

Business Traveller Poland

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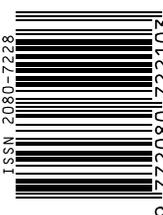
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SINGAPORE AIRLINES BUSINESS CLASS

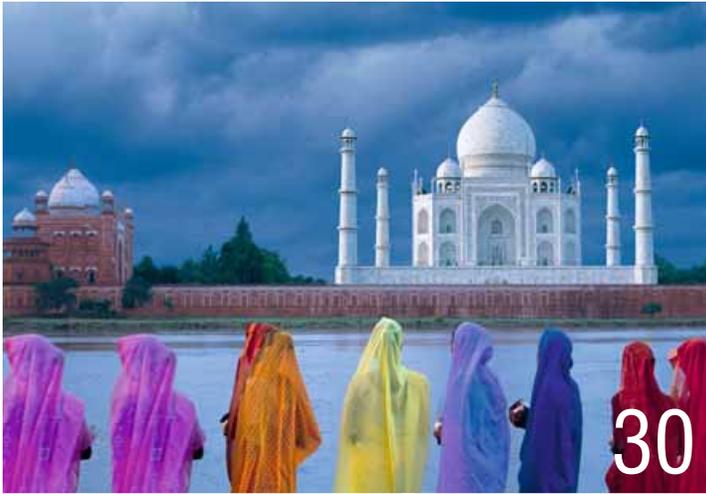
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Nasza Business Class – najbardziej obszerna w swojej kategorii, zapewnia luksus wypoczynku w czasie lotu. Wyjątkowy fotel rozkłada się w idealnie płaskie, największe podniebne łóżko, gdzie możesz swobodnie się wyciągnąć.

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We answer all your questions related to travelling

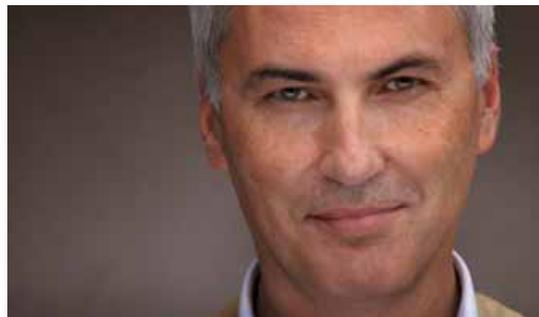


It's hard to find a country with such enormous contrasts, like India. It's a land of a wonderful and mysterious history and tradition, which everyone should visit at least once in a lifetime. India is also a place of expanding business. It's like a Bollywood film production: sparkling with colours, lavish and full of music. We invite you then to a journey through India to experience this amazing country for a short while.

This issue is full of unusual places. One of them is Bangkok, which we visit with Turkish Airlines, and where we describe one of the best local hotels. Other recommendable hotels we test in this issue are located in Warsaw, Donetsk, Vienna and Chicago. Hong Kong is one of the Asian Tigers – and it's a truly amazing place. No wonder then, that the local airport is being continuously expanded and each year it handles a bigger number of passengers. We look there to show how this complex structure functions.

We also explain what the term "fifth freedom" means, thanks to which carriers are forced to constant competition, which, in turn, is beneficial for travellers. We also advise you what you should do in order not to develop a double chin or a beer belly when you travel frequently. You will also find out that you can take care of your physical fitness even on a plane or in your hotel room, using the things you can find there.

Winter is coming, so it's high time to choose a ski resort for this season. In this issue, we suggest the French Alps. And if you prefer warm climates, we recommend Aruba with its excellent base to organize a perfect incentive trip. We also check to see what is there to do and see in four hours in Dubai. Remember about Business Traveller. Enjoy your reading.



Robert Grzybowski
Wydawca BT Poland



Read more details! Visit businessstraveller.pl

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Effie Award for LOT

LOT Polish Airlines has for the first time received the prestigious Effie award for marketing activities. The Polish carrier was awarded a bronze statuette for “Vietnam Campaign”, which promoted a new connection of LOT from Warsaw to Hanoi.

The jury comprised media experts, specialists from research institutes, as well as individuals from agencies and media houses. Effie is awarded to companies that have succeeded in the market thanks to effective



advertising campaigns. The competition was first organized in 1968 in New York by the American Marketing Association. Currently, the awards are awarded in 40 countries.

LOT Catering in the Black

The leading Polish catering provider is strengthening its position in the air and, importantly, is going through an intense expansion in the market of ground services, expanding its offer with three new brands: Vřvanta, Biscuiterie and Tomatillo. This has contributed to the best

ever financial results of the company. After three quarters of this year, LOT Catering has achieved sales of €74.78 million, while the operating profit amounted to 6.23 million (which is 212% higher compared with the first three quarters of the last year).



The Soccer Poker

With less than a year to go now until the Euro 2012 commences, the hospitality industry is preparing hard to the event. The best Polish and Ukrainian hotels have been competing to host various national teams. Meeting the requirements, which are described in every detail in the guidelines of UEFA, as well as wishes of the individual sportsmen and coaches (one of them is said to have asked for the hotel which will host his team to be as close to a good golf course as possible), isn't easy. It's, therefore, a double success, if a hotel is able to satisfy all those needs. Most teams chose to stay in Polish hotels (Germany, the Netherlands, England, Sweden, Spain, Italy, and most recently France) even if this means travelling to Ukraine for matches.

Since we're talking about Euro 2012. Sharp, the official partner of Euro 2012, is doing a research into the reactions of football fans. Sharp FanLabs are specially designed trucks with TV equipment and teams of specialists.

They will conduct a study into football fan reactions, trying to find out who can eat their team's shirt if it's necessary, and who is only a lukewarm fan.



Mercure Grand Warsaw with Selected the Best Hotel



Warsaw Mercure Grand has received the award „Hotel of the Year 2011” as the only Warsaw's hotel among the elite top twelve tourist facilities in Poland. This is Mercure's another award this year. Recently the hotel has also been recognized as “the Best Hotel for a businessman” and highlighted on Tripadvisor website, where it was granted the „Certificate of Excellence” 2011.

Mercure Grand Warsaw continues the best traditions of elegant and stylish hotels located in Warsaw, while offering the highest standard of service.

Among the 299 rooms, especially for businessmen and demanding guests, the hotel has prepared Privilege rooms with a higher standard and additional privileges.

The idea behind the contest for the „Hotel of the Year” is the selection and promotion of the most interesting tourist facilities. The jury selected the winners on the basis of objective criteria like the number of stars, the state of the building, the quality of service, the attractiveness of the offer, but also the opinions of the guests.

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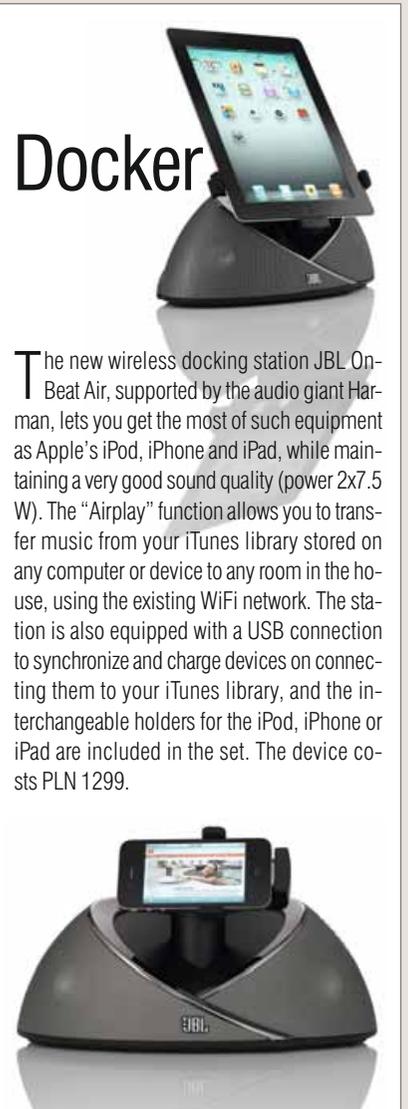


Finnair's Quality Hunters Are Coming

This is the second edition of the promotional action by the Finnish carrier and Vantaa Airport in Helsinki, which organized the recruitment of Quality Hunters – that is people assessing the quality of both companies. Like the year before, thousands of candidates, also from Poland, applied for the second edition of the action. The seven selected lucky devils will for six weeks travel on board Finnair aircraft and carefully point out the advantages and disadvantages of the company. This time the hunters were assigned to specific areas. For example, Mal-

hotra Sanjoo from Stockholm will examine the category of "Food and drink", while Asami Nagai of Tokyo – the category "Shopping". At the end of the action a detailed report will be prepared. Such actions are intended to improve the quality of services, and at the same time are an excellent form of marketing, as the actions of the Hunters are followed online by thousands of people. To encourage constructive comments, the eighth member of the group will be selected from among the participants of the online discussions by other Quality Hunters.

A COOL GADGET A COOL GADGET A COOL GADGET A COOL GADGET



Docker

The new wireless docking station JBL On-Beat Air, supported by the audio giant Harman, lets you get the most of such equipment as Apple's iPod, iPhone and iPad, while maintaining a very good sound quality (power 2x7.5 W). The "Airplay" function allows you to transfer music from your iTunes library stored on any computer or device to any room in the house, using the existing WiFi network. The station is also equipped with a USB connection to synchronize and charge devices on connecting them to your iTunes library, and the interchangeable holders for the iPod, iPhone or iPad are included in the set. The device costs PLN 1299.

New Connections by Emirates

Emirates is one of the fastest growing airlines today. One of the proofs for the fact can be the airline's new connections from Dubai. Recently it was announced that starting 2 February next year, the airline will launch flights to Dallas, and on 1 March to Seattle, where are located the he-

adquarters of many renowned companies such as Boeing or Microsoft. The two new routes will connect important transfer hubs, making it possible for US passengers to use convenient connections from the U.S.A to the Middle and Far East, as well as the Indian Peninsula and Africa. Both routes will be operated by Boeing 777 aircraft, which offers the highest standards of travel including luxurious first class compartments (so called Private Suites) and the business class seats which recline into a fully flat bed.

This year, Emirates launched connections to Basra, Geneva, Copenhagen, Johannesburg and St. Petersburg. On 13 November, the airline launches flights to Baghdad, and in January and February 2012 new connections to Buenos Aires, as well as to Zambia and Zimbabwe.



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A Sleeping Box

Nothing is impossible. Young Russian architects from ArchGroup studio have invented and built a mini-hotel room, which can stand almost anywhere. The Sleepbox – could turn out to be a good solution at airports, train stations and even in large



ARCH GROUP

office buildings. The box is two metres long, slightly over two metres high and four metres wide. It has quite a comfortable bunk bed and something which resembles hotel room furniture, as well as a reading lamp. The windows have blinds, so there's no danger of gazes of hundreds of passers-by. The luxury versions, will be equipped with a TV and the necessary sockets to connect your laptop. The manufacturer also offers a version for three people, and even a model equipped with a heating system, which may supposedly stand outdoors.

The first sleep boxes were installed in Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow, and the airport in Dubai is reported to have ordered almost a hundred such rooms, so – as the designers of the box claim – the interest is growing. The best proof may be the fact that next year Moscow will receive a new hostel which will be composed of such elements. The compact hotel room costs, in its basic version, just over €7,000 for one unit. It's delivered as separate elements to be assembled. The Russians claim that the investment pays off just after 9 months of operation.



The skies of northern Europe have recently seen a new airline, although wearing quite a well-known livery. This is because Flybe Nordic has just started its operation.

The carrier was created following the dissolution of Finncom airline, which operated in the area, and the present company is a joint venture of Flybe and Finnair.

(Flybe owns 60 per cent stake in the new airline). The new air carrier has taken over all the routes of now defunct Finncom, adding some new ones, so they now have a total of 24 routes, which means 416 weekly flights between airports in Finland, Sweden and the Baltic States. The schedule also includes a connection with the Polish, Lech Walesa Airport in Gdansk.

Finnair is a giant airline, which needs no introduction. Flybe is, in turn, the largest regional low fares airline, which has dominated the British market – it presently flies to 65 airports in Europe and annually carries almost 7 million passengers. Flybe plans to invest over €23 million in Flybe Nordic.

Mike Rutter, Managing Director Flybe Europe told us that the near future, when another wave of crisis is expected to hit airlines, will be a time when air carriers will have to consolidate to survive. "We are well aware of the

Nordic Flybe Takes off



dangers, but we can't just sit and wait wondering how the situation is going to develop. The best way of defence is attack, so you need to work on new, effective solutions," says Rutter.

Is Gdańsk the only Polish city taken into consideration by the new carrier, or are you thinking about some other ones? "That's just

the beginning of our journey," Rutter claims. "Much depends on how successful the new route will be. If the flights to Gdansk will prove profitable, we will definitely think of some other Polish destinations."

Flybe Nordic will operate their routes with ATR 72, ATR 42 and Embraer 170 aircraft.

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The New Year's Eve in Zakopane

If you wish to spend your Christmas away from home, there's only one ideal place to do so – Zakopane. Those who at least once stayed in Zakopane for their Christmas-New Year stay, will admit that it's nothing but the truth. Unforgettable experience and a truly festive atmosphere are guaranteed there.

There's no other place in Poland which would provide you with such a beautiful scenery and special atmosphere to spend this unique time of the year. You will never forget the snow-covered mountains, highlanders in the sleigh, vibrant Krupówki street decorated with wonderful illuminations, and starry sky, which is nowhere as beautiful and as close as here. Somewhere behind those images lies something that really creates the spirit of Christmas in Zakopane. These are traditions of Podhale, the unique cuisine, and a truly festive atmosphere.

It's worth coming to Zakopane and discover this holiday once again: go to the Midnight Mass with the highlander, listen to carols, or take part in a sleigh ride which ends with a bonfire. You will feel here the real atmosphere of Christmas.

It's also worth to try various Christmas delicacies. The chefs from the renowned Litwor and Czarny Potok hotels,

are preparing for this occasion a special menu, where traditional and refined cuisine harmoniously complement each other. The hotels belonging to Trip Group have prepared for the occasion special packages that combine Christmas and New Year's stays.

For those who can't go to Zakopane, Trip Group has prepared a special offer at Ossa hotel – just 60 km from Warsaw. The interiors of the hotel will be warmly decorated and the chef has already come up with ideas for a varied Christmas menu. In this respect, Ossa is unique, using the wealth of Masovia cuisine, thanks to many years of experience of the hotel's cooks and confectioners, who willingly draw on the highlander tradition.

It will certainly be possible to transplant some aspects of the unique climate of Zakopane to Christmas celebrations in Ossa. However, on New Year's Eve the place will be dominated by a completely different mood: the guests of the hotel will enter the New Year with Latin dances.

"The New Year's Eve with Hot Rhythms" at Ossa, is a reminiscence of hot summer in the middle of winter.

The hot samba will also, naturally, dominate in the hotel's kitchen. Ossa's culinary offer for the New Year's Eve and the New Year's Day is a real treat for gourmets.



Also, the promoters of the club for the youngest, called "Ossa kids" are waiting impatiently for a meeting with their young friends. As usually, they have prepared a lot of attractions for the little hotel guests. Nobody is going to be bored on New Year's Eve.

Meanwhile, for the whole new year the chefs of Trip Group have prepared a special surprise for the clients and friends of the Group – you will soon find it in your mailboxes.

Airbus with Rolls-Royce



The competition between the two largest manufacturers of civilian aircraft is becoming more and more exciting. Airbus has just shown the new Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engine, which has been installed in a testing unit of the A380. It's just the beginning of a series of long tests, because ultimately this engine will be mounted on Airbus A350 family, which is still under construction. The aircraft and the engines will probably be an icon of flying which is both economical and comfortable. Unless Boeing invents something better.

Best Western Attacks

The largest hotel chain in the world is taking more and more bold steps on the Polish market. In October, the chain officially launched three hotels in our country. In the capital's district of Mokotów, Best Western together with PUHIT Capital Group opened Best Western Hotel Portos, which is the second hotel of this brand in Warsaw after BW Felix. The renovation and adaptation works cost almost PLN 15 million. There are 225 modern single and double rooms, equipped with broadband Internet and 32-inch LCD screens.

The same company joined Best Western with its Monopol hotel in Cracow, which now is called Best Western Cracow Old Town. It's located in the immediate vicinity of Cracow's old town and is the first 3-star hotel in the area. The hotel is situated in a historic setting, has 54 standard rooms, 19 Lux rooms, and 18 Superior Pre-



mium rooms, which feature avant-garde decor and remarkable lighting.

That's not the end, because BW brand also debuted in Gorzów Wielkopolski - where, in turn, they have renovated the former 3-star Fado hotel. Best Western Gorzów Wielkopolski offers 32 rooms, including 23 single ones, six double rooms and three spacious suites.

Is It Harder to Do Business in Poland?

That's the conclusion that can be drawn basing on the results of an annual survey conducted by the World Bank. In the report entitled "Doing Business 2012", in terms of friendliness of the regulatory environment for business, Poland dropped by 3 positions to the 62nd place.

The leaders haven't changed – the top places are again occupied by Singapore, Hong Kong, New Zealand, USA and Denmark. In the overall ranking Poland is behind such countries as Latvia (21), Macedonia (22), Estonia (24), Lithuania (27), Slovenia (37), Kazakhstan (47), Slovakia (48), Hungary (51), Montenegro (56) and Bulgaria (59).

Our country has been relatively well evaluated in terms of getting credits (8th place), protecting investors, international trade (46), and getting electricity (64)

We got a much worse assessment for resolving insolvency (87), registering property (89th), starting a business (126th), paying taxes (128th). The worst situation is with getting construction permits (160th place – 164th place a year ago), where there are as many as 30 procedures required and the time to obtain them is on average 301 days.

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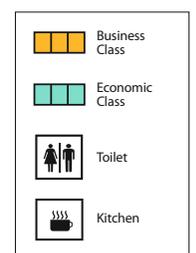
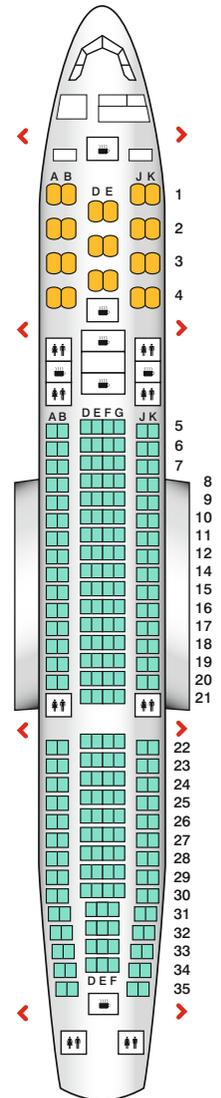
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LOT POLISH AIRLINES



Airbus A330-300



ON BOARD: WARSAW – ISTANBUL- BANGKOK

Turkish Airlines

Airbus A321/A330-300 Business Class

INFO The Turkish air carrier flies from Warsaw to Istanbul every day (on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, with flight TK1766 at 1.20 pm, while on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 1.10 pm with flight TK7841). The journey takes just over two hours.

