

# Gostelow Report Live

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SPECIAL REPORT

Singapore, May 29, 2019

Notice some smiling unusually broadly this morning? Those are the 35 ultra-fit who went on the ILTM morning run, kicking off – well, perhaps starting off – at 6.45 a.m. ILTM's latest research, released yesterday, identifies three consumer archetypes driving the future of wellness tourism in Asia, namely affluent new-agers, Chinese millennial millionaires and female travellers. The ILTM-commissioned research was done by **CatchOn**, the company led by Forum speaker Cathy Feliciano-Chon. As she said, the overall market for wellness tourism will essentially double from 2017 to 2022, and already there are 20%-plus annual gains in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The Mekong Delta holds general fascination – explore from the river, say with **Aqua Expeditions** (CEO Francesco Galli Zugar actually has floating hotels rather than standard ships, and he offers both Mekong and Amazon itineraries) • Forum speaker Bill Bensley is giving his name to the first-ever Bensley Collection tour, 14 days starting from February 16th, 2020: the tour, organised by **Remote Lands' American** polymath, Catherine Heald, starts at **Rosewood Luang Prabang**, takes in various Shinta Mani resorts, including **Shinta Mani Angkor**, GM Kenan Mumin - fortunately 15 minutes' tuk-tuk ride from the main temple as you really would not want to stay any closer - and finishes at **Danang's InterContinental Peninsula Resort**.

Chloé Reuter, of **The Luxury Conversation** and Reuter Communications, shared details on Monday on future health and wellness travel – note the rise of women travellers, she stressed. Elsewhere we learned of rising acceptance for LGBTQ+ in Asia, which creates potential for brands to capture this high-spending segment (these are travellers who love adventure) • This August, **Singita Volcanoes National Park**, GMs Brad and Kate Murray, opens in Rwanda: within a few minutes' walk of each other, its two buildings are nine bedroom Kwitonda Lodge and total-sale four-room Kataza House (this is 2.5 hours' drive from Kigali, or helicopter). **Rwanda Development Board** is boosted by growing interest in the destination, for leisure and for the MICE sector – talk here at ILTM Asia Pacific to Denis Dernault, complex GM of **Kigali Convention Centre and Radisson Blu**, all Government-owned (the 291 room hotel includes a 700 sq. m Royal Suite, two bedrooms, a high-tech office, an art lounge with latest-general home cinema and game centre, a full kitchen and private panoramic fitness, with jacuzzi) • For those attracted by Africa think also of **Africa Journeys Ltd**, and, for private jets, **Akagera Aviation**, plus **Thousand Hills Africa Uber Luxe Safaris** • **Fairmont The Norfolk, Nairobi**, GM Alex Hauser, launched a new era for Kenya luxury when it opened in 1904, and today the 165-room hotel is a base for local business as well as starting point for some of Kingdom's other Kenya properties, the **Mara Safari Club** and **Mount Kenya Safari Club** • **Botswana Tourism Organisation** has plenty to share with Okavango Delta openings (Singita) and refurbishments (Belmond), and if you can't fly direct to Maun there is reliable lodging in Gaborone (Minor's Avani, Hilton) • **Hilton** celebrates its centenary this very Friday, May 31st - how many realise that if Conrad Hilton hadn't lost all his widowed mother's savings by investing in a bank, which failed, he would never have bought his first hotel? Hilton's CEO Chris Nassetta and area Presidents, including Asia Pacific's Alan Watts, are covering the television channels, and owners and other stakeholders are being fêted in appreciative glory. Asia Pacific celebrations, next week, are being held at **Conrad Tokyo**, GM Neil McInnes: this is a very clever hotel that is well-sited for public transport and is invariably busy with Japanese, who think that the 'karma' of the 290-room hotel is spot-on (designers are Takenaka Corporation). Look down at legendary Hama-Rikyu Gardens from the 37th floor club lounge, but for real style head for the 230 sq m Royal Suite, so 'exactly Japanese' that even the most sceptical connoisseur could not improve on its 'authenticity' • Japan now has its own area within ILTM Asia Pacific, as one of the fastest growing G7 economies, and to show what a leader it is, Osaka hosts the 2019 G20 summit, June 28-29 (other dates to avoid when thinking about a trip to this unique country, or at least its capital, Tokyo, are around October 22, the enthronement of the new Emperor, which will see over 180 invited nations all taking at least five rooms in the city's luxury hotels; you might also want to avoid both the semi-finals of the Rugby World Cup, October 26-27, and definitely the final in Yokohama, on November 2nd) • **Shangri-La Tokyo** is also well located, for Tokyo station and business as well as the Imperial Palace and its Gardens (so great for cycling, and become a local by pedalling on the pavements – sorry, sidewalk if you are American). Hotel GM Marcus Bauder has a Japanese wife, so this 200-room hotel, which displays over 2,000 original artworks, 'understands' its local customers • **AMAN Tokyo**, GM Miss Tomoko Yagi, showed from its 2014 opening that this is a brand that can switch from resorts to city-centre retreats. Here, soar in Aman's first-ever elevators to the 33rd floor lobby, a 78-metre long 'balloon', its walls a wood encyclopaedia, castor aralia, chestnut, ash, camphor, cypress, pine, its 30-metre ceiling, washi paper. Yes, more zen, with amazing views, from the 84 bedrooms (try the 157 sq m Aman Suite) and the 33rd floor pool – watch the sun set, as you do 30-metre laps • Balance city life with a train trip to Shima-shi – Tokyo to Osaka via shinkansen, then on to Kashikojima, 15 minutes from Amanemu (peace+joy): this is a 24-room sense of tranquillity, outdoor onsens, long Ise Shima park walks, boating in Ago Bay. Aman's third Japan option, **AMAN Kyoto**, one of Kerry Hill's last designs, opens this November (24 rooms, two villas, GM Akira Shiota).

**Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi**, 30 minutes by boat from Male airport, opens 1st July: three islands have been joined to produce a sensational resort with a cave-walkway wine cellar, one restaurant on a bamboo walkway four metres above ground, another run by tattooed Aussie Dave Pynt, star of Singapore's Burnt Ends. All 121 villas, minimum 86 sq metres with 149 sq m outdoor space, have private pools (the smallest is 40 sq m): premium is #121, a private island with a pair of can-be-connected villas, to give five bedrooms, a mere \$45,000 a night. Way back in January 2019 GM Etienne Dalancon had a confirmed festive season reservation, two rooms, 12 nights, £70,000 • Maldives' **Velaa Private Island** evolved because its Czech owner liked vacationing on what was then his own retreat: he expanded the 20-hectare site to have 47 villas (the four-bedroom Romantic Villa is only accessible by boat). The resort, run by his brother Michal Smejč, is a collage of his own interests. Sports include covered squash and tennis, climbing walls and Zapata jetcaps, plus Troon golf. A 4-floor connoisseur tower, rising above the undergrowth, includes a suitably-stocked wine room, and a teppanyaki restaurant – year-round, Velaa gets 60% repeats, average stay five nights • **Four Seasons Hotel Seoul**, GM Alejandro Bernabe, has an anonymous-door speakeasy, Charles H, for renowned cocktail writer Charles H. Baker, 1895-1987: eateertainment also includes two stunning André Fu restaurants, Kioku Japanese and Yu Yuan Chinese, plus Boccalino Italian and a 200-seat Market Kitchen – 95% of customers in a 317-room hotel that offers 750 dining seats are locals. Retreat to the calm of the two-bedroom Presidential Suite, with Lasvit chandeliers, or to the 28th floor club lounge: try the golf simulator, or nail bar, or take selfies at Dane Nicolai Bergmann's floral art boutique • Seoul's openings include Hyundai's forthcoming 241-room **Andaz Gangnam**, Seoul, GM Juan Jose Mercadante Castro • For inbound support, talk to Chris Kim, GM Asia-Middle East of Chunchoo Kim-owned **Kim's Travel DMC** – last month they handled a Hong Kong Prudential incentive for 1,800 • But so many in Asia seem to understand customer service, regardless of numbers involved (notice how hosting hotels here send buyers off in the morning with grab'n'go fruits and snacks, at no charge?).

The Bangkok-based Pacific Asia Travel Association PATA's Annual Tourism Monitor 2019 show almost 700 million international visitor arrivals in 2018, an increase of 7.7% over 2017. At its annual conference this month, PATA stressed that global growth and economic supremacy is moving back to Asia, where it was before the 1800s industrial revolution • **InterContinental Phuket Resort**, GM Bjorn Courage, on Kamala

Beach, often called Millionaires' Mile, opens this November, design P49, 221 rooms and a 360 sq m, three-room InterContinental Pool Villa – high points include two km of sand, and the adjacent nature reserve • **InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa**, area GM [Andrew Davidson](#), is on the Coral Coast of Viti Levu Island. Its 640-hectare space includes an 18-hole Vijay Singh golf course, managed by IMG – there are ocean views from all but two holes, and, taxingly, seven holes play down to, and along, the water's edge. Favourites of the 216 rooms are hilltop villas, with pools • The 29-room **Vomo Island Resort** has a new GM, [Justin King](#), who has relocated from Tasmania's treasure, Saffire Freycinet. Vomo's 91 hectares include a nine-hole golf course. The 116 sq m, two-room Royal Deluxe Villa is right ocean-side • Tahiti's private island treasure, named for former owner Marlon Brando, is **The Brando**, GM [Silvio Bion](#), culinary consultant [Guy Martin](#) from Paris' famous Le Grand Véfour: best of the 47 villas, all with plunge pools, is the 200 sq m, three-bedroom Villa 113 at the end of Mermaid Bay (only access to the island is from Tahiti, 20 minutes via the resort's own planes, Air Tetiaroa Twin Otter or Norman 2. The Brando, by the way, really stresses sustainability with its seawater air conditioning SWAC system, which draws on an inexhaustible supply of completely renewable clean energy to have zero impact on the environment.

