, discreetly set up by Kempinski – 438 rooms and, again, get access to the 25th floor club lounge. The hotel's displayed art is supposedly worth over US\$50 million, and massive works are complemented by, say, the tea lounge's 42 wood compartments each holding an exquisite handmade Chinese teapot.

Park Hyatts often have signature views (is that why one celebrated luxury buyer lives above **Park Hyatt New York**, for Central Park views and access to the hotel's 25th floor pool?). Choose **Park Hyatt Sydney**, GM Marc von Arnim, for closest cross-harbour views of Sydney Opera House: at **Park Hyatt Melbourne**, GM/RVP Robert Dawson, ask for a view over St Patrick's Cathedral – the hotel's golden Labrador ambassador, available for walkies, has just published the third volume of 'his' gorgeous book, *The Tales of Mr Walker* – a hotel dog with a nose for adventure, benefitting Guide Dogs Victoria • At **Park Hyatt Shanghai**, GM Mark Lyons, soar to the 87th floor lobby in a mere 54 seconds, and be greeted not only by Xie Aige's charming white life-size sculpture, the leaning Mr Please (not to be confused with Mr Goodnight, the ceiling-hung master-switch cords by all bedsides in Shanghai's **The Middle House**). Park Hyatt Shanghai's interiors are Tony Chi minimalism - ultimate is the 88th floor, 190 sq. m Presidential Suite – and the 85th floor indoor pool explains the word 'zen' • If all goes to plan, Auckland will once again have a Hyatt by the end of 2019 – the 190-room **Park Hyatt Auckland**, GM Brett Sweetman, is harbour-side, near the existing Sofitel (Hyatt's Robert Dawson says such loyalty remains for the former Hyatt Auckland, up on the hill, that four of the management team are already back, pre-opening) • It sounds as if **Auckland Seaplanes** could be the answer to getting around beautiful New Zealand, say to visit **Robertson Lodges' Cape Kidnappers** and **Kauri Cliffs**, both with exquisite interiors by Virginia Fisher, the Grand Dame of the New Zealand luxury look. Jay Robertson, who heads his family's New Zealand operations, is really thrilled that Kauri Cliffs, near Kerikeri, nearly four hours' drive from Auckland, will be adding a trio of four-room self-contained villas in time for the 2019 festive season.

Kerzner has upped the scale of its ILTM Asia Pacific presence by 40% this year. In Australia, **Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley Resort** (GM James Wyndham), three hours' drive from Sydney, offers Australia's only luxury Outback experience. All 40 villas have double-sided working fires and indoor 7-metre pools, heated by solar panels on the 100 sq. m corrugated iron roofs. This is the place for biking, hiking and riding, professional star-gazing and, thanks to a partnership with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, to see how indigenous bird life is attracted (the 150-plus species include Brown Treecreepers and Dusky Woodswallows). Back home, nothing beats the resort's Gippsland Black Angus grills, perhaps with a glass of 2017 Becker Wines Syrah from the Hunter Valley • And in South Africa, **One&Only Cape Town**, GM Richard Lyon, shows the value of inland waterways – get to the city's busy convention centre in 25 minutes by water taxi. A 245 sq. m Table Mountain suite offers, as its name implies, a great view of that city icon, but all 131 rooms have private balconies • Sun International's **Table Bay at the Waterfront**, GM Joanne Selby, is the Cape Town base if you want to be part of Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, with its myriad of eating shacks, boutiques and general activities: Suite 726, with eight-seat dining, looks across the harbour to Table Bay – take a local foraging tour with the Cape's top woman chef, Jocelyn Myers Adams • Nearby, **Royal Portfolio's** two year-old **The Silo**, GM Luis Pinheiro, shows how designer Thomas Heatherwick can uniquely blend, well, 42 once-working grain silos into a 28-room hotel integral with MOCAA, Museum of Contemporary African Art, showcase for the personal collection of Puma founder Jochem Zeitz • Zeitz is now director luxury for Kering. Unlike its 'big business brother' LVMH, Kering has not yet directly entered the hotel sector, but it is making waves, literally, in the cruise industry. Maryvonne Pinault, stepmother of current Kering CEO François-Henri Pinault, was on a **Ponant** cruise and she liked it so much that the Pinault family's Groupe Artemis bought the company. Ponant is the hidden-secret of the luxury cruise sector, all-inclusive, underwater lounges: its market is 40% US (boosted by brand chairman Americas Edie Rodriguez, who previously took Crystal right up there) – the rest of the market is pretty much divided equally between Australia and France. Among future highlights, Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart, with six musicians, will entertain on a Le Champlain cruise, Montreal to Boston, October 19-27, 2020 • Australia-based Steve Odell, **NCL's** high profile SVP, MD Asia Pacific, sadly had to bow out of ILTM Asia Pacific at the last moment. One of his brands, **Regent Seven Seas**, is upping the luxury stakes the whole time: WiFi is now mostly satisfactory, and ship-wide, and free laundry for gold-status loyal members is a big incentive.

Hong Kong Island has had two additions in the last 15 months, first **The Murray, a Niccolo Hotel** and now, last month, China Resources' 129-room **The St Regis, Hong Kong**, in Wan Chai - GM Derek Flint, designer André Fu, 250 sq. m presidential suite. At The Murray, Portuguese-Brit Adriano Vences succeeds the quintessential English gentleman Duncan Palmer as MD – the Palmers relocate home. Also Island-side, **The Conrad Hong Kong**, GM Thomas Hoeborn, is one of the four properties directly above Pacific Place mall (in all, go for harbour views, across to Kowloon): The Conrad's 59th floor club lounge is a world-beater, with two mirror-image areas, both with proper kitchens where guests can heat exactly-timed breakfast croissants, heatproof gloves included. Another of the Pacific Place quartet, **The Upper House**, continues to reign supreme, and not only because of champion social-networking GM Marcel Thoma and the who's who at the 49th floor Café Gray. This is the avocado-hued 117-room 'theatre' that catapulted André Fu to world fame (apparently, he's redoing the 200 sq. m Presidential Suite, which comes with a loaned Lexus. Yet another of the Pacific Place places, **Island Shangri-La** – your home if you want the island's highest club lounge views, from the 56th floor Horizon Club – now has Ulf Bremer as GM • Across on the mainland, **Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong**, GM Pierre Perusset, claims the overall pinnacle club lounge – his is on the 116th floor and open 24/7. With its 312 rooms on floors 102-118 of the 480-metre tall ICC Tower, unless you have the dual good luck of 100% eyesight and meteorological clarity, you might not even see what's going on down at ground level. The premium Ritz-Carlton Suite is 400 sq. m. **The Langham Hong Kong**, MD Shaun Campbell, is a really handy business base, and T'ang Court has two Michelin stars (also, Bostonian Seafood & Grill introduces a Sunday seafood and bubbly brunch that allows you to drink Perrier-Jouët for up to four hours). There's gourmet cuisine, too, across Salisbury Road at **InterContinental Hong Kong**, GM Claus Pedersen – two stars for jewel-box-like Yan To Heen and one each for Alain Ducasse's Rech seafood. Expect imminent announcement on who will design the 514-room hotel, which, after closing sometime early 2020, re-opens as The Regent, Hong Kong. Any guesses?

Right, fellow ILTMite, see you tomorrow, and, meanwhile, **remember the hashtags:** #ILTMAsiaPacific #momentsthatmatter #runwalkbreatherelax #businessinharmony #iltmevents. **And follow the portfolio:** Facebook: @iltmevents Instagram: @iltm_events LinkedIn: International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) Twitter: @iltm_events

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