CHECK-IN I arrived at Okęcie a few minutes past noon, because I had managed to check online for the flight the day before. Also I had no luggage to check as I only travelled with my hand luggage, however I turned up at the check-in with my business class reservation to receive an invitation to the Business lounge.

BOARDING I decided to make for Balada lounge, where I drank strong coffee. During the check-in procedure I took the fast track for business passengers and a few minutes later I boarded the A321. Our take off was delayed by about 15 minutes, but the pilots were able to compensate for it in the air, owing to the wonderful weather. I was sitting in an aisle seat, in the fourth row of business class seats, arranged in 2+2 configuration. Once we reached the cruising altitude, the friendly

staff quickly began the service. For the beginning we were served a glass of champagne, juice or water. We were also given warm towels and several minutes later the meal was served. As a main dish I ordered rigatoni pasta. I also couldn't help myself to try a pretty good, Turkish wine called Angora. The journey passed very quickly and pleasantly.

THE TRANSFER You can reach Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok from Istanbul by flight TK064 on board Airbus A330, at 7.45 pm or by TK068 on board Airbus A340, at 11.45 pm. I chose the first option. Having a boarding pass in my hand and a bit of free time, I was able to use the business lounge located at the airport in Istanbul.

THE LOUNGE The business lounge, which is available for passengers of upper cabin classes flying with Turkish Airlines, the holders of Elite status in their Miles & Smiles loyalty programme, as well as the owners of the gold card of Star Alliance, was opened in late July this year, following an extensive renovation. The innovation and attention to de-

tail can be seen there at every step. I was really impressed with this place – I've seen this type of airport lounges a lot, but in my opinion, that one is presently the best in the world.

The lounge occupies the area of 3,000 sq m and is located in the international departures zone. Throughout the day, it can handle up to two thousand guests. They will find there tasteful furnishing, comfortable armchairs and sofas, relaxation rooms, showers, fine cuisine with a number of snacks (fabulously delicious olives, peppers and tomatoes), hot dishes (soups, skewers, grilled dishes), sweets and beverages. There is also a large selection of spirits, and among them more and more appreciated local white and red wines, such as Sarafina or the aforementioned Angora.

There is also a childcare room, a billiards room, a library with books and daily newspapers in several languages. The business centre features several 27-inch iMac Pro computers by Apple. If you have your own computer, you can browse the Internet, using the free Wi-Fi.

You spend there several hours, resting or working. Just remember to go there at least 45 minutes prior to the departure time, because reaching the gates takes about 15 minutes, and the Turkish air carrier is very punctual.

BOARDING Keeping the above in mind, I turned up at the gate several minutes prior to boarding. It turned out, however, that I could have come later, because being a business class passenger I was guaranteed the “fast track” boarding. Thanks to this, without too much hassle, only after showing my boarding pass and passport, I went through the boarding bridge on board the Airbus A330-300 – an aircraft, which is perfectly adapted to long journeys.

THE SEAT Turkish Airlines has undergone an extraordinary transformation over the past few years. Doomed by many to go bankrupt, the Turkish air carrier managed somehow to recover, invested big money in modern aircraft, and is now one of the leading players in Europe. Recently, the airline has also installed new seats on long-haul routes, both in economy and business class.

I took seat 3A in the business class cabin. The cabin features 28 modern seats configured 2+2+2, with four pairs of seats in the middle row and five pairs on each side.

The seat is almost 56 wide and it provides exceptional flexibility and convenience for the traveller, especially because the seat pitch reaches almost 193 centimetres, so there’s really plenty of space. What’s more, the seat reclines fully into a flat bed, which is 188 centimetres long.

If you decide to lie down, your weight doesn’t shift to your feet, as it is the case with many other airlines, which gives you a real chance to relax. The seat is controlled in a simple, intuitive way, and you can also enable a gentle relaxing massage. The

seat has a few amenities, a comfortable footrest, storage compartments for small items, and an individual reading light. Of course, each business passenger also receives an elegant travel kit. The seat also features a socket to power your laptop or other electronic devices. The personal screen, which is retracted from the central console, provides free access to the entertainment system and the folding table allows you to enjoy your meal in comfort.

THE FLIGHT We were greeted with champagne Gosset Brut Grande Reserve. Following the take-off, when the “fasten your seatbelts” lights went out, three flight attendants and the chef, which served exclusively the 28 Business Class passengers, began serving the meal. For starters we were served fabulous, Turkish meze, i.e. small aromatic appetizers, which tasted great. The menu also featured shrimp salad, stuffed eggplant, or smoked fish pate. For the main course we were offered lamb chops with red peppers, grilled fillet of sea bream, or ravioli with mushrooms. This, of course, followed by cakes, ice cream, and beverages.

The dishes were served straight from the cart onto the plates by the chef wearing a distinctive cooking cap. The passenger feels there like in a good restaurant.

The wine list included over a dozen of various types of wine. Among them white Chablis Premier Cru Les Beuroys 2007, pink Rose Sevilen 2009, and selected by me for the meal, red Chateau Lamothe Pontac Medoc 2009.



The on-board entertainment system is a real hit, as well. The screen is very intuitive and it also displays messages about the flight, as well as the view from the camera mounted on the chassis of the aircraft. Turkish Airlines are working now on implementing the Internet access to their on board entertainment system.

I could choose from hundreds of films, television programmes, music videos, CDs and games. If you don’t feel like working, you are guaranteed that the entertainment system won’t leave you bored. Interestingly, the on-board magazine called SkyLife can be downloaded directly to your iPad.

ARRIVAL The plane arrived in Bangkok 8.5 hours after the take-off. Despite a slight delay in Istanbul, we reached Bangkok 10 minutes before the scheduled time. It’s worth disembarking quickly and going straight to passport control, as there may be quite long queues and the waiting time may exceed half an hour.

VERDICT It’s an excellent and quick connection operated by a modern machine, and with a very good service. The connection via Istanbul has considerably cut down the time of travel.

CONTACT turkishairlines.com

Jakub Olgiewicz





HOTEL: BANGKOK
Banyan Tree

WHAT'S IT LIKE? Banyan Tree Hotels&Resorts is a flourishing hotel chain, paying lots of attention to the quality of its buildings. And there are 26 of them already; Besides, the company also manages about a hundred Spa salons scattered all over the Asian continent. The Bangkok hotel, opened in 2002, was the fourth one in the group's portfolio. And it's impossible to overlook. The characteristic skyscraper, which looks like a majestic triumphal arch, is a luxurious hotel with 61 rooms, providing its guests with comfort and good taste. It's definitely worth paying a visit.

WHERE IS IT? The hotel occupies one of the central places of the business district in this Thai metropolis, so it's visible from a distance. Nearby, there are also numerous embassies. Nearby, there is Lumpini park and a railway station. The taxi ride to South Saton Road, where Banyan Tree hotel is located, should not take more than 50 minutes, although sometimes you do get stuck in the traffic. Naturally, motorized hotel guests have access to a dedicated car park.

ROOM FACILITIES The choice is quite wide, as the hotel offers 327 guestrooms of different category. What's different when

compared to other skyscraper hotels, is that the higher category rooms are located on lower floors. The room decor is mostly in wood and warm and soft materials. Thanks to huge windows, the rooms are sun-drenched, which also contributes to their unique atmosphere. If you need to catch up with your sleep after a long journey, or deal with jet lag, it's possible to completely darken the room.

The basic category are spacious Deluxe rooms (there are 141 of them), covering the space of 48 sq m each. They are located between 50th and 58th and between 33rd and 42nd floor. Such an enormous space means the guests can expect a large bedroom with a huge comfortable bed, a separate recreation section with a sofa, armchairs and a coffee table, 2 TV sets, a laptop safe, a mini bar with a fridge and special working are with a workdesk, a fax, a telephone answering machine and an internet connection. As a welcoming gift, the guests receive a fruit platter and a stick of incense. The well-designed bathroom comes with a hair-dryer and a magnifying make-up mirror.

Premier rooms are between 43 and 49 floor, and offer a magnificent views over the

city and the river. What's especially important for business travellers – and they usually choose the rooms of this category – is that Premier rooms offer free internet access – both in the room, as well as in Business Centre, as well as free local phone calls and a fax facility.

Banyan Tree Club rooms, decorated in subtle shades of grey and red are found on business-dedicated floors from 15th – 32nd. Among many special facilities, their guests may expect a private check-in service (even in the room), a free relaxation massage, a breakfast in Club Lounge and all-day-long snacks and drinks, and access to a small conference room for 8 people with a secretary service.

The hotel has also Spa Suites and a presidential suite. The hotel concierge service is very efficient, so you no longer have to think about booking your tickets or organizing a tour around the city.

BUSINESS FACILITIES It goes without saying – given the perfect location – that the hotel is a perfect spot for business meetings. That's why, there are 13 conference rooms available for hiring. The biggest one, Banyan Ballroom, on the 10th floor, can accommodate up to 400 people. The





FACTS **CONTACT** BANYAN TREE; 21/100 South Sathon Road, Sathon, Bangkok 10120, Thailand; Tel.: +66 2 679 1200; banyantree.com
PRICE Internet rates for a room with breakfast, for a three-day-long stay started at 5,400 Thai Baht (about €128)



room owes its perfect acoustics not only to the professional equipment, but also to the fact, that the room is 5-metre high. Access to natural light is another bonus. The other rooms are smaller, but provide the conference participants with even better conditions.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS Catering in the hotel really is truly special. It's enough to mention that Banyan Tree comes with eight restaurants and four bars. Vertigo – a hotel rooftop restaurant – is a spot well known not only in Bangkok, Thailand. It gets bustling with life after the sun sets, when the first guests arrive to marvel at the beautiful views from the 61st floor. In past, the place used to be a helipad, but the owners decided to transform in to a restaurant. And they were absolutely right. The decor is simple, as the city panorama is supposed to be a magnet for tourists. Funky music played inside also contributes to its avant-garde atmosphere. Vertigo serves international cuisine dishes served a la carte, but you can also order a set of four or five dishes for a sumptuous dinner prepared specially by the chef.

You'll get to taste a whole different atmosphere after entering Bai Yun restaurant on 60th floor, with equally remarkable views. The restaurant specializes in Cantonese cuisine, which earned it multiple rewards. Another reason to visit the place, is that it offers a fine selection of Chinese tea.

If you want more modern and casual atmosphere, go to Pier 59 restaurant, located across two floors. The eatery serves mainly fresh seafood. Saffron, the apple of the hotel manager's eye, is a traditional Thai restaurant. You can also grab a bite in Taihei



(Japanese for "peace") and get some sushi and sake. If it's a pizza that you crave for, go to Goodies, while Romsai restaurant serves breakfast in the morning, while in the evening you can drop by for some barbecue. You can also eat in Apsara restaurant, located on a stylish, fabulously-lit ship, moored on a river in the hotel's neighbourhood.

LEISURE FACILITIES A wonderful Spa salon is available for guests on 19th and 20th floor. And you can often hear the guests saying: "It's the best Spa I've ever been to". The selection of relaxation and therapeutic treatments performed by well-trained specialists can really make your

head spin. There are 16 modern treatment available. You can also buy special treatment packages to be realized throughout your stay. Although you should remember that early booking is absolutely necessary. Otherwise you might not manage to get the treatment, as the salon is extremely popular.

Guests can also use an outdoor hotel pool, located on 21st floor, above the noisy streets of Bangkok.

VERDICT An excellent hotel located in a Thai metropolis with a impressive rooftop restaurant and great Spa salon.

Jakub Olgiewicz



HOTEL: WARSAW

Golden Tulip Warsaw Centre

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The official opening took place several weeks ago. This is the first hotel of Golden Tulip brand in Poland. It belongs to a new group Louvre Hotels, which was founded in January this year and is already the 10th largest hotel chain in the world. The entrance to the hotel from the busy street leads to a nice interior with a reception area and a bar on the opposite side. The whole has a modern, somewhat ascetic character – dominated by stone and wood. It's a 3-star hotel, although its standard seems to be higher, because probably, next year, the hotel will try to obtain the fourth star. I bet it will get it without too much hassle.

WHERE IS IT? In Zawisza Square, which is the very centre of the Polish capital. Getting there from the Central Rail

Station takes a few minutes, while getting to Chopin International Airport, can take several minutes, provided that it's not a rush hour, when traffic jams can completely block the city. The hotel has prepared 160 underground parking spaces for its guests.

ROOM FACILITIES Golden Tulip has a total of 144 rooms. Thanks to the recent renovation each room received new tasteful furniture, and all rooms have pastel cream walls, which interact with vivid red carpets, armchair covers and striped curtains.

I stayed in a room situated on the highest, 7th floor. The corridor features a closet with an extra pillow, a sewing kit and a flat safe. There is a mini-bar (it's closed and contains 7 items: 2 kinds of beer, water and soft drinks), the price is flat – PLN 45 – and it's credited to your account, when you ask for a key at the reception. The room also has coffee and tea making facilities, and two bottles of still water which are offered free of charge. The remote controller for the air conditioner is on the wall, while on the other side of the door there's something, which is a rare sight in three-star hotels – a trouser press.

The large, comfortable bed occupies the central position in the room. Opposite, there's a large desk top with a mirror and a flat screen TV (it's a special hotel version which features an alarm clock). There are power points in the wall to connect your laptop or other devices, as well as phone and Internet plug points. There's also free access to WiFi across

the whole building and you can obtain the password during the check-in procedure at the reception.

The windows are large, well-sound-proofed so the sounds of the city centre simply don't reach your ears. Interestingly, the windows can be opened – such solutions in air-conditioned hotel are an exception today. Since there are a lot of tall buildings around in quite close proximity, thick curtains are truly beneficial to effectively isolate the room. There's also a round table and two comfortable chairs facing the window.

BUSINESS FACILITIES Golden Tulip has eight conference rooms, fully equipped and able to accommodate up to 550 people. The largest conference room is 232 sq m and is formed of two separate rooms Tulip 1 and Tulip 2. The advantage of each of the rooms is the daylight access.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS Branche Restaurant, located on the ground floor and decorated in an original way, serves breakfast from 6.30 am. In the afternoon and evening you can eat there, a la carte – I can definitely recommend the Polish herring as an appetizer, the boletus cream, as well as grilled beef tenderloin steak with goat cheese, stuffed peppers and potato pie. The Lobby Bar & Lounge offers a continental breakfast and in the evening a wide choice of drinks. –It's an ideal place for a less formal meeting.

LEISURE FACILITIES The guests to the hotel can visit the sauna and a renovated fitness room. All the facilities are accessed with the guests' magnetic cards.

VERDICT Excellent location in the heart of the capital, good food – the hotel will host foreign journalists during Euro 2012 championship. You don't need a better recommendation.

Wojciech Chelchowski



CONTACT Golden Tulip Warsaw Centre; Towarowa 2, 00-811 Warszawa; Tel.: 22 5827500; goldentulipwarsawcentre.com

PRICE The Internet rate for a stay at the end of October was PLN 200.

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HOTEL: VIENNA

Radisson Palais Blu

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The building, where this 5-star hotel is situated, comes from 1872, and was originally built as two separate palaces. Indeed, even now, it still is a sort of a palace. On crossing the doorway with large, bulky door, we enter the world of a 5-star luxury, straight from the era of Emperor Franz Joseph. Heavy curtains, large windows, ornate ceilings, stylish furniture, monumental mirrors, upholstered walls—all of these make a distinctly aristocratic impression on every guest. It's not surprising, however, because Radisson Blu Palais fits perfectly into the atmosphere of Viennese and Austrian nostalgia for the old, good times.

WHERE IS IT? In the very heart of Vienna, at Parkring. The hotel is located near the Stadtpark, the city park, featuring a monument of Johann Strauss. Nearby, some other famous places like the Opera or the Cathedral of St. Stephen. What's more, the hotel is also located close to shopping centre and only 20 minutes by taxi from Schwechat airport.

ROOM FACILITIES The hotel features 247 stylish rooms. Their décor is dominated by warm colours – some with cream, red, and dark green palette, and others with shades of brown. The rooms feature solid wooden furniture, and the chairs are bent in a way which is typical of the 19th century. The rooms are air-conditioned, have heated floors in bathrooms, safe, satellite TV, free mini bar, a telephone with voice mail and fax, as well as a trouser press. The hotel offers special rooms for allergy sufferers and people with disabilities. The Internet connection is free. Classic rooms (181 of them) are the most common option in the hotel. They are 20 – 30 sq m large and feature all the amenities necessary for a business traveller, including comfortable workspace. Royal Club rooms and the more expensive ones, entitle the guest to a higher standard of service (including the access to the Royal Club Lounge, a bathrobe and slippers, the unlimited use of fitness club, a daily newspaper, a separate room on the second floor where you can have your breakfast, coffee and tea making facilities, the turn-down service, and a welcome drink). Royal Club rooms are up to 40 sq m large. The hotel has also thirty suites called Maisonette. The name isn't accidental, because these two-level apartments are advertised as the perfect place for newlyweds or for families. Downstairs there's a large, comfortable lounge, while upstairs the be-

droom and the bathroom. Apart from the "standard" Maisonette suites, the hotel also has four Maisonette Apartment Suites, which are two-storey apartments featuring a kitchenette and dining area. They are also slightly larger with about 50 – 65 sq m. A level higher in the offer of Radisson Vienna are the rooms called "Suites", which have the same features as Maisonette suites, plus a larger separate lounge. The most luxurious suite on the hotel's offer is the presidential suite, which is 120 sq m large, has a spacious dining room, lounge, and a bedroom. It can be extended to 168 sq m, by combining it with the adjacent Classic room.

BUSINESS FACILITIES The proximity of the airport and the central location make Vienna Radisson ideal for organizing there conferences and other business meetings. The more so, because the hotel has a lot to offer in this respect. The conference rooms occupy the second floor, there are seventeen of them (can be combined), and accommodate from 15 to 500 guests. All of them are equipped with air conditioning and high-speed Internet. Participants of meetings also have access to a well-equipped business centre. The business floor features also a spacious foyer, which is ideal for coffee breaks and lunches. It is worth noting that the meeting rooms of the Radisson don't differ from the rest of the hotel design and décor wise, with palace-like frescoes and

FACTS **CONTACT** Radisson Blu Palais Hotel, Vienna; Parkring 16, A-1010 Vienna; tel. +43 (0)1 515 17-3500; raddisonblu.com
PRICE The price for a standard room, booked online at the end of October was €189.



ornaments. All the rooms have access to the natural daylight.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS

The elegance of Radisson Blu Palais is perfectly reflected in the design of the local restaurant called Le Siècle, which is spacious, and stylishly decorated. The menu matches the décor and consists mostly of the dishes of the international cuisine. Fish dishes, which are cooked in many ways, are particularly tasty. It's also a good idea to check the wine list, which contains only the best types of this noble drink. Not surprisingly, Le Siècle has received a great deal of accolades. The restaurant is located on the second floor of the hotel and operates from 06.30 am to 10.30 am, noon – 2.00 pm and from 6 pm to 11.00 pm. You can also get lunch and snacks at Palais Cafe. It's an ideal place for a less formal meeting, though still in a very elegant surrounding. Palais Cafe serves salads, sandwiches, as well as hot and cold drinks, including delicious coffee. This relaxing place features comfortable, traditional furniture, so you might feel there somewhat like in an exclusive club. There's live piano music every evening. The offer of Palais Cafe includes a two-course Speed Lunch. Interestingly, if they don't serve it to you

within 30 minutes, you are entitled to have it free of charge. However, as you might guess, this hardly happens. Palais Cafe has the same opening hours as the main restaurant. In the evening, head to Bel Ami Bar (open till 1.00 am), where you can taste excellent drinks.