**St Regis Macau, Cotai Central**, MD [Janet McNab](#), is part of the massive Sands Cotai empire: smallest room at the 400-key hotel is 53 sq m, and the Presidential Suite is 477 sq m. Signature restaurants include Dynasty 8, where private dining rooms are themed for the eight dynasties, Qin, Han, Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing • At **St Regis Shanghai Jingan**, GM [Javier Albar](#), there's Cantonese at Yan Ting, and Japanese at Seki-tei: the 480-key hotel's Metropolitan Suite has two bedrooms • [Willi Martin](#), area GM, **Grand Hyatt Singapore**, has nurtured one of the luxury hotel world's all-time culinary successes: the 1998-vintage Mezza9 was among the first multi-kitchen interactive restaurants, and it's still an all-time favourite with locals and regular visitors. Sibling **Andaz Singapore**, GM [Olivier Lenoir](#), shows contemporary style – the 340-room hotel is another [André Fu](#), and staff wear commercial fashion by Singapore's In Good Style • What other news from Singapore? Under GM [Christian Westbeld](#), **Raffles**, which dates back to 1887, awakens from its current renovation in August (designer [Alexandra Champalimaud](#): restaurants will include [Anne-Sophie Pic](#)'s La Dame de Pic (as at Lausanne's Beau-Rivage Palace), a Bar & Billiard Room Mediterranean-themed BBR by [Alain Ducasse](#), and yi by Jereme Leung – plus a Butcher's Block steakhouse and the 1892-vintage Tiffin Room • Alain Ducasse's largest outpost-restaurant is the 400-seater miX by Alain Ducasse atop the opulent 390-key **Emerald Palace Kempinski Dubai**, MD [Margaret Paul](#) – this is an ideal place for families, peace and quiet away from the Emirate's frenetic buzz, and for lovers of opulent gold leaf • Elsewhere in Dubai, to see hints of Ancient Egypt, including massive columns in the lobby and poolside, head for the pyramid-shaped **Raffles Dubai**, GM [Ayman Gharib](#) (the 248-room hotel is owned by a local Egyptologist, who fortunately also put up the adjacent Wafi Mall, and the 19 retail tenants, who include Burberry and Chanel, will deliver to your room – best lodging, by the way, are the two 650 sq m Royal Suites) • **Atlantis Palm Jumeirah, Dubai**, GM [Tim Kelly](#), has several sensational suites, including a pair of two-floorers where the lower floor looks out under water, with massive fish swimming by: as an alternative, the 924 sq m Bridge Suite literally bridges the two towers of the massive hotel – you have a private elevator, three fully-ensuite bedrooms and dining for 16 • **Bulgari Resort and Residences Dubai**, GM [Pep Lozano](#), is where top emiratis retreat for weekends, preferably in one of the 13 beach-facing private villas. Another draw at the hotel, which also has 101 rooms in the main block, is its proximity to the Yacht Club and Marina.

In Singapore, location is vital. For traditional shop-houses and the downtown central business district, **InterContinental Singapore**, GM [Mark Winterton](#), offers a spacious colonial-style main lobby – make sure your room has access to the second floor club • At **Four Seasons Hotel Singapore**, GM [Peter Draminsky](#), some would say best rooms are any -07 or -08 as they are angled at the apex of the S-shaped building, part of the mighty portfolio of Singapore's BS Ong: this 254-room hotel is ideal for uptown shopping – you simply walk through an internal shopping arcade, with Ong-family boutiques either side, to emerge through the Ong-owned **Hilton Singapore**, in Orchard Road • **St Regis Singapore**, only five minutes' north, belongs to another Singapore leader, [Kwek Leng Beng](#). Stay at this 173-room hotel, GM [Xavi Gonzalez](#), for butler service, Riedel glassware and great art – the 300 sq m Presidential Suite has an original Chagall, and a 20th floor balcony with hanging day-bed • Biggest art collection in town, however, is at the 608-room **Ritz-Carlton Millenia**, car-loving GM [Peter Mainguy](#) – there are two lifesize leaning 'men', by Zhu Wei, outside the main door and, within the 4,200 pieces are by such names as Chihuly, Hockney, Stella and Warhol. To appreciate this 32-floor hotel, get any room with access to the top floor lounge • Not surprisingly many visitors to Singapore choose **Marina Bay Sands** for access to the 340-metre SkyPark supported by the three 55-floor towers beneath – what more can one say (it IS unique)? [Ian Wilson](#) runs the 2,561-room hotel, with over-97% occupancy (choose a Club room). Stay there also for retail, and over 60 restaurants, and for the sheer delight of feeling better.

See you tomorrow and, meanwhile, **remember the hashtags**: #ILTMAAsiaPacific #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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