LEISURE FACILITIES The guests of the Radisson Palais can use John Harris Fitness Centre, which is located on the 8th floor. Apart from the advanced equipment and helpful instructors, it offers a magnificent view of the old town. There's also a sauna, solarium and a sun terrace – and we can also ask for advice the experienced instructors, willing to assist you with your training. The fitness centre is open 06.00 am to 11.00 pm. The hotel also operates Vendome Spa, where we can undergo various rejuvenating and revitalizing treatment. The spa stretches over 500 sq m and features, among others, a 7 sq m bathtub in the shape of oysters. Water in the tub is enriched with minerals.

VERDICT Chic, elegance and style – if you want to feel like in the good old days of the empire, and look forward to comfort and excellent service, you should visit this place.

Janusz Tomaszewski

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Laser Ophthalmology Centre



HOTEL: DONETSK

Ramada

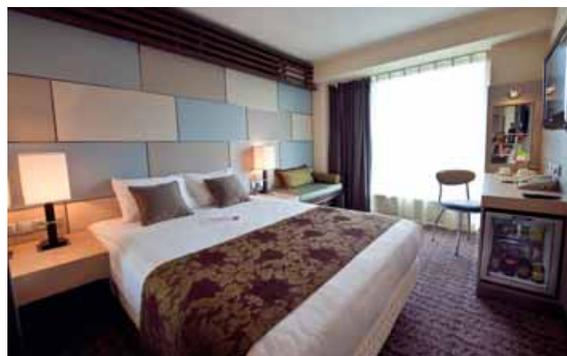
WHAT'S IT LIKE? Ramada hotel in Donetsk has attractive looks and I must admit that it makes a positive impression already when you look at it from the outside. The façade lighting, which resemble Christmas illuminations, distinguishes the hotel from the nearby blocks of flats, creating a warm atmosphere.

Once you enter the hotel, the pleasant impression remains, although you might be mildly surprised that this is already the first floor of the building. The round sofas opposite the reception desk, the winding stairs to the right, leading to the restaurant located on the second floor, and the entrance to the hotel bar located on the left, make a nice whole. The three lifts, somewhat hidden behind the reception area, transport hotel guests to all floors of the building.

WHERE IS IT? Ramada is located near the picturesque Kalmius river, in the heart of a very interesting city of Donetsk. It's just a few minutes by car from the bustling shopping malls. The most popular place in town – the Donbass Arena stadium, which will host matches of the next year's Euro 2012, is located less than 20 kilometres from the hotel. The journey to the airport takes just over 15 minutes. Surprisingly, so far this is the only hotel in the area.

ROOM FACILITIES The hotel has 165 rooms, ranging from economy ones, through regular suites, to business-su-

ites. I spent the night in a standard room with a king-size bed. The creamy walls, decorated here and there with light wood, contribute to a pleasant atmosphere and the dark blue carpeting adds elegance. There's a large work-desk in one corner, and a free of charge WiFi is available throughout the hotel. The most impressive would probably be the wide window of the room, which, but for the fact that it looks directly onto the street. A large part of the hall is occupied by a mirror and a wardrobe with shelves and hangers. There's an electric kettle, and coffee and tea, which can be especially useful during the coming winter. The bathroom is small, but definitely thoughtfully arranged. There's a comfortable bathtub, light gray tiles with turquoise elements, a small mirror and a shelf for cosmetics – in other words, everything you need during your stay in a hotel.



FACTS **CONTACT** Blvd. Shevchenko, 20 Donetsk, 83100 Ukraine; tel. +38 (062) 381-79-79; ramadadonetsk.com.ua
PRICE The cost depends on the type of the room, ranging from \$94 to \$300



BUSINESS FACILITIES There is a conference hall with an area of 240 sq m. It's equipped with modern audio system and seven speakers built into ceiling which provide equal distribution of the sound, while the lighting system surprises with a wide choice of colours. In addition, the hotel has two small rooms, prepared for 10 to 14 people.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS Atlas restaurant is lavishly decorated, which is typical of eastern neighbours. Elegant chandeliers and satin curtains contribute to a little heavy atmosphere. Pierrot bar, which is situated to the left of the reception desk, is an extremely charming place serving delicious desserts and drinks. The friendly atmosphere attracts not only hotel guests. The bar is also a meeting place for various visitors and locals.

VERDICT It's a good choice both for business travellers, as well as tourists visiting the city.

Olga Chelchowska



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BT About Culture

LESZEK BUGAJSKI recommends BOOKS

TWO STATUES

Two "founding fathers" of the British rock, and two biographies. And we all know that's it all about: famous rock veterans, vanguards of the 1960's cultural revolution, and deservedly, they've just got their monuments, even if only paperback. Keith Richards rewarded himself by writing an autobiography. While the other rock star – Paul McCartney – let a musical journalist do the job, in a true classics fashion. Both books are a fascinating read, as they show the rock'n'roll lifestyle from behind the scenes, revealing what only lit the imagination of the fans all over the world. In a nutshell: sex, drugs & rock'n'roll. And this – the way both stars describe this lifestyle – is what makes this two books differ the most. The rest of it – which includes their work, songwriting, rehearsals, recording sessions, their family life – is pretty much the same. Richards who has always been a "bad boy" went the whole way when writing about himself and his friends and didn't hide anything. You will read about quarrels, fights, jealousy, betrayals and malice. McCartney, was presented as his complete opposite, a well-mannered, hard-working musician, an English middle-class representative faithful to the bourgeois style of life. But during the times of their boisterous



youth, both of them did drugs, although the Beatles always did it halfway, probably only because this lifestyle was considered cool at the time, and the author of the biography carefully and respectfully reveals all the details. When talking about his friend from Rolling Stone, he says that he had probably sniffed in the whole periodic table already, and he doesn't deny he just enjoy that kind of lifestyle. But now, both of them are two elderly men, who just try to live up to their legends. McCartney always wears a jacket if he performs in public and takes up classical music, while Richards still wants to play rock music, and tries to consolidate his image of ragged pirate and laid-back ironist.

Keith Richards: "Życie" (Keith Richards: The Biography).

Publishing house: Albatros A. Kuryłowicz

Peter Ames Carlin: "Paul McCartney. Życie" (Peter Ames Carlin: Paul McCartney: A Life).

Publishing house: Axis Mundi

BEFORE THE END OF THE WORLD

A new author, well-known pattern, and some decent literature. Retro-detective books are – since the success of Marek Krajewski and his books about a detective from the city of Breslau – a Polish specialty. Only Zbigniew Białas, when writing his novel, set a year before the outbreak of I World War in Sosnowiec,

shifted his focus, and in effect what we get is a novel of manners, rather than a detective story. Sosnowiec at that time, was a social and lifestyle melting pot of the Upper Silesian Coal Basin, and the westernmost town of the Russian Empire slowly heading for its final collapse. Believable and well-written book, and naturally there is a dead body involved as well – it's a must in today's popular literature.

Zbigniew Białas: "Korzeniec". Publishing House. mg

MUSIC



COMA

The CD has no title, so it's referred to as "the red one". Coma came as a real revelation a few years ago. The music of this band from Łódź made you believe in the strength and quality of the Polish rock music. But, after the high target that has been set, it's not so easy to meet the expectations of the Polish fans. Maybe it will be different this time. Now it's time for a CD promotional concert tour.

TOM WAITS BAD AS ME

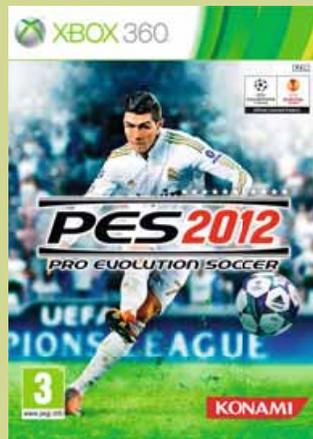
Some music stars after not performing for two years disappear completely and the world forgets about them. Waits remained silent for seven years, and the world can't wait to listen to his latest CD. This is how cult music by a cult musician is made. Contrary to what the title may suggest, Tom Waits is not bad – he has this something, which makes you wanna wait.



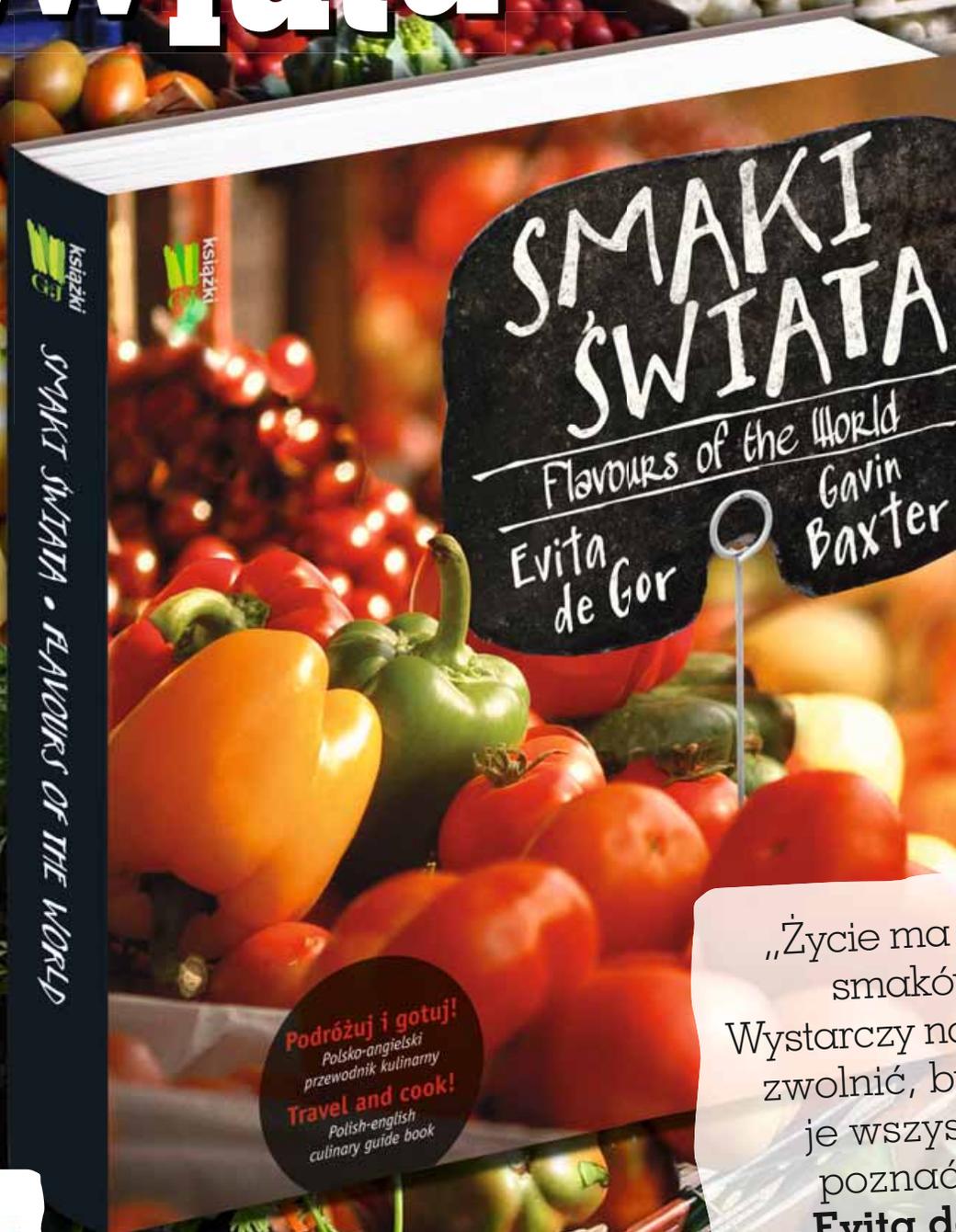
GAME

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2012

The world community of football computer games enthusiasts has a lot to choose from. Nevertheless, there are only two games that count. One of them is PES, fiercely competing with subsequent versions of FIFA. The latest installment – PES 2012 – brings new changes, especially with reference to offensive strategy. In other words: If you don't attack, you'll lose. Perfect graphics, and emotions more powerful than during a real stadium game (at least in my family's league)... Now even Poland can hope for a title of a champion.



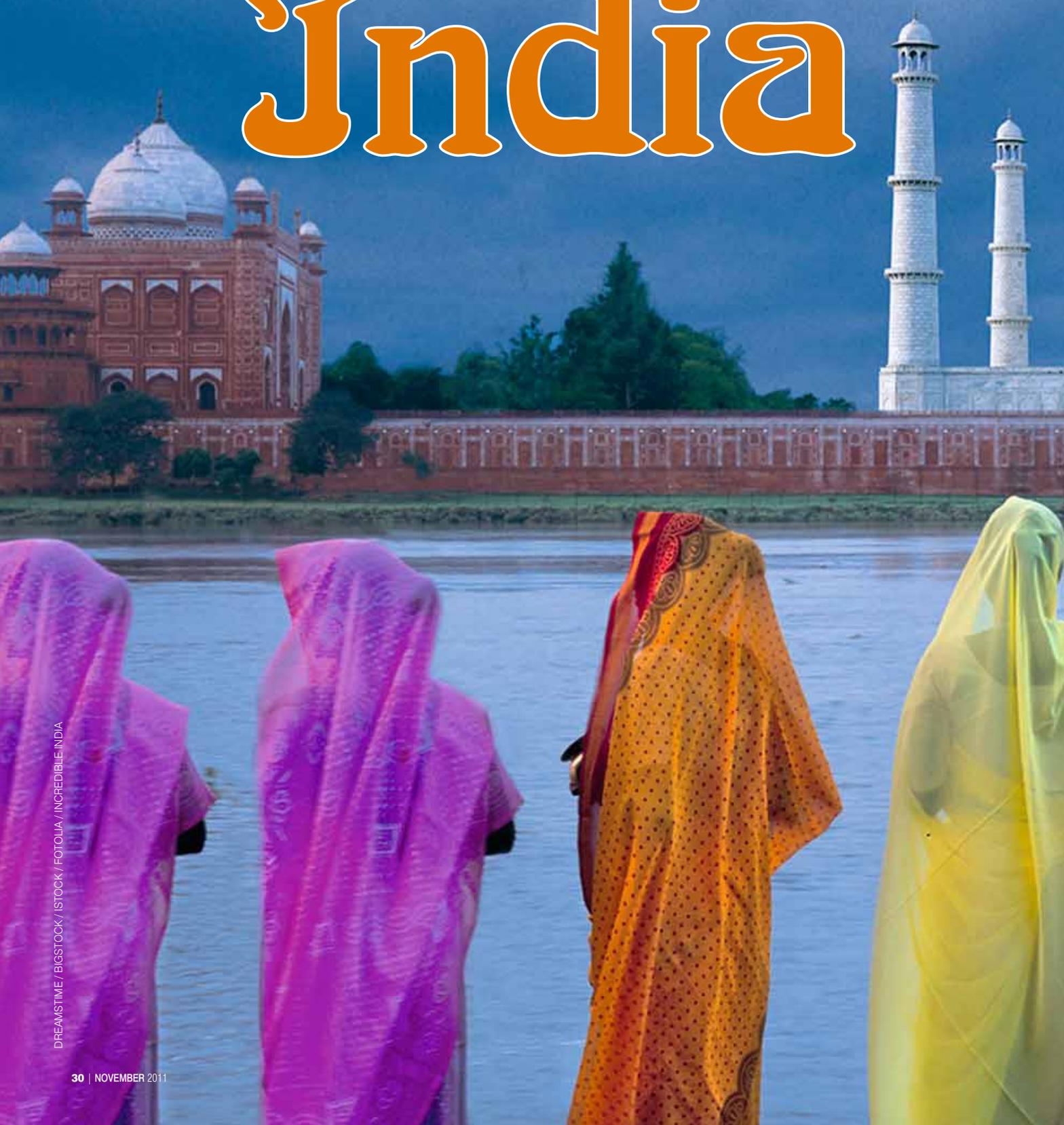
Smaki Świata



„Życie ma wiele smaków. Wystarczy na chwilę zwolnić, by móc je wszystkie poznać...”
– **Evita de Gor**

PARTNER
Austrian

All the Colours of India



DREAMSTIME / BIGSTOCK / ISTOCK / FOTOLIA / INCREDIBLE INDIA

It's a country of old traditions, rich culture and extraordinary people, which may soon become one of the top players in the global business. Modern India has a huge potential and is one of the fastest growing economies in the world – reports

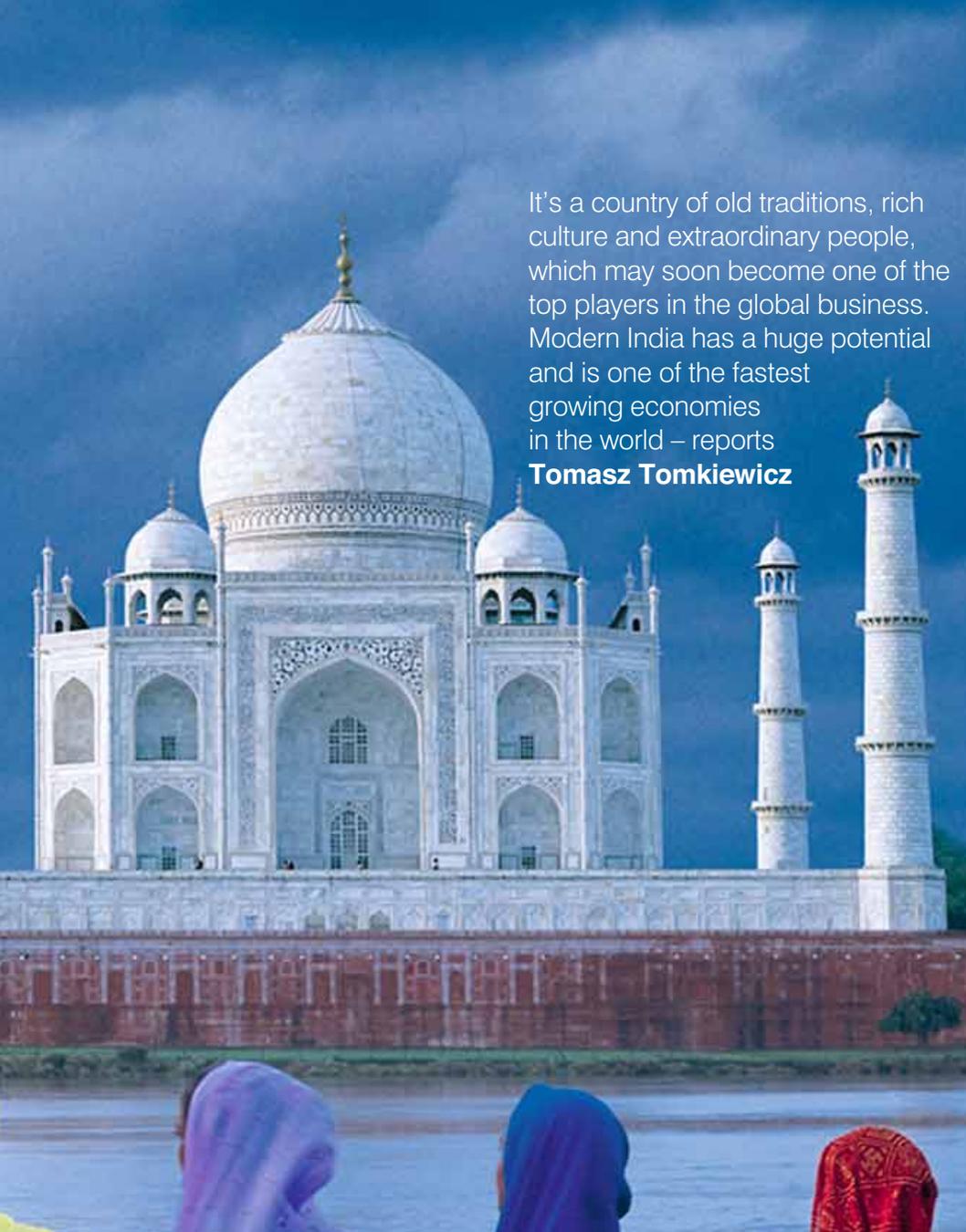
Tomasz Tomkiewicz

Anyone who returns from an even short trip to this country, feels truly transformed, the best example of which can be the Polish former Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Anna Kalata, now the Vice-President of Indo-Polish Chamber of Commerce. Ms Kalata says she was impressed by the great impact of India's culture and people on visitors to this fascinating country.

For centuries, art has been of utmost importance for the citizens of India. It has always been imbued with deep religious feeling, which is characterized by a very personal, emotional approach. That's why India prides itself with its numerous sculptures, which reflect various phenomena.

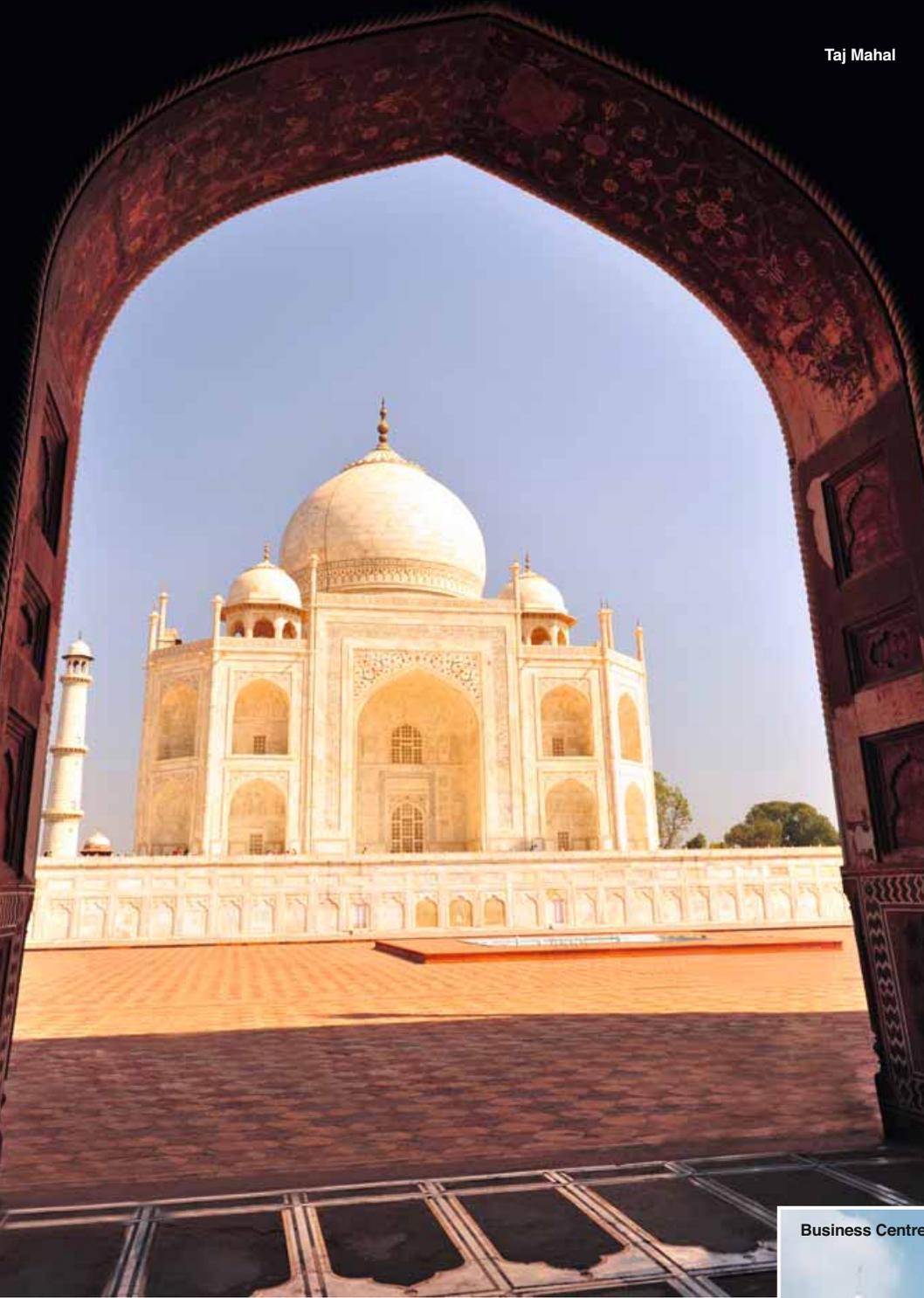
Also the Indian architecture is an art in itself. Interestingly enough, a number of Indian temples were not built, but rather forged in the rock, like some giant, monumental sculptures. India is very much associated with the legendary Mahatma Gandhi, who led his nation to independence from the British Empire. He managed to achieve this with methods, which had never been seen before – without violence and the use of force.

Apart from a hint of mystery and mysticism, there is the harsh reality and the great ambitions of the country. India, has only been independent for a few decades, but it has already managed to become the world's second mostly populated country, with its billionth citizen born mo- ▶



Red Fort

Taj Mahal



ke Gurgaon located south of the capital, and Noida in the state of Uttar Pradesh. This happened mainly because the old metropolitan areas became overpopulated and it was simply necessary to transfer a number of businesses to new places. This, however, also meant more workplaces for young Indians, who having been thoroughly educated in the U.S or UK, return to India to start their own successful businesses.

The high-tech market is also developing quickly there. Its main strength is the innovation in the information technology industry. It's an important signal sent to Western investors, who are now queuing to enter the market. We will probably soon hear a lot about the Bangalore – a city in the south of the country, which is India's Silicon Valley. Bangalore is home to several research centres belonging to the largest IT companies. In fact, India has already managed to dominate the global market of IT services, and there are over 100,000 well-prepared IT professionals in Bangalore itself. Similar situation can be seen in the sectors of accounting, office, and services. Here, the growth is enormous.

Huge corporations are looking for their own place in India. They are, in fact, effectively enticed with good regulations, low rent, and cheap but solid work force. That's why, even such tycoons as American Express, Coca-Cola and Whirlpool have transferred a part of their business activities to India. What's more, many international banks, including BNP Paribas, Standard Chartered and Citibank, have great expectations for this country.

Car enthusiasts couldn't believe when it turned out that such iconic brands as Jaguar and Land Rover's turned to India, seeking help in saving their businesses. Tata Motors, for years regarded

re than a decade ago. Also all economic forecasts predict that India will be, together with China, a major power in the global market, which is bound to happen within the next thirty years. Today, the World Bank ranks the Indian economy as the 10th most powerful on the globe. The country's GDP, which grows by an average of 8 percent per year, is something to envy by most other economies.

CROUCHING TIGER

Many Indian cities are now giant construction sites. New Delhi, which is one of the largest Indian metropolises, is expanding at a rapid pace. Similar process can be seen in Calcutta or Chennai (earlier known as Madras) – the main city in the state of Tamil Nadu.

This explosion of trade and industry has led to creation of new cities li-

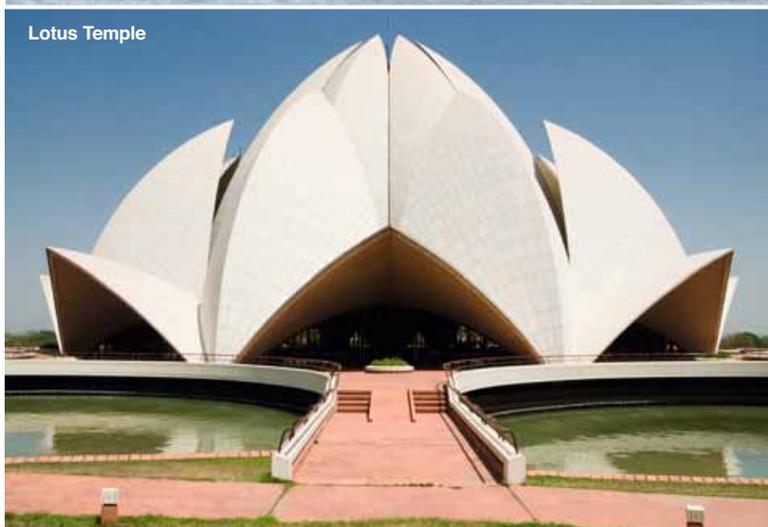
Business Centre, Bangalore



Taj Mahal Hotel and Gateway of India, Mumbai



Lotus Temple



With its numerous hotels and business centres, India is almost unbeatable

eting rooms that can accommodate from a dozen to over a 500 people. There is also vast outdoor space, including an amphitheatre for 500 guests, and a huge courtyard, which will accommodate 2,500 participants. The conference centre has also 6 restaurants, 58 guest rooms, a spa, a business centre and a specially designed cultural programme.

In India you will also find a number of hotels which specialize in handling business meetings. In Mumbai, there is, for example, Renaissance Convention Centre Hotel. This seven-storey building, located in the city centre, offers 583 rooms, four restaurants, a swimming pool, spa, ►

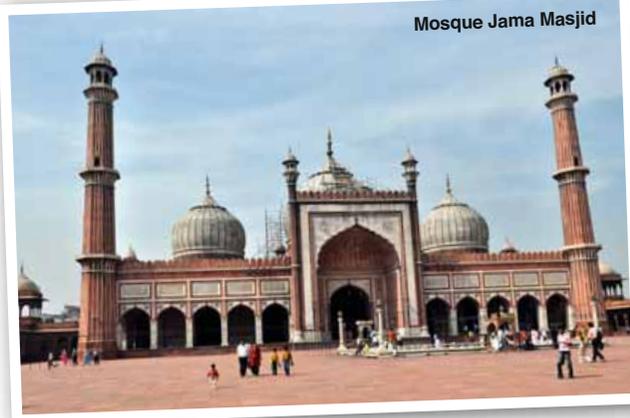
as an exotic and harmless brand, is now not only the owner of the above mentioned British brands, but also dictates the trends for the future. Tata is one of the largest and wealthiest family businesses. Today, the world is talking a lot about Tata Nano, a concept of the world's cheapest car, accessible to anyone. The car is small, so it's ideal for crowded streets of every metropolitan area. What's more, it has basic comforts, consumes only 5 litres of petrol per 100 km, and costs less than €2,000, so Tata has really hit the jackpot here.

A HOTEL PARADISE

In business, a measure of the scale of development and prosperity of the country, is the quality of its hotel base. In this respect, India is almost unbeatable. This is not only because of the size of the country, but mainly owing to the high quality of service. The largest hotel groups buy here vast area of land, sign contracts, and open new venues, including conference centres.

Take, for example, the Habitat World Convention Centre, located in Delhi. This impressive building offers 26 me-

Mosque Jama Masjid





Lake Palace, Udaipur

and above all, a business centre, and several conference rooms with secretarial services and car rental. The total area of all the conference rooms in the hotel is 22,000 sq m.

The largest hotel located in the capital of India is Hyatt Regency with 524 rooms, a swimming pool, spa and a business centre. The rooms offered for events include small conference facilities, but also a ballroom and exhibition space. Of course, all the equipment needed to hold a business meeting, is available on the spot. The hotel provides full personnel support for events.

In Hyderabad, Westin Hyderabad Mindspace seems to be a good choice. This 15-storey hotel has 427 rooms, and a conference centre, which contains nine configurable rooms – including a ballroom for 500 guests. An interesting option is to hold a meeting within the complex of pools, where up to 300 guests can participate. The hotel has huge leisure facilities, and it's known for its excellent quality of its spa.

The offer for hotels in Delhi is very wide, but undoubtedly the most spectacular is the Hotel Imperial. This place is legendary. It was built in the 1930s, and impresses with its design and architecture. That mere entrance to the ho-

tel is impressive thanks to an alley lined with 24 royal palm trees. The hotel is also partly a museum, displaying a vast collection of works of art. Imperial houses almost 250 rooms, several restaurants, a fitness centre and spa, the only Chanel shop in India, conference rooms, and beautiful gardens.

In Agra, just 600 meters from the most famous monument of love, which is the Taj Mahal, you will find a 5-star Oberoi Amarvilas, featuring the Eastern décor and known for its excellent service and delicious Indian cuisine. You will also find there another luxury hotel, called Trident. Goa, which is a former Portuguese colony, has several nice hotels e.g. The O Resort and Spa, Ramada Caravela Beach Resort, or Alila Diwa.

FOR ADVENTURERS

There is a saying: if you want to see the whole of India, you have to have six lives. That's why, tour operators have a real problem with the choice of a suitable place, in this culturally rich and diverse country. There are, however, a few things that should definitely be organized in order to make your stay in this country an unforgettable experience.

One of such things is, undoubtedly, the elephant polo. In Rajasthan, the land



Hawa Mahal – Palace of the Winds, Jaipur



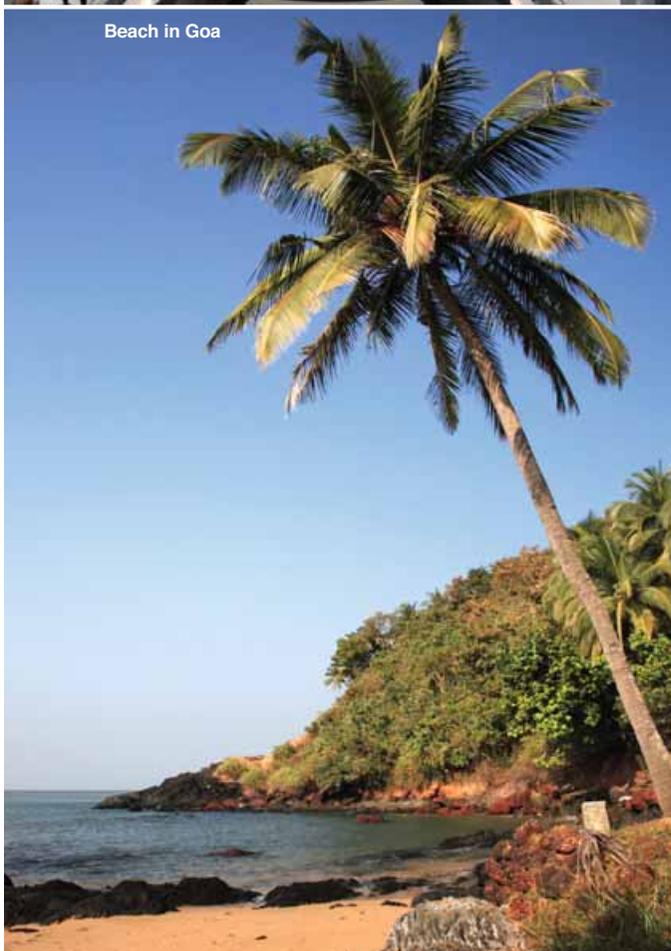
Metro in Delhi



Cyber Towers, Hyderabad



South City Mall, Calcutta



Beach in Goa



Polo on elephants

of maharajas and palaces, polo was popular among the aristocracy. Opposing to what you might think, elephants in this game look very dignified and their graceful movements don't look clumsy, at all. The game has four quarters, seven minutes each. The players keep changing, so that everyone can try their hand at this fascinating sport.

The Indian experience wouldn't be full without the palace gala. For example, the Samode Palace – one of the most interesting and most romantic hotels in India – offers an evening in a traditional style. For this occasion, the palace is lit with hundreds of lights, the entrance alley is lined with a red carpet and visitors are greeted by girls dressed in colourful costumes. The evening program consists of a dinner, combined with regional dances, and it ends with fireworks. You can also arrange a dinner in the Mogul style, since India was once a part of Mogul Empire. The guests sit at low tables, on mattresses with many pillows. The programme includes watching henna painting demonstration, tasting Mogul cuisine, and admiring the local dancers.

Bollywood. This word has become world-famous. The films kept in a rather grotesque style, thanks to their undeniable originality, have conquered the whole world. It's a good idea to organize an evening in Bollywood style, to feel the atmosphere of the film world. The room is

decorated with posters from movies, the most famous scenes from Indian films are displayed on screens located everywhere, and the main event of the evening is the dance performances inspired by film themes.

Lake Palace is a luxurious hotel, situated on a rock, which is in the middle of Lake Pichola, Udaipur. You can reach this extraordinary place by a boat. The building dates back to 18th century, has white marble walls and is considered the most romantic hotel in India. You can rent here a historic barge and arrange a cruise with dinner aboard, in a truly royal setting.

In the hippie era, India was very much respected by young people. In fact, most hippies communes were based on Indian models. On the island of Goa, which is famous for its friendly, warm climate, beautiful beaches and rich history, it's possible to arrange a hippie-style evening. All the guests put on the clothes from the flower power era, the DJ plays songs from the 60s, and the culmination of the evening is a spectacular fireworks show.

These are only some of many interesting ideas for group stays in India. There's also, for example, a treasure hunt in the Red Fort in Delhi, a cocktail party in Taj Mahal, or a rickshaw ride through the city. India is so rich in possibilities that practically every event organized here is absolutely unique. ■

THE GATEWAY TO ASIA

HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT / DREAMSTIME / ISTOCKPHOTO

It's typical of Asians that when they get down to doing something, they do it with style. That's why, the whole world can only envy Hong Kong Airport its technological solutions and the quality of its services. **Tomasz Tomkiewicz** looks closer at the bold visions of the expansion of the airport.



HKIA. This abbreviated name is often used for Hong Kong International Airport. It started to be used around 1998, when the old airport in Hong Kong was replaced with the new one. Developed by the renowned architect Norman Foster, it has always aroused admiration with its unusual and original design (the airport has one of the world's largest passenger terminals). However even more impressive is what happened there business-wise. Last year HKIA airport served over 50 million passengers. In several years time this number is expected to double. It's not surprising then, that the plans for the expansion of the airport are very bold, and as we know Asians – they will certainly get their own way.

THE AIRPORT WITH A FLAIR

Half of the world's population can reach the airport in Hong Kong within only 5 hours. It's not surprising then, that HKIA is a real hub – the world's third airport in terms of the number of passengers handled annually. Each day almost 900 flights take off from the airport to 160 various directions. They are operated by almost a hundred airlines. The airport is sometimes called the gateway to Asia, due to a number of rail and road connections with the cities, located in Pearl River Delta, which flows into the South China Sea.

When the construction of the HKD 50 billion airport was completed, an average of HKD 2 billion has been invested in the development of the port each year. Thanks to this continuous investment the airport received the second runway, the SkyPier – which connects the terminals, as well as 10 new cargo stations, and business facilities like the impressive Airport World Trade Center. Also the original infrastructure has been upgraded.

The management of HKIA has recently introduced a "Master Plan 2030". The document, which is the business strategy for the further expansion of the airport, was developed on the basis of the past experience and observable trends in the market. Admittedly, it was prepared with every single detail in mind, and was consulted within a respectable body of the Research Centre of the local university, so it's not merely a set of wishful thinking. The Master Plan draws attention to an important role of the airport in the economy of Hong Kong, because it provides up to 5 percent of the total annual income of the city – in 2008, the revenue amounted to 78 billion HKD. In 2010 the airport established a new record – it was visited by 50.9 million passengers, handled 4.1 million tons of cargo, and held 306,000 flight operations.

The plan predicts that in 2030, HKIA will handle 97 million passengers. If it



is to happen, then huge investment is needed in the airport's infrastructure. By 2015, the expansion will cost HKD 9.3 billion. The investment involves building a new passenger hall, 20 aircraft stand, the extension of the current Automated People Mover system, minor enhancement works on the Baggage Handling System, and construction of new taxiways. After 2015, further investments are planned, including building a third runway, which by 2030 is expected to increase the revenue of the airport to 167 billion HKD. It sounds serious.

THE FIRST CLASS

All this is, of course, a matter of the future. But even today the airport in Hong Kong is, in many respects, a model airport. Especially when it comes to service and facilities for passengers, some specifically designed for business guests. "Wearing a welcoming smile and easily recognisable uniform" – this is how the so-called Airport Ambassadors are advertised. Who are they? They are stationed at high-traffic locations throughout the terminals to offer immediate assistance to passengers in need. They answering passenger enquiries, give directions, promote passenger safety, and assist at special events, or even help if you need to buy a gift for your wife. The Ambassadors are ready to answer every question. Business passengers will be glad to receive the so-called Frequent Visitor Card. You become entitled to receive this card if you visit the HKIA at least three times within one year. The card entitles you, for example, to the fast track check-in.

The airport in Hong Kong has cleverly solved the problem of internal transport

Passengers use here something called The Automated People Mover, which is an automatic (no engine drivers) electric train that runs between all parts of the airport at the speed of 63 km/h. It pulls in at each bus stops every 2-4 minutes, carrying in this way over 7,000 passengers per hour.

There's also no problem, whatsoever, with the Internet access at the airport, because WiFi is offered here free-of-charge and works perfectly. Business passengers can enjoy a number of VIP lounges belonging to airlines, or visit the ones operated by the HKIA. There are several of them, some available for card holders of proper airline alliances. The Plaza Premium Lounge is a lounge available for everyone, also for economy class passengers – it's just enough to pay the entrance fee (the all inclusive package costs 400 HKD for two hours). Inside, we will find not only place to work and rest, but also many amenities such as showers, dining, massages, and beauty treatment.

Another interesting solution for those who seek tranquillity and peace, are miniature gardens, located in various parts of the airport. Passengers have there a perfect opportunity to rest among lush greenery and with the calming sounds of water. The airport hasn't forgotten about smokers, either. There are separate smoking lounges where you can feed you cancer as much as you like.

HKIA has a very good airport-based hotel infrastructure. Regal Airport Hotel is directly connected to Terminal 1 via a special walkway. It offers over a thousand rooms, a huge business centre, and great food. Other hotels include SkyCity Marriott (650 rooms) and Novotel Citygate (440 rooms) – both luxur-



us and comfortable, well-prepared for all the needs and desires.

An interesting characteristic of the airport in Hong Kong are the theme exhibitions. Passengers can learn there about their history of cultivation of tea (and about the ceremony of drinking), the history of Chinese medicine, the art of Cantonese opera and theatre, as well as the history and the top attractions of Hong Kong. It's a great idea, especially because many other airports offer nothing but boredom, when you have some free time between your flights. As you see, the Asians understand the educational aspect of travel. ■

The airport in Hong Kong handles over 50 million passengers annually. In several years' time this number will double



Głębocek. Vine Resort & SPA – an Original Blend

Until now, centres of this kind were created mainly in France, Spain or South Africa – i.e. in the regions renowned for their wine culture. Located in Brodnickie Lakeland, Głębocek. Vine Resort & Spa is the first hotel SPA in Poland which introduced on its offer professional Vinotherapy in SPA, based on active ingredients from grapes and their bushes.

The principle that lies at the root of this picturesque hotel belonging to Villa Park group, was to create a place that would allude to the regional character of the location, emphasizing the natural qualities of Brodnickie Lakeland, as well as to introduce an innovative and unique idea to market.

The characteristic features of the lake district, where the hotel is located: the soothing silence, numerous nature reserves, rare plants and peculiar fauna combined with the SPA offer, based on Vinotherapy, detoxifying treatment, as well as alpha therapy which helps reduce stress. The distinctive element of the brand is the constant contact with wine (wineries around the hotel, treatments with wine, wine as a drink for a meal).

The keynote of the whole undertaking, as far as the external architecture is concerned, was to draw on the original ideas of rural homesteads, especially the architecture of a court. The characteristic elements of such buildings included arcades, wooden finish, or large windows. The design of the interior, made by Studio Kaczmarek from Warsaw, is based on a simple principle to connect the regional nature of the ambient object with the modern design. Simple, warm finishes: raw wood, stone and flax, are contrasted here with the contemporary materials, such as glass or dark parquet, as well as with modern accessories and lighting. There are also some unusual contrasts introduced, such as fabric embedded in glass or harsh boards with led lighting that combines two worlds



The focal point of the resort is Winnica SPA, where all treatment rooms are situated



– the ethnic and the modern one. Another interesting solution is the introduction to the architecture building, which is situated in the midst of a meadow, new spatial solutions typical of today's city hotels, such as a bathroom open to the room.

IN THE SHADE OF THE VINEYARD

The luxury Winnica Hotel offers 24 rooms of the highest standard. Their interiors manifest a symbiosis of the nature and architecture, while maintaining an intimate, warm climate. The three detached rural cottages of Hotel Osada offer 15 rooms, each individually designed.

The resort also features Chata SPA – a detached suite with a private sauna.

The focal point of the resort is Winnica SPA, where all treatment rooms are situated. The total area of the SPA is 710 sq m. The rich offer includes all kinds of treatment for the body and the face by Thera Vine – a South African brand and an expert in Vinotherapy, as well as treatment with cosmetics by Parisian Academie Scientifique de Beaute, or BodyCoffee coffee beans. The offer of SPA includes wine baths, scrubs with grape seed, and grape pulp wraps. Apart from the extensive Vinotherapy offer, Głębocek has also prepared an area of Brodnica Baths, where you can enjoy the aroma-therapeutic sauna, wine and flower steam bath, as well as a detoxifying or relaxing massage. The resort has also created the first Polish Alpha Sphere, designed for relaxation and to stimulation of creative thinking. Its main element is the AlphaLounger – a sound armchair, which will put you in a state of deep alpha relaxation.

The hotel is surrounded by vineyards, where almost 1,100 seedlings are planted (they're American-European hybrids). The complex also features a wine cellar where, apart from the wines from Italy, France, Spain and the new world, you can taste Polish wines – from the vineyard of Płochocki family. ■

Getting back **in Shape...**

The economic turmoil, which has shaken most airlines, affected also the Polish national carrier. However, the management of LOT Polish Airlines hopes that despite the difficult situation the company will become stronger. This year's results prove that there's a light at the end of the tunnel.



It's hard to imagine a greater series of misfortunes in business, than the one that has affected air carriers in recent years. The global economic downfall led to severe cuts in businesses, which led some to believe that air travel would soon become a thing of the past, because the cost-saving measures would mean that we would start communicating with one another mostly by means of the Internet and videoconferences. Individual clients and tourists also succumbed to this panic, which resulted in a dramatic decrease in turnover. Numerous airlines were on the verge of bankruptcy.

LOT Polish Airlines luckily was spared much of this trouble. The airline put much hope in the contract with Boeing for the supply of the ultra-modern B787 Dreamliners, which would allow LOT to spread its wings by offering its customers the best quality of service, and thanks to the new design of the aircraft, would contribute to substantial fuel savings. Unfortunately, the delivery of the Dreamliner was

Dreamliner will be an opportunity to expand the offer of the Polish carrier



delayed. The delays of months, and then years, substantially contributed to the difficult situation.

A BETTER FUTURE

Fortunately, Boeing's trouble is now over. The first Dreamliner has recently been delivered to the Japanese, and LOT is to be the first European airline to receive its B787 in just a few months. As we were informed by Leszek Chorzewski, the spokesman of LOT, during the first three quarters of this year, carriage on scheduled routes showed a dynamic of 111% in comparison with 2010. The dynamic of domestic traffic showed growth of 21% and for LOT's medium-haul flights showed growth of 11%. For long-haul flights, the figures stand at 95% in comparison with last year, which is connected with a decrease in operations on routes to and from

North America and Asia. LOT has not been investing in increasing its fleet of Boeing 767's since the company is awaiting delivery of its Boeing 787's and this is one of the underlying causes of a stagnation in the growth of its Atlantic carriage figures. The dynamics for the carriage of business class passengers for the period between January and September evinces a significant improvement of 21% when set against the figures for 2010. In September alone, the growth dynamic in this area was 130%.

Income from the company's primary operations for the three quarters rose by 6%, while costs rose by just 4%, despite the fact that the cost of fuel alone rose by all of 27%. These higher fuel prices mean that LOT's expenditure in this area was 221 million zloty higher than in 2010.

The financial results for the first three quarters show a decrease in losses in an-

nual terms from minus 96 million zloty in 2010 to minus 52 million this year. The results thus indicate an improvement of 44 million zloty, and of 225 million when fluctuations in fuel prices and exchange rates are excluded. Profits of plus 67.6 million zloty were recorded for the company's primary operations, as compared with 56.4 million for the same period last year. The post-tax result for January to September was plus 5.4 million zloty and was subject to the most recently observed and recorded fluctuations in exchange rates.

Another area which should be mentioned is that of the punctuality parameters for flights. In the third quarter, LOT displayed an increase from 76% to 81% in comparison to last year. The regularity of flights also increased to 97.8% from the beginning of this year. ■

AVIATION LIBERATION

Flying with a 'fifth freedom' airline can mean a better price and product, says **Alex McWhirter**



ISTOCKPHOTO



In a world of predictability, how fortunate it is to have the choice of “fifth freedom” carriers. These “third country” airlines ply a varied number of routes around the world, operating services that do not begin or end on their home soil. Most travellers are unaware of their existence, but choosing a fifth freedom airline can refresh the most jaded of travel palates and make your flight more enjoyable.

They also mean that instead of flying between Frankfurt and New York JFK with Germany’s Lufthansa, you could sample something more exotic in the shape of Singapore Airlines (SIA). When travelling between Bangkok and Hong Kong, why accept Thai Airways regional business class product on an elderly B747 when you could sample one of Emirates state-of-the-art A380s complete with fully flat beds? British Airways or Virgin Atlantic might seem the obvious choice if you want to book the premium economy cabin between London and Los Angeles, but why overlook Air New Zealand (ANZ), whose latest premium economy seating (starting on April 2) is more spacious?

Steve Gadd, business travel director of UK and Ireland for Trailfinders first and business class department in London, says: “These airlines, which one could almost describe as dislocated carriers, attract passengers with a mixture of price, service and scheduling”. An Emirates spokesperson adds: “Fifth freedom is about offering passengers choice. With our young fleet we have become the airline of choice for many travellers on the fifth-freedom routes we operate”.

Scheduling is a plus point. Consider that Catalonians heading for Brazil

have no direct service to Sao Paulo from Barcelona – instead, they are obliged to take Iberia and change planes in Madrid. But from the end of this month, Singapore Airlines will connect the two cities nonstop using a B777-300ER equipped with the latest premium class seating. The new route will be a continuation of an SIA service that has originated in Singapore.

What if you are a Star Alliance fan and want to earn frequent flyer points between London and Hong Kong? That route is dominated by Oneworld carriers but thanks to fifth-freedom ANZ, Star passengers can accomplish the trip nonstop instead of routing via the likes of Frankfurt with Lufthansa, Zurich with Swiss or Bangkok with Thai Airways.

Likewise, Qantas comes to the rescue of Oneworld fans based in Frankfurt who need to reach Singapore. Germany is a Star stronghold and Frankfurt-Singapore is controlled by Lufthansa and SIA. But thanks to Oneworld’s Qantas, you can fly Frankfurt-Singapore nonstop, so there is no need to take British Airways via London.

Price is a selling point, depending on the carrier and route. Some fifth-freedom airlines have little market identity so must price keenly to drum up custom. The numerous services operated by Taiwanese carriers Eva Air and China Airlines (CAL) between Europe and Bangkok will always cost less than those of recognised names such as BA, Qantas, Thai, KLM and Lufthansa.

Within Asia, you can expect United to undercut SIA and Cathay Pacific be-

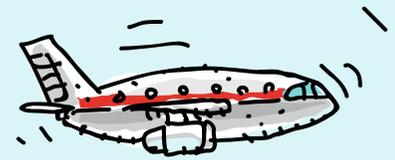
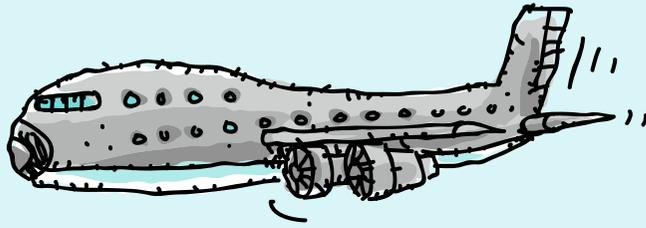
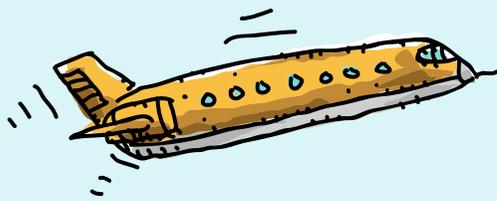
Choosing such an airline can refresh the most jaded of travel palates

tween Singapore and Hong Kong, while Delta will charge less than Cathay Pacific or JAL on the important Hong Kong-Tokyo route. Also noteworthy is Qatar Airways service between Singapore and Denpasar in Bali, on which local agents can sell you a flat-bed business class seat on a B777-300ER for little more than SIA might charge for a seat in economy.

By now, you might be wondering how fifth-freedom carriers can exist. Surely the national airlines of the two countries they operate in resent a third carrier muscling in on their patch? The answer lies in aviation history. In 1944, the world’s governments attended an ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) convention in Chicago where the framework of today’s airline networks was put together.

These worthy aviation officials devised a series of “freedoms”, or building blocks, that gave airlines the right to fly internationally. Of all the freedoms, it is the fifth that is the most interesting. Until the advent of the B747-400 in the late 1980s, no plane was capable of flying nonstop over really long distances – before then, airlines had to touch down for refuelling. So Air India stopped in London en route between Delhi and New York, BA’s Hong Kong-London service called in at Mumbai, and SIA’s California services had to operate via Hong Kong and Tokyo. These long routes would not be economically viable if airlines were not allowed to set down and pick up passengers en route, so sympathetic countries granted intermediate or fifth-freedom traffic rights.

Political considerations were another *raison d’être* for fifth freedom rights. The national carriers of Germany and Japan



were grounded for ten years after the end of the Second World War. So were it not for allied airlines having fifth freedom rights, Germany and Japan would have been more isolated than they were.

Although US carriers no longer fly fifth freedom within Europe, they still utilise their rights within Asia – witness the number of services operated by Delta and United that link Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul.

Look at the situation faced by the Taiwanese carriers when they first operated to Europe in the 1980s. At that time, neither Eva Air nor CAL were permitted to take the most direct routing overhead the Soviet Union and mainland China. It meant taking a longer routing via the Gulf and South East Asia. The viability of Europe-Taiwan air service was secured when these airlines were given permission to carry passengers between Europe and Bangkok.

Once granted, it is not easy to remove fifth freedom rights. That is why such carriers are still active on what might seem like odd routes and using rights that might have been granted decades ago. Nowadays, gaining new fifth freedom rights can be tricky. In these difficult economic times, it is only natural that governments protect their national carriers. So gaining new rights, or even upgrading a plane type, can be an aeropolitical issue.

Some years back, Cathay Pacific wanted to fly between Manchester and Moscow en route to Hong Kong, while SIA sought to fly between London and New York. Both requests were turned down, and while Cathay Pacific never did serve Manchester in the end, SIA decided to route its transatlantic service through Frankfurt instead.

Singapore Airlines is also understood to have encountered problems with the Japanese authorities when it tried to upgrade its Tokyo-Los Angeles transpa-

TOP 20 FIFTH-FREEDOM ROUTES

ROUTE	AIRLINE	AIRCRAFT
Barcelona-Sao Paulo	SIA	B777-300ER
Tokyo-Los Angeles	SIA	A380 (from March 27)
Frankfurt-New York JFK	SIA	B747-400
London-Hong Kong	ANZ	B777-200
London-Los Angeles	ANZ	B777-300ER (from April 2)
Delhi-Bangkok	Cathay Pacific	A340-300
Amsterdam-Mumbai	Delta Air Lines	A330-200
Bangkok-Hong Kong	Emirates	A380
Kuala Lumpur-Melbourne	Emirates	B777-300ER
Singapore-Sydney	BA	B777-200
Sydney-Auckland	Emirates	A380
Frankfurt-Singapore	Qantas	B747-400
Singapore-Jakarta	Lufthansa	B747-400
Bangkok-Ho Chi Minh	Qatar Airways	A330-200
Tokyo Narita-Seoul	United	B777-200
Manchester-Munich	SIA	B777-300ER
London-Bangkok	Eva Air	B777-300ER
Dubai-Cairo	SIA	B777-200
Singapore-Brisbane	Emirates	B777-300ER
Hong Kong-Tokyo Narita	Delta Air Lines	A330-300

In return for getting a better price or product, travellers must adapt to the airline's schedules

cific service from a B747-400 to a more modern A380. It is believed the Japanese were reluctant for the move to go ahead because both its carriers on the route – Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways – operate no comparable aircraft. Fortunately, SIA has finally won approval and, assuming its A380 delivery schedule goes according to plan, it will inaugurate its Tokyo-Los Angeles service from the end of the month.

The most enthusiastic supporters of fifth freedom carriers are the governments of Dubai and Singapore, as they recognise that were it not for third country airlines, their city-states could not have developed so fast. By the standards

of Europe or the US, both destinations were late in acquiring their national carriers. Before SIA was formed in 1972 and Emirates in 1985, both Singapore and Dubai relied heavily on third country airlines to put them on the map. Both places acted as aerial crossroads astride the voluminous networks linking Europe with Asia and Australia.

If fifth freedom carriers do face a problem, it is one of identity. For example, how many Catalonians would think of logging on to singaporeair.com for a flight to Brazil? And how many Singaporeans would know to consult lufthansa.com for an evening flight to Jakarta? Fortunately, the transparency of the web, the advent of code-sharing and better trained agents have all boosted brand awareness in recent times.

Emirates says: “We promote these [fifth freedom] services with advertising, direct marketing to potential travellers and travel agent training. This mix has proved to be successful for Emirates and is helped by the extensive and growing amount of information available online”.

So what are the drawbacks? In return for getting a better price or a better product, travellers must adapt to the airline's schedules and, in some cases, they can be inconvenient. Take the fact that ANZ's London-bound flight departs Hong Kong at an unfashionably early hour, or that Singapore Airlines plies Barcelona-Sao Paulo three times a week rather than daily.

Weather can also be a factor. You might be enjoying a leisurely breakfast at your five-star Singapore hotel and looking forward to your evening BA flight to Sydney, but be unaware that an incident at Heathrow has disrupted schedules. But ultimately, fifth freedom carriers offer passengers choice – and that's no bad thing. ■



Sharley

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■ Pielęgnacja ciała

Lipo Shock - szokujące efekty odchudzania, długoetapowe efekty redukujące tkankę tłuszczową;

Therma Lipo - alternatywa dla chirurgii plastycznej; redukcja tkanki tłuszczowej, cellulitu i ujędrnienie skóry;
Elektrostymulacja, Ultradźwięki;

Body mix - wyszczuplenie, modelowanie sylwetki;
Laser, krioterapia, fotostymulacja, masaż ciśnieniowy;
Zabiegi relaksujące - winoterapia, czekoladoterapia;
Mezoterapia - kondycjonowanie skóry, terapie cellulitu.

■ Medycyna estetyczna

Leczenie przebarwień - peelingi, **Cosmelan** - terapia na przebarwienia hormonalne;

Usuwanie zmarszczek - botulina, wypełniacze;
Mezoterapia - kondycjonowanie skóry, poprawianie owalu twarzy;
Poprawa owalu twarzy - najnowocześniejsze zabiegi.
Leczenie nadpotliwości - botulina.
Zamykanie naczynek - twarz, nogi.



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Business Traveller interviews **Robert Lech**, a General Manager of Sodexo Motivation Solutions.

What does travelling mean to you?

Travelling is learning, discovering and satisfying your curiosity. But at the same time it teaches you to be sensitive and tolerant towards others. I think every traveller is an open-minded person with broad horizons. What's important for me, isn't only to have nice memories and pictures from holidays, but also to experience the local culture, learn something new, get to know different flavours and smells, adopt different ideas to my own situation. A journey abroad is like a journey throughout your life – every day you have to discover something new for it to be successful. It's exactly the same thing with business.

Can you give an example?

An excellent example is the history of the company I work in – Sodexo. You can compare it to an around-the-world trip. Had it not been for the travel lust and a need to learn, it would have never changed from a small family-run company to a huge institution which, within the last 40 years, has conquered the whole world, from the Philippines to Panama, and from Bulgaria to Peru. All this thanks to one man being confident enough to believe that his dreams might come true. He managed to transform a local catering company into one of the biggest global companies – Sodexo Group, which is currently present in 80 countries and serving millions of people around the world.

Even the furthest journeys begin with the first single step. Your furthest journey?

The whole world needs motivation

I would like to mention, metaphorically, that the most important thing in every journey is the first step, and the courage to make it. My furthest journeys are business trips to Asia. When the company was making plans about the development of new products on Asian markets in 2007, we knew it would be quite a challenge for us. We hardly knew anything about these people's mentality and behaviour patterns, and it all seemed so different from Europe. But it turned out we were wrong. I helped colleagues from Shanghai, Mumbai and Jakarta with launching new products on the market. It turned out that the our solutions worked well on their local markets and vice versa.

They say travelling broadens the horizons...

Travelling indeed broadens the horizons and make us think unconventionally. What was especially important in my professional life was the exchange of experience and talks with colleagues from other markets. During stays in Sodexo offices all over the world, we compare our – often quite different – experience, working methods, different strategies, we think about those differences and also our similarities in the approach to motivation. That's how we generate new ideas to extend our offer.

You mention the motivation factor quite often. Can travelling be a part of it?

Motivation is a magic word, common to all cultures and nationalities – we want to reach our goals, be appreciated and rewarded. It depends on

individual needs of a person we want to motivate. Our company deals with advising clients how to create effective motivational systems for their workers and business partners. The best solution is to provide people with the freedom of choice, the so called cafeteria of benefits or rewards. Such a system functions effectively also in our company. The workers can choose coupons or stored-value cards, which they use to finance travels for themselves or their families, as well as medical care or meal funding. Most workers when provided with such an opportunity to travel, see it as a gift, which motivates them to work and makes them develop a sense of loyalty to their company.

As for motivation, is Polish market different in other ones in any way?

The salary alone has stopped being a motivational factor some time ago already. It's difficult to motivate a worker with a salary, which in our country is usually the basic salary, received regardless of how effective is their performance. According to research, merely three months after we get a pay rise, we get so used to it, that we no longer seems to appreciate it. The process of building and maintaining motivation is time-consuming and works only if we think about the long-run effects. The motivational function of a salary starts when it is given not only in its basic form, but also in a form of non-pay benefits and incentive bonuses. We can observe that it's beginning to change in Poland. We are aiming at the world pattern, where the basic salary constitutes



only 33% in Western Europe countries, and only 17% in the USA. The rest of the monthly payment is given out in a form of incentive bonuses, often dependant on each individual worker's performance, and additional non-pay benefits. The amount of money given to non-pay benefits is systematically increasing in Poland.

What did you learn while travelling?

Travelling helped me to understand the world, develop more faithful and humble attitude. It taught me that it isn't important where you live or what your national dish is, because regardless of their origin, all people want to be happy, have a satisfactory job and a loving family. Thanks to the experience I gained on almost all the continents, I can understand better the needs of my relatives, workers and clients. Each journey helps me to recharge my batteries with positive energy not only to work, but also to live.

And then comes a time when you plan your next holiday?

I learned to enjoy what I already have – here and now – I don't fall into the trap of always dreaming about the next holiday. After I come back to work, I try to remember about my holiday adventure for as long as I can. Although the prospect of planning another trip can be quite tempting. But there's time for everything.

What factors do you take into account when picking a hotel?

With business trips, location and proximity to the airport or meeting places is the most important. But the atmosphere of a given hotel is also crucial. I appreciate pleasant, professional service and unlimited access to the internet. On the other hand, when it is holiday accommodation I want, the hotel has to be atmospheric, intimate and has an extensive sports and recreational offer. A gym, a swimming pool, a volleyball and tennis court are a must. The proximity to a beautiful beach is what my family pays more attention to.

So, you aren't only a traveller but also a sport enthusiast?

Sport gives me energy, and that's why I regularly ride a bike and go jogging. Last year I took part in the KaszebeRunda cycling race in Kashubian Switzerland. The race started and finished in Kościerzyn, and I covered a distance of 125 kilometres. I love playing tennis and I am proud that I have improved my forehand. Whenever I can, I go out with my daughter to ride a bike or skate. I dream about riding the route of such cycling races like Giro d'Italia or Tour

de France, or about spending a holiday in Nick Bollettieri's tennis academy.

Where are you planning to go next?

I'd like to spend a family holiday in Bora Bora. It is all very tempting to me: stunning beaches, azure waters, scuba-diving and the depth of the Pacific Ocean. But I'm asking myself right now: Isn't it a bit too "pacific" for me? ■



The French Space in Warsaw

In late October Air France organized an unusual presentation in our capital. In the transit zone, the visitors to the airport in Warsaw could see the distinctive seat capsules which are installed in Business Class cabins of the French carrier. The presentation was very popular.



The idea was simple. To show the look and the functionality of the seats which guarantee lots of personal space for a passenger. The seats somewhat resembling shells, and made of solid plastic, left no-one indifferent. If they only had a little time before their flight, the passengers departing from Warsaw airport were very keen on watching the presentation.

It's hardly surprising though, as for several months now, the French airline has offered four different cabin classes, which allows for a greater freedom of choice and enables you to select the option which best suits your needs. The names of the cabin classes have also changed: in addition to *Premiere* – which is the first class, *Affaires* – which is business class, there is a new value called *Premium Voyageur* – which is a premium economy class, while

economy class is simply called *Voyageur*. The replacement of business seats in the aircraft serving long haul flights continues, and such seats can already be found on board of nearly 30 machines of the French carrier.

An Independent Territory

L'Espace Affaires, i.e. the business space is the shortest and most accurate definition of the new Air France business class. Its designers focused in particular on freedom and privacy. The space provides everything that is needed to relax and work, which is very often the case in a business class cabin. Thanks to the capsule design and solutions in the cabin, the space for an *Affaires* passenger has increased by as much as 27 percent. The rigid composite construction (which gives an additional sense



of security) was coated with durable and pleasant to the touch material, while headrests are made of leather. Even if the seats are arranged in tandem, the wide and autonomous armrests, where the control panel is located, provide enough independence. Each seat has its individual reading light, and on each side several storage compartments, which are particularly useful on a long-haul flight. There is, of course, the power outlet to recharge your laptop's battery or other devices.

The seat width (which is 61 centimetres) is the essence of comfort. The seat can recline almost fully to create a flat six-foot bed. You don't have to worry here about numbness of the legs or circulatory problems. The seat provides a good opportunity to rest on the flight. Provided, of course, that you're not tempted to use the on-board entertainment system. The personal 15-inch screen, tempts with a great choice of goodies: from feature films, which have recently premiered in cinemas, through entertainment, business and music programmes, to hundreds of CDs, radio programmes, interactive games and even language courses and relaxation programmes.

You Want More

Passengers at Warsaw Okęcie watching the new Affaires seats could also find out what additional benefits are provided during transcontinental flight, for example, from Warsaw, through Paris to Asia or Africa.

Everything starts even before the flight because passenger of Affaires class are invited to separate check-in counters offered by most airports in the world, as well as Air France business lounges, where they can have a good meal, drink aromatic coffee or a glass of noble wine. Such passenger is entitled to check two pieces of luggage

weighing up to 32 kg as checked baggage (if he's Platinum, Gold or Silver member of Flying Blue frequent flyer programme, this limit increases to 3 x 32 kg). Additionally, he can take on board two pieces of hand baggage with a total weight to 18 kilograms.

Boarding takes place out of order, and after the Affaires passenger has taken his seat he receives a hypoallergenic pillow, a woollen blanket, and a travel kit with necessary in-flight gadgets and cosmetics.

The on board catering is another reason to boast. The dishes are prepared by renowned chefs with novelties introduced regularly. Just before the takeoff, passengers are served a welcome drink, while the meal served in the air consists of the appetizer, the main dish, the dessert and various types of cheese – all served on porcelain dishes and tablecloths with an emblem. If a passenger doesn't wish to be disturbed during the flight, he may ask for an express meal. Also at any time during the flight he can use the self-service bar and the cabin crew is always at his assistance. ●



FIT TO FLY?

Paul Cheung
reveals some
simple ways
to keep the
bulge at bay



Travelling for business has its perks – seeing new places and meeting new people keeps life interesting. But if you’re a frequent flyer, it’s likely you’re all too familiar with the ongoing battle either to get fit or stay fit. If you aren’t quite so health-conscious, you may at least experience the odd pang of guilt after indulging in yet another heavy meal or seeing fellow professionals returning from a stint in the hotel gym.

Whichever camp you fall into – the fitness freak, the well-intentioned or the downright lazy – spending much of the year getting on and off planes, checking in and out of hotels, passing through multiple time zones and adopting haphazard eating patterns is a serious hurdle to achieving your goals and developing a routine that can be sustained.

As we are all aware, the issue of fitness has become a nationwide problem – in 2010 the British Heart Foundation reported that nearly one in four adults were obese. And it seems the risk for business travellers is particularly acute. According to a study in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* in April, those who travelled most frequently not only had higher obesity levels but also reported feeling more unhealthy.

Research in 2008 by Dr Richard Godfrey, a senior lecturer at the University of Brunel, suggested that fitness levels could be maintained for about two weeks without significant decreases, but in practice many travellers find they start to diminish far quicker. “After one week, I find that changes are very visible”, says David Foo, a financial operations analyst who travels between the UK and Singapore. “I definitely see increased fat around my abdominal area”.

It’s easy to see why – from the moment you set foot on a plane, you’re thrust into uncontrollable territory. But there are simple ways to make yourself feel healthier and maintain your fitness levels, and they start with the flight itself.

In 2007, a study by the American College of Sports Medicine showed that dehydration – a particular risk on board – “significantly compromised the ability to perform resistance exercise”. It’s therefore vital to keep yourself topped up. “Try carrying a bottle with you at all times and refill it as needed on the plane”, advises Mark Kennedy, a kinesiologist (a specialist in the science of human movement)

and one of the founders of healthynomics.com, which provides tips on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Equally important is to keep moving. British Military Fitness instructor Alex J Abdullah suggests some simple exercises to try on board: “While you’re up, try this head-to-toe sequence – find a space towards the back of the plane, and start to rotate your neck in one direction and then the other. Rotate your shoulders backwards and forwards, twist at the waist left and then right, rotate your wrists, clench and unclench your fingers and finally rotate your ankles clockwise and anti-clockwise.

“Without bouncing, reach down and try to touch your toes to stretch your hamstrings, which will be tight from being in a prolonged sitting position. Finish with gentle controlled squats. This sequence will keep circulation moving and you’ll feel much less lethargic”. (For a less public workout, see overleaf for exercises you can do in the privacy of your hotel room.)

Another problem people have to contend with in the air is a lack of good-quality food. Even on a major airline such as Virgin Atlantic, a typical transatlantic economy flight will get you one hot meal, a choc-ice for a mid-flight snack and an egg or cheese croissant before you land. The saturated fat content of the choc-ice and croissant combined tops 40g, more than half of the recommended total daily fat intake of 70g (based on a 2,000-calorie diet). So do you eat products laden with sugar, salt and fat, or go hungry and risk going into

a catabolic state (when your body starts breaking tissue down)?

While you may think that skipping the odd meal won’t do you any harm – and may even help you to lose a few pounds – starving yourself in this way will actually hinder your achieving this. When you are in a catabolic state, your cortisol levels

rise, preventing fat loss and promoting muscle wasting. So eating a small amount, of preferably nutritious cuisine, is better than nothing at all. Consider requesting a “special” meal when you book your flight, such as one with low sodium, fat or calories – most long-haul carriers offer this option.

What about when you reach your destination? Amy Mac, fitness entrepreneur and creator of the Hotel Workout series (withmymac.com), says the key to keeping on track is “making small, targeted goals”.

“It can be as simple as having a healthy breakfast, eating lean meats and vegetables for lunch and dinner, only one high-calorie/sugar treat a day and fitting in 20 minutes of exercise a day for the

duration of your trip”, she says. Don’t set yourself up for failure by saying: “I will work out in the morning before my meeting and eat salad for lunch everyday and absolutely no desserts”.

Before bedtime, get yourself into a restful state. Elite-level coach Will Woodfall, who runs London personal training studio Fit 4 Purpose, recommends his “post-flight process”. “Before stretching, have a warm bath to relax your body and raise your temperature”,



The key to keeping on track is making small, targeted goals

he says. “Concentrate on stretching your quads [front thigh muscles], hamstrings and calves for about 30 seconds each. This will encourage down-regulation of the sympathetic nervous system and increase blood flow and energy around the body. Do all this in a dark room. This will get your body ready for a deep sleep by releasing the hormone melatonin”.

The next day, try to balance the time you eat with the time you exercise. It’s easy to get confused about what your pre-training nutrition should be but, simply speaking, you need to ingest carbohydrates, which will fuel your workout. According to Alex Popple, a performance nutritionist for British Swimming, it all depends on how much time you have to digest prior to training. “Two to four hours before, you can have

a medium to large serving of carbohydrates such as pasta or rice. One to two hours before, a small to medium serving of carbohydrates such as toast, cereal or a banana, and less than one hour, have a high-carb drink such as milk or non-acidic fruit juice”.

If you find there is no pool or that the hotel’s gym consists of a knackered stepper and a few unpaired dumbbells, don’t despair. Kennedy says:

“Last year I travelled to India in the hot season so running outdoors was out of the question. I had to be creative and exercise in my room. It’s amazing how a quality workout can be performed just by using your bodyweight – push-ups, lunges, squats, stairs, jumps, you have many choices”. If the climate is conducive to jogging, ask at reception for a map of nearby routes.

Abdullah adds: “If the hotel gym is adequate but you’re short of time, try compressing your usual workout into a circuit. The key is to get in and out in 30-40 minutes. If you want to concentrate on weights, do a circuit that incorporates exercises that hit each major body part – your chest, your back, your legs, your arms and your shoulders – do one set each with no rest in between”.

If you want to focus on cardio, you could use interval training. “It doesn’t matter if it’s the bike, treadmill or cross trainer”, Abdullah says. “Work at maximum intensity for 30 seconds and then return to a comfortable pace for a minute. Alternate between the two extremes for no more than 20 minutes and I guarantee you’ll have a good workout”.



The real test is an evening of schmoozing, boozing and unhealthy eating

As a general rule, Will Woodfall recommends training in the morning so that you can “get it done and it isn’t competing with other things”. A big no-no is training right before you go to bed. “This will produce too much cortisol and adrenaline, which will turn your nervous system on and make it more difficult to sleep”, he says.

Depending on the space in your suitcase, Kennedy says one of his must-takes is the Basic TRX Suspension Training Pro Pack (from £132, trxfitness.co.uk). “It’s a full-body workout tool [which involves using elasticated resistance straps] that can be used in your hotel room or outside in the park. I have attached my TRX to trees, hotel doors, swing sets and football crossbars. The anchoring options are numerous. It weighs less than 1kg and can easily fit into carry-on luggage”.

The Pro Pack comes with a basic training DVD including a 30-minute workout that hits your upper and lower body and core. Latex resistance bands (from £4, amazon.co.uk) are also lightweight, versatile and effective.

Sheraton is one hotel brand trying to help its guests to stay fit – its sheratonfitness.com/training microsite offers four 20- to 30-minute in-room workouts from Core

Performance to download. Or if you have an iPhone, try the Fitness Builder app (£6.99), which contains 5,600 exercise images and videos and more than 750 workouts.

Technogym (technogym.com) has another solution. The Technogym Wellness Key plugs into the fitness company’s machines and sets them to your preferred workout, so you can get going straight away. It also tracks your movements and measures the intensity of your exercise, which you can later plug into your computer to see how hard you’ve worked. A new model that can also be used for outdoor exercise, My Wellness Key, is scheduled to arrive in gyms next month.

Once you have completed your regime, finished your meetings, and are feeling pretty good, then comes the real test – an evening of schmoozing, boozing and unhealthy eating. But don’t worry if you do occasionally falter. “I am all about moderation”, Mac says. “If someone wants to take me to try the best burger and fries in the city, then great. It just means I might add five minutes to my jog and eat lighter meals the following day. You have to be flexible but focused when on the road”. ■

The hotel room workout

Elite-level trainer Will Woodfall from Fit 4 Purpose has put together a workout exclusively for *Business Traveller* readers that is suitable for men and women of varying levels of fitness. “You’re working on the weak points that you wouldn’t focus on in the gym such as shoulder stabilisers and hip flexibility – key components in avoiding injury,” he says. “Do the exercises three to eight times as a circuit with little or no break in between.” For more advice, email fit4purpose@live.co.uk



Warm-up

1 Leg slide – five repetitions per leg (one set).

What does it work? Core.

Lie on your back and lift both legs off the ground so your knees are bent and directly above your hips. Draw your belly button gently into your spine, squeezing pelvic floor muscles. Take one leg and straighten it slowly towards the floor so that the heel is an inch from the ground. Bring it back to the starting position.



2 Clam – ten for each leg (one set).

What does it work? Glutes (rear muscles), hips, core.

Lie in a foetal position with your knees bent at 90 degrees, heels touching each other. Open your knees with heels still together. Hold and squeeze your glutes for five seconds. You may only have a small range of motion but ensure your hips don’t rock back as you get higher.



Workout



3 Press-up plank – six repetitions per arm.
Press ups – six repetitions (four sets in total).

What does it work? Chest, core, shoulder stabilisers, serratus (muscles in side of chest). Start in a press-up position with your feet wide apart, hands directly beneath your shoulders. Your spine should be neutral, not curved or rounded. Slowly lift one arm off the floor and touch your hip without anything moving. After doing each arm six times, finish with six press-ups, making sure that when you come up, you push your hands into the ground and spread your shoulder blades apart as if you're sliding them off your back.



4 Prone T-Raise – 12 repetitions (one set).
What does it work? Neck, upper back.

Lie down face first with your forehead on the floor. Get into a "T" position. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and lift your arms off the ground for five seconds. Don't let your arms glide down into an "arrow" shape.



5 Desk row – ten repetitions (one set).
What does it work? Upper back, biceps, lats (lower back muscles).

Lie with your legs underneath a desk, hold on to the edge and bend your knees. Row yourself up (gripping on to the table edge) so that your chest touches the desk. Tempo is – up for one second,

hold for four seconds, down slowly for four seconds.

6 Chair lateral step-up
 12 repetitions for each leg (one set).

What does it work?

Adductors (thigh muscles), glutes, hamstrings, quads. Grab a chair, preferably cushioned (this will make it more unstable and work the stabilising muscles in your feet and ankles). Stand side on to the chair and step up on to it with the closest leg (be careful not to put your weight too near to the edge, as it might fall over). Lift the toes of the straight leg up to minimise its assistance.



7 Lunge matrix – 24 repetitions (one set).
What does it work? Hamstrings, quads, glutes, adductors, hips.

Lunge forward until your back knee is an inch from the ground. Switch leg. Lunge out to the side (point toe in direction that knee is going) so that the trailing leg is straight. Switch leg. Lunge backwards on one leg and then the other. Each lunge counts as one repetition.



8 Deck squats – 12 repetitions (one set).
What does it work? Whole body.

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Descend into a deep squat position and round

your back. Gently fall on to your backside and roll on to a rounded back (like a turtle shell). Then roll forwards, fling your arms towards your hips and roll on to your feet, before standing up straight. Jump at the top if you can.



Cool-down

9 Towel crunches
What does it work? Feet, ankles.

Sit on a chair with a towel under your bare feet. Stretch the towel out lengthways in front of you and place one foot on it, the other next to it on the floor. Using only your toes, scrunch the towel in with one foot, slowly, before switching feet. There should be no movement in the knees or ankles.



10 Single-leg balance on mattress – one repetition.

What does it work? Feet, knees, hips. Do a one-legged balance on your bed for one minute per leg. You should feel your hips and feet burning because of the instability of the mattress. To make it more challenging, close your eyes.





New brands, new opportunities

Orbis Hotel Group, together with Accor – its strategic partner company – has begun the implementation of the new strategy devised for the group's budget hotels.

This huge and ambitious project is set to ensure customer satisfaction and increase the value and profitability of all brands in this segment. The project consists of modernization, change of corporate identity as well as the introduction of new products and services.

WHAT'S GOING TO CHANGE?

As a result of activities related to the new strategy, Etap hotels are set to disappear from the market, while ibis hotels will undergo thorough transformation. They will be replaced by ibis budget, ibis styles, and the new ibis brands, creating a group of three strong and innovative brands,



with “ibis” being the core. The element which will integrate the new brands will be a common DNA, based on three values: simplicity, modernity and comfort, with a clear targeting of the offer.

All brands will benefit from the mega brand leadership. ibis is the market leader in 12 countries and enjoys a growing worldwide popularity, which stems from its very good reputation. Now, this positive image is going to be transferred to all brands within the economic segment. The project includes the plan for the modernization of the existing hotels, which will include rebranding activities, introduction of new products and services, as well as an increase in the overall comfort offered to guests.

“In 2012 we will start modernizing our hotels from the budget segment.”

ORBIS

Our first and major goal is to increase the comfort of hotel beds across all brands. Secondly, we are going to renovate the interiors of our hotels. We will focus here on three main principles: simplicity, modernity and well-being. The interiors will now be more accessible, welcoming and modern. With the new décor, spaces such as reception area and lobby, will be warm and friendly places which will foster communication and facilitate establishing new contacts”, says David Henry, Sales, Marketing, Distribution & Revenue Management Director for Orbis Hotel Group.

The whole project will be accompanied by an information campaign, which will begin in 2012. Its goal is to explain the na-

ibis will become a megabrand. The three brand names will provide their clients with a freedom of choice



David Henry Sales, Marketing, Distribution & Revenue Management Director, Grupa Hotelowa Orbis

ture of the changes in the architecture of the brands and to introduce their offer.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE NEW IBIS, IBIS BUDGET AND IBIS STYLE HOTELS?

All hotels in the budget segment will receive a “refreshed” image, allowing their customers to rediscover them. The new brand architecture provides a better segmentation of products, which is expected to contribute to the development and consequently a bigger market share.

From now on budget Ibis will be primarily practical and a non-binding brand. It will provide the core features for customers who expect independence and authenticity. Ibis styles will become a colourful brand. Here, the focus will be mainly put on fun, optimism, modernity and de-

sign. Importantly, the prices will be affordable for everyone. The refreshed ibis will be a brand offering a comprehensive range of services and the highest level of comfort in its economy segment. Ibis will be dedicated to customers requiring a full product with a uniform standard of service.

All the planned changes are designed in order to tailor the offers of all budget hotels to customer needs and meet the growing and changing market expectations. “The customer of the 21st century is a sort of an “experience collector”, and choices made by him must primarily enrich his lifestyle. Hence, these modern,

in 2012. Four new budget hotels are in their final stage of construction. Two building complexes, which include hotels Ibis and Ibis Budget, are now being built in Warsaw at Bitwy Warszawskiej street, and in Cracow in Pawia street. Hotels Ibis and Ibis Budget Warszawa Reduta will offer 333 rooms, while Ibis and Ibis Budget Kraków Stare Miasto will feature 302 rooms. With the new investment the chain of budget hotel belonging to Orbis Hotel Group will increase from 18 to 22. The new hotels are situated in strategic locations – in Warsaw close to a business and shopping



attractive and innovative brands should primarily affect the senses by providing the appropriate experience. We wish to achieve this by making some changes to our existing brands. In the hospitality industry clients at each price level, expect a great location, comfortable rooms and a professional quality of service. Today’s consumers have become experts in virtually every field, including hospitality. Thanks to the development of technology, ICT and telecommunications, customers are well informed and make very informed choices”, says David Henry.

THE NEW INVESTMENTS BY ORBIS HOTEL GROUP

In Poland, the first hotels under the new brands will be put into operation

centre, and in Cracow near the Main Railway Station and Old Town.

The importance of budget hotels is increasing with every year. They are becoming increasingly popular among tourists. By introducing changes in this segment Orbis Hotel Group wants to adapt to market changes and consumer expectations. This expanded architecture of budget brands provides the guests to the hotels with the widest choice and a greater availability, while for Orbis Hotel Group it’s a real chance to expand and strengthen its position of the leader on the market. ■

www.accorhotels.com
pl-pl.facebook.com/AccorhotelsPolska

ART HOTEL



In the past, hotels were associated merely with beds and meeting rooms. Fortunately, those days are now over, and thanks to Starwood Hotels & Resorts, which first introduced branding communication, hotel brands have developed a specific character, and the world of travel has become even more interesting.

Starwood has nine global brands, and each of them has a different personality. The youngest child of the hotel chain is Le Meridien brand, acquired in 2005, which after the acquisition was transformed into a mecca for art lovers, culture and good cuisine. It was a natural thing to do, because Le Méridien is derived from the culturally rich

STARWOOD



Europe. Apart from the standard hotel services, the brand offers its guests the possibility to discover culture. During a stay at the hotel guests start looking at things from a different perspective, and thus become more creative and productive. How does this happen?

THE ART OF CREATION

Following the acquisition by Starwood, Le Meridien hired a Cultural Curator, as well as a group of creative people associated with various branches of culture,

transformation point, that is the door of the hotel, which was designed by artists and by itself is a work of art. In the lobby guests are treated with music which was created exclusively for the brand by the artists who collaborate with it within the LM100 association.

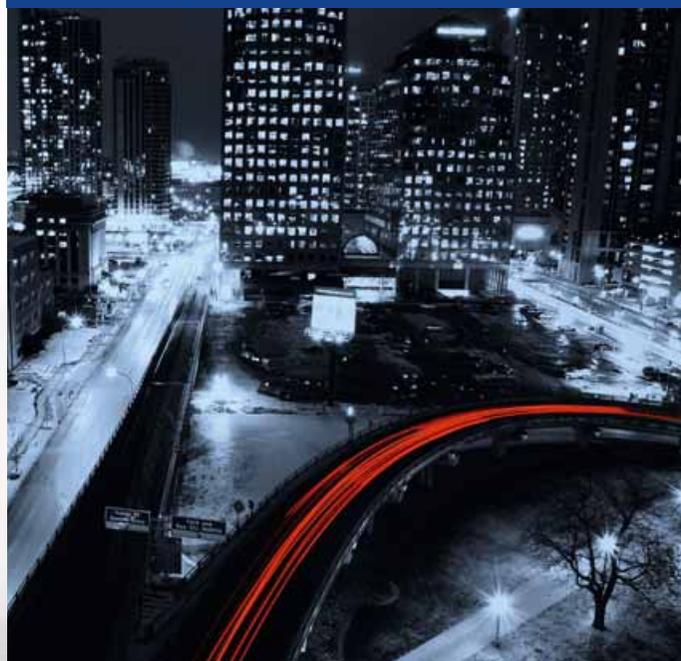
Art accompanies visitors throughout their whole stay. At check-in to the hotel, each guest receives a key that not only opens the door to the room, but also provides access to the world of culture in the art gallery which collaborates with

The art of a creative approach to everyday hotel activities is a novelty concept of Le Meridien

Le Meridien breakfast prepared under the supervision of the main chef, George Vonderichten. They begin with a small amount of orange, carrot or raspberry juice with chilli, cloves and pepper to help them wake up.

The breakfast menu also includes a croque madame, a crunchy bagel with smoked salmon and velvety tofu, egg espresso, as well as butter cake toasts.

Another element of the breakfast set are three sandwiches and cakes, made according to the recipes of chefs of



re, which started introducing innovative ideas. The group is called LM100 and its goal is to enrich the experience of a stay in Le Meridien hotels by facilitating them the access to local centres of the contemporary art.

The person who has the greatest impact on the cooperation of Le Meridien hotels with local centres of contemporary art and collaborating with various renowned artists, is the Cultural Curator and a French artist, Jerome Sans. His work for Le Meridien consist in identifying internationally recognized masters of art, architecture, design, fashion and cuisine, and hiring them to work for Le Meridien.

The new face of Le Meridien can be described with three key words: Elegance, Culture and Discovery.

The cultural adventure begins at the entrance to the hotel – at most hotels of this brand a guest passes the so-called

the brand. In the case of Le Meridien Bristol in Warsaw it's "Zachęta" gallery. At the same time the same key is an art in itself, because it was designed by artists, and guests can collect them, obtaining in this way the whole Le Meridien collection.

A SOUND IN THE LIFT

In the hotel lift there's another surprise – music created by Hisham Bharoocha – a musician, photographer and a visual arts artist. Hisham creates art inspired by the true nature of our temporary existence on earth. Through his works he tries to understand life through experiences and feelings that we have. By establishing such cooperation Le Meridien has transformed an ordinary, predictable ride in a lift into a magical experience.

Le Meridien also considers cooking as a form of art. In every LM hotel in the world, guests can try the delicious

Le Meridien hotels, and selected by JG Vongerichten.

In Warsaw, the only hotel of the brand is Le Meridien Bristol is located in Krakowskie Przedmieście street. It's a hotel with an artistic pedigree – founded by Ignacy Paderewski, it has been the pride of the Polish capital for over 110 years. ■

Le Meridien Bristol





Meet in Brussels

The Belgian capital has an abundance of venues for special events, finds **Liat Clark**

Considering Brussels is home to more than 40 European and international organisations including NATO and the European Parliament, plus 311 meeting venues and 12,000 hotel rooms, it is always surprising to find you are not jostling between crowds, head down, briefcase pinned to your body like in other major cities. Despite being less than two hours away by rail from London, Paris and Amsterdam, the Belgian capital feels surprisingly laid-back – the pace is relaxed, the people hospitable and the beer on tap.

The city is, of course, known for the last of these, with bars lining the Gothic Grand Place – a UNESCO World Heritage

The city has responded to demand by becoming ever more creative

site – and amenable bartenders eager to find you the perfect blend. Meanwhile, its gastronomic reputation continues to grow (see “Eat ethnic in Brussels”, businessstraveller.com/archive/2011/april-2011). The immigrant population has turned quiet quarters into bustling hotspots – you may have heard of Little Italy, but Little Turkey and Little Morocco? – giving gourmands more options than ever.

And this choice extends to the city’s meeting venues. Brussels has responded to demand by becoming ever more creative, turning disused factories and art nouveau treasures into dynamic spaces. Here’s a selection to consider next time you are planning an event in the city.

AREA 42

This modernist, adaptable space is a few roads over from Brussels Gare du Nord and around the corner from the beautiful Byzantine-style St Mary's Church. After entering through the nondescript door, a carpet made of fake grass leads through to the main room, signalling the quirky sentiment that runs throughout the building.

Two years ago it was an abandoned telecoms office built by Swiss architect Michel Polak. When it was acquired by French architect Edouard Poullain he imagined an artist's studio, but the abundance of space meant it could have a dual purpose. What makes it special for events is the option to display the artists' works (they have a studio in the building), including the spectacular *Happy Birthday Mr President* by Piet So, a motorised tribute to Marilyn Monroe.

There are four main rooms totalling almost 2,500 sqm, which can be split into sub-sections with curtains. A street entrance brings you into Area Four, the largest single space, able to accommodate 980 people for a reception. Glass blocks line the ceiling where artist-in-residence Peter Keene's motorised kinetic lights hang, and concrete pillars break up the clean, glossy white space.

Area Three seats 190 delegates and has views over downtown Brussels. At the end of the room, past the bannister made of giant multi-coloured matchsticks, an angular black staircase built by Antoine Meyer leads to Area Two, seating 290 people. Here there is access to a patio area with a vertical garden, where the artists grow vegetables in carbon fibre pockets. Area One, seating 300 delegates theatre-style, is an auditorium ideal for lectures. Red panels and exposed bulbs hang from the ceiling and rose trees line the small patio outside. There is lift access to the underground car park from both floors, which has 20 spaces during the day, and 140 from 6pm and at the weekend.

■ 42 Rue des Palais;
tel +32 2218 1641; area42.be

CHALET ROBINSON

The capital proves it can do quaint as well as its Flemish counterparts with this unusual venue set in Cambre parkland, a ten-minute drive from the centre. Situated on a man-made island (a boat ferries guests back and forth), the cedar wood chalet was originally built in 1877 but burned down twice in its history. In the early 20th century it was a popular spot for after-



noon tea and now, two years after its most recent opening, well-coiffed young professionals flock to the idyllic spot for gourmet food. (For a dinner event, make sure some of the restaurant's Belgian classics, such as sweet meatballs in a rich caramelised chicory gravy, are on the menu.)

An outdoor terrace overlooks grounds where bunnies and geese complete the Disney-like scene – it can be combined with the indoor restaurant to seat 200 guests. Inside is elegant, with painted black wooden worktops and flooring, white walls and silver globe-like lighting fixtures. Sash windows look out to the water, and downstairs a boardroom lined with modern art seats 16.

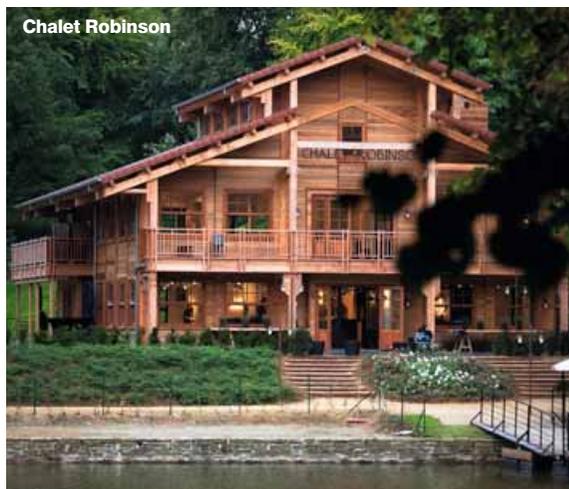
Upstairs, 200 people can be seated in the most impressive venue, which has a vaulted ceiling, exposed beams, a balcony at the front and a sizeable sheltered terrace to the rear. There is a private dining room by the downstairs entrance. The park backs on to the 4,420-hectare Sonian Forest, a nice place for a walk if you have time.

■ 1 Sentier de l'Embarcadère;
tel +32 2372 9292;
chaletrobinson.be

ROYAL MUSEUMS OF FINE ARTS

Situated by Place Royal in the city centre, this 1887 Beaux Arts building houses the Museum of Ancient Art, the Museum of Modern Art and a gallery dedicated to surrealist Belgian painter Rene Magritte. Opened two years ago, the last has

Chalet Robinson



one function room, the Magritte Room – a black-walled, atmospheric space where works including his *La Magie Noire* appear on hanging lampshades, illuminating the otherwise sombre room quite beautifully. The room seats 150 people for dinner, and guests can go upstairs to enjoy spectacular views of the city from the top floor or take a tour of the exhibition, which tells the story of Magritte's life through a chronological display of his sketches, paintings and writing.

The Museum of Ancient Art's towering Forum is of regal proportions, with columns visible in the galleried exhibition floor above. There is a permanent display of Pierre Alechinsky's vibrant and hypnotic *The Last Day*, Eglise Gustave Wappers's *Episode of the Belgian Revolution of 1830* and Constant Montald's dream-



Royal Museums of Fine Arts

like *Whiteworld*. The room can host 400 for dinner or 700 for a reception.

Behind the Forum, the modern 150-capacity Museum Café was designed by Belgium-based restaurateur Antoine Pinto and has a canteen-style setup, with a black marble bar, velvet curtains, orange and purple leather chairs, and an outdoor terrace. All rooms can be hired from 5.30pm-11.30pm, except on Wednesdays.

■ Rue de la Régence 3;
tel +32 2508 3412;
fine-arts-museum.be

WIDE GALLERY

The Wide Gallery's contemporary setup benefits from big open spaces (2,000 sqm in total) and high ceilings, as well as a location adjacent to the Ring West highway (visitors from outside the city do not need to cross town to reach the venue). Built



Wide Gallery

in 1902, the site was originally a factory for diamond tool-maker Diamant Boart and was transformed into a minimalist venue a year ago.

The white spaces, accented only by curtains that act as walls (lit with uplights to add a splash of colour), are a blank canvas for event planners. The four units can be broken up into different combi-



Botanic Gardens

nations with the moveable white veneer curtains, which can also act as a backdrop for films to be projected. (In one of the units – a huge square – films can be projected 360 degrees across the curtain walls.)

Unit 0.1, a long, narrow space seating 500 delegates, can be joined with Unit 0.2 to create an L-shape, seating 800 people. The largest single space accommodates 1,100 guests for a reception and features exposed whitewashed brickwork and towering central columns, where a bar is set up. All units have been fitted with a basic tech package and wifi is available throughout.

■ 11 Rue du Charroi; tel
+32 2344 4155; widegallery.be

BOTANIC GARDENS

At a quarter of a century old, the Jardins Botaniques has firmly established its identity as a cultural meeting point for the country's artists. Exhibitions, plays and concerts are regularly staged here, with the focus predominantly on home-grown talent, though they have also hosted bands such as Arcade Fire, Oasis and the Smashing Pumpkins.

When the gardens are not hosting music festivals, they make a great alternative for functions. The greenhouse-style hallway leading to the main venue is a great spot. With views over the grounds and tropical vegetation all around, it's ideal for a drinks reception of about 250 people, and in good weather the adjoining outdoor terrace can be used. The Orangerie can be set up for private performances or seminars and seats 350 or 700 standing, while the Cirque Royal seats 1,200 delegates but is not suitable for all types

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of events as it is in a permanent concert hall layout.

Other rooms include the Bibliothèque, where a marble fireplace and dusty books give the feel of an old university lecture room, and the Cinema, a basement seating 90 with exposed brickwork and arches. The Witloof Bar is another subterranean space, used for standing events of 200 people, while the acoustics of the Rotonde (seating 125) would suit an intimate concert or dinner.

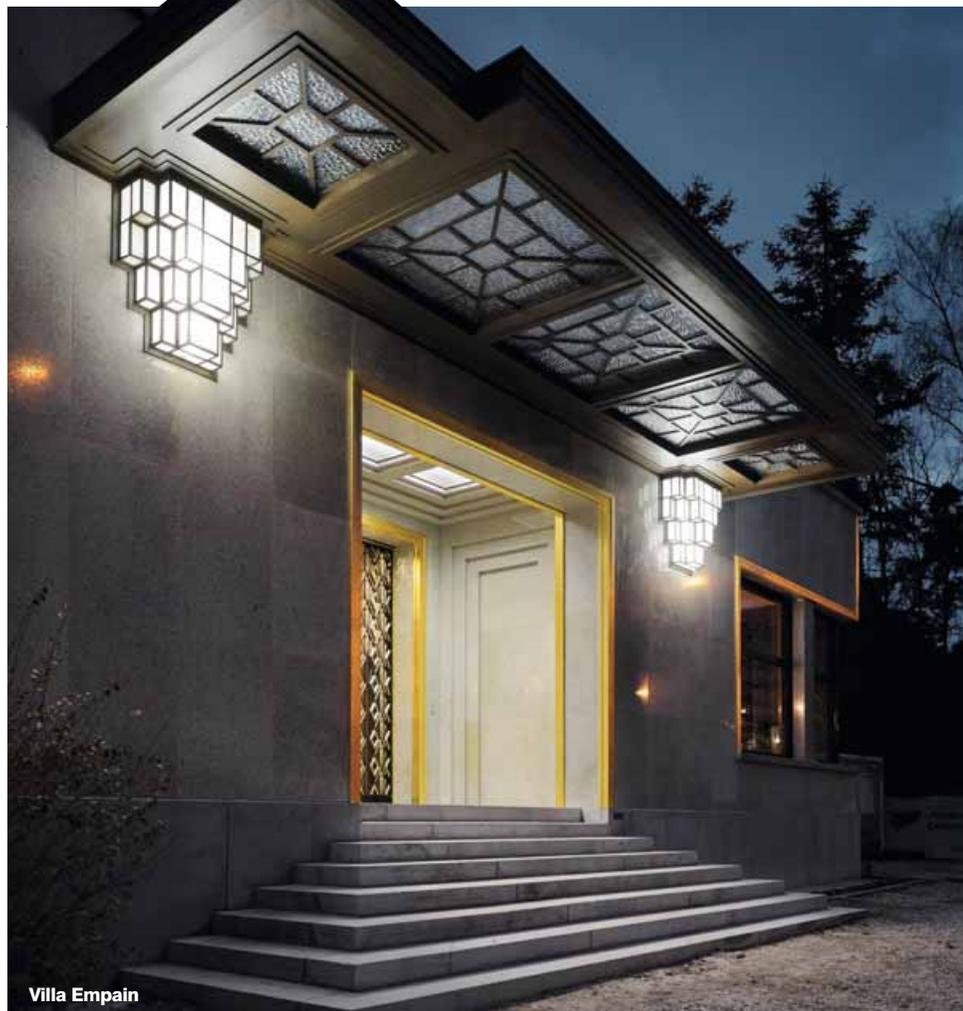
■ **236 Rue Royale; tel +32 2226 1211; botanique.be**

VILLA EMPAIN

This art deco villa was built in 1930 as a private mansion. The Boghossian Foundation restored it to its former glory in 2006, forming a cultural centre in Brussels where ideas from the East and West could meet. From the gilded motifs on the front door to the marble floors and bronze detailing throughout, it is a masterpiece. Housed in the consulate district along Avenue Franklin Roosevelt, Villa Empain is a 15-minute drive from Brussels Midi.

Open for meetings since April last year, the venue has two function rooms. The main atrium overlooks an outdoor pool and terrace (which can be covered for parties) and hosts 300 people for a reception – more if it's good weather and the terrace is used. Items from a permanent exhibit remain during events, so visitors can enjoy the *Lacets En Or* by Jean-Michel Othoniel, a giant necklace made from beads of Murano glass, gold and ash.

Upstairs is out of bounds during events (though you can ask for a group tour) but downstairs is a clean, white-



Villa Empain

walled L-shaped area that can be divided in two and seats 200 delegates for a lecture. It also features one wall lined with huge silver-leaf teardrops, *Silver Surfer Tears* by Jeff Zimmerman. At the end of the garden is a small, elegant three-bedroom house that can be rented.

■ **67 Ave Franklin Roosevelt; tel +32 2627 5230; villaempain.com**

MAX HALLET

This year marks what would have been Belgian art nouveau architect Victor Horta's 150th birthday. Horta was responsible for the Palais des Beaux-Arts, the Gare Centrale, and some beautiful townhouses that are dotted around the city, of which Max Hallet is a fine example. Most townhouses only open their doors to the public every few years, but Horta fan Michael Gilbert lovingly restored it, unveiling it for events three years ago.

Located on the chic Avenue Louise, the building was erected in 1903 with parties in mind. The entrance leads to a sweeping staircase with intricately designed brass railings that are reflected on the marble mosaic floor. Peach walls



Max Hallet

draw the eye to a restored fresco above the stairwell, and to the bay window on a mezzanine level.

One level up is a spacious landing leading to a long room suitable for conferences or dinners. The hallway, landings and upper room can be used for a reception of about 150 guests or 80 for dinner. The rich detail, from the stained-glass windows to gilded walls, almost feel too precious to touch (in fact, stilettos are not welcomed, as they could damage the floor).

■ **346 Avenue Louise; tel +32 2648 8111; events-at-horta.be**
Visit meetingpointbelgium.be

Aruba

Wonderful beaches, the hot desert, the ocean, and the strong breeze during the pirate boarding raids. The small island of Aruba offers numerous attractions to incentive travel participants, says **Jakub Olgiewicz**.

A Trip for Gold

The island is rather small, it's 30-kilometre long and 8-kilometre wide, which altogether gives the space of slightly more than 190 square kilometres, inhabited by the population of 100,000 people. The island, situated only 30 kilometres from the coast of Venezuela, was discovered over five hundred years ago by the Spanish sailors. Soon afterwards it was conquered by the Dutch, and became a part of The Lesser Antilles. Up to this day, Aruba – together with Curacao, Sint Maarten and the Netherlands – is a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and

its inhabitants – the descendants of the Arawak peoples – have Dutch nationality. The locals, who are generally very open to visitors and smile a lot, are usually the speakers of... Papiamentu, which was officially declared an official language five years ago. It's a Creole dialect being a mixture of Portuguese, Spanish, dozens of Dutch borrowings, English and French. What's more, all of the above-mentioned languages are widely used in Aruba.

WATER FROM THE DESALINATION PLANT

It's warm and sunny virtually all year round, although the high season – with higher prices – is between December to mid April. The average temperature is 28 degrees Celsius. If you aren't a fan of scorching heat, you should know remember about Aruba's cooling winds, which make beach lying and sunbathing a genuinely pleasant experience.

What's interesting the tap water there is clean and safe to drink. This is because of the world's second biggest desalina-

tion plant, which satisfies the needs of the whole island.

Getting to Aruba takes no effort, only a little time. The easiest connection is through Amsterdam. The air travel begins in Warsaw and lasts for about 12 hours, so there's no need to complain. Upon arriving we will find a considerable range of hotels, ideal for incentive travel participants. I can safely recommend the local Radisson hotel – it has good infrastructure and service, it's located in Palm Beach near the capital town and the local airport.

BOARDING ATTACK!

When your team finally arrives in Aruba, they are likely to forget what the word "boredom" means. The trip programme can satisfy everybody's needs, as there are numerous possibilities. The numerous local attractions are also widely appreciated by the tourists, especially Americans and Canadians, who come here every year to visit the local beaches and casinos. It's like Aruba is the Caribbean Las Vegas. Each year, Aruba is visited by 1.5 million tourists, which means that the island is home to rich and happy people.

The incentive travel participants have access to all water sports they would like to do, including scuba-diving lessons to see the fabulous coral reef, to windsur-

ISTOCKPHOTO / DREAMSTIME / FOTOLIA





Aruba, which is inhabited by merely 100,000 people, is visited by almost 1.5 million tourists each year

ing. On board of a big and fast catamaran, they will have a chance explore this charming island, and one evening will be spent while having a sumptuous dinner. The ship restaurant is supposed to imitate an old Spanish warship. The guests are even given bandanas and eye-patches, so they could feel like sea wolves. Thereafter, during the meal, by the candles and Caribbean music, the meal is interrupted by a group of loud and dangerous intruders. In other words, the ship is attacked by the pirates. The attacking does not last for too long, and the atmosphere gets cooler as drinks are being served. The more courageous defenders have a chance to jump into the water right from the stern.

Another unforgettable experience is jeep safari around the National Arikok Park, or a visit on a unique butterfly breeding farm. Horse-riding enthusiasts may try riding on a horse back along the beach, while those having a romantic streak may spend time walking along the coast and admiring the sun sets.

ABOVE AND BENEATH THE SURFACE OF WATER

Next, the group will be transported from Oranjestad, the centre of the island's capital to Atlantis, a submarine which goes

40 metres under the sea, which is about enough to see the wealth of the underwater fauna and flora in its natural environment. Such an expedition is a must. So is a visit to the famous Charlie's bar. The bar has been open for 70 years, and was founded by a married couple Mr. and Mrs. Brouns (in 1977 the Dutch Queen honoured them with medals for humanitarian attitude during the World War II). The bar was often frequented by numerous seamen, who sometimes could not afford to pay for the alcohol. That's why they often pawned their belongings in return. Charlie used to hang those items on the walls and under the ceilings—don't miss an opportunity to see this unique collection.

Besides, the whole stay is accompanied by music and sun shine. If you want to know more about the music, the so called limbo dance—leaning backwards under a horizontal pole to rhythmical music—is very popular there. To do this properly, the dancers are required to have great stamina and acrobatic skills. It's a challenge for visitors, although you need to know the locals can lean under a pole placed on two empty coke bottles. But it's well worth trying. Especially, because you may get to take part in a frantic dancing profession just like during the Rio Carnival. ■



Skiing in the French Sauce

DREAMSTIME / L'IMPÉRIAL PALACE - ANNECY



The mysterious Mont Blanc, perfectly prepared ski slopes, and an extensive programme of activities (also not related to skiing). This winter ski aficionados should definitely consider going to the French Alps.

Polish people usually prefer spending time in the mountains in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria or Italy. Whereas the French Alps, known mostly because of the highest peak in Europe, are a true paradise for skiers. What's more, getting there from Poland seems to be pretty easy. You only need to fly to Geneva, and later take a coach tour to reach your destination – the journey takes about 2 hours, depending on where we are heading. After arriving, we will get to see charming towns, well groomed slopes, delicious fo-

od and a whole bunch of places where they can have a real fun.

IN THE SHADOW OF A TOWERING MOUNTAIN

“Is it popular with tourists?“, the waiter is wiping the tables and doesn't even have to turn around, to know what I'm asking about. “Extremely popular“, he says, “but unfortunately most people don't bother to take a guide“. The restaurant overlooks the highest mountain in Europe. It's giant, impressive and awe-inspiring. You could say, you can look the Mont Blanc in the eye, as Vertigo restaurant is located ▶



Alpe d'Huez

on the top of an adjacent mountain, 1838 metres above the sea level. But that's not even half of Mont Blanc height, which is 4810 metres. Climbing Mont Blanc isn't a thing for beginners, the expedition is difficult, especially as the mountain top can be reached only within a few hours early in the morning. The locals recommend climbing only with a guide, but numerous people decide to give it a try on their own. And accidents do occur, so if you are an inexperienced climber, unassisted mountaineering isn't recommended.

There are easier ways to have a look at Mont Blanc – for instance you can get on board of a four-person plane. There is an airport nearby the town of Megeve. Although you may have different associations with the word “airport”. The runway is located on a hill slope, and when the aircraft takes off, and goes down the slope, you have a feeling that the pilot won't have enough time to lift the plane, and it will end up in the nearby forest. Fortunately, the plane goes up, and within a couple of minutes you get to see Mont Blanc. The view of snow-covered mountain slopes and protruding rocks is really stunning. In the sun, they look both dangerous and delicately. This is undoubtedly something for photography-enthusiasts – who would not even try to picture the majesty of Mont Blanc with even the most simplistic camera. About an hour-long flight around Mont Blanc

is one of the most interesting attractions when visiting the French Alps, so if you are planning to go there you need to remember about including it in your itinerary.

An excellent idea for an interesting evening is going on a night mountain escape wearing snow rockets. Naturally Mont Blanc will not be your target, but there are plenty of other mountains here, as well as companies which have such an attraction on their offer. Contrary to its name, snow rockets do not look like rockets at all – their shape resembles openwork canoes with studs. Walking isn't really comfortable, but at least snow is no longer an obstacle. Especially, as the mountain you climb during such a trip can be really steep at times. What was supposed to be a 20 minutes’ march changes into an hour, and after another 15 minutes you start sweating like a pig. On top of all that, you might get genuinely depressed at the sight of a 60-year-old mountain guide jumping all over the slope without even the slightest signs of tiredness. But the effort is rewarded once you reach a mountain top restaurant – it doesn't look very impressive, even for a mountain inn, but the food there is genuinely excellent. But what can you say? It's France, after all.

GETTING DOWN TO SOME SKIING

The French Alps is a real paradise for ski enthusiasts. The Rhones-Alpes re-

A queue of people dreaming about reaching Mont Blanc never seems to end. You need to bear in mind, however, that employing a mountain guide makes the whole thing a lot safer

gion is famous for good organization and excellent tourist accommodation. A place which is really worth attention is Alpe d'Huez station – a winter sport centre famous since 1930's. It's located on a plateau at 1860 metres above the sea, and boasts really high level of sun exposure. In December the sun shines here for about 7,5h a day, while in April – for 11 hours. On average there are about 300 sunny days a year here. Alpe d'Huez consists of six ski resorts, where we can find 132 slopes with the total length of 230 km. There are pistes for both beginners and advanced skiers, who will face a challenge to get through pistes with huge elevation difference. Among them, there is the well-known Sarenne, the longest black diamond ski slope in the world. It is 16 kilometres long, starting from the top of Pic Blanc. It takes 90 minutes to go through it, and it's really difficult, so the beginners should better stay out of it. VISALP Skipass, which you can buy at Alpe d'Huez, is a whole package of attractions, among which we can find free skiing at night, access to skate rinks, two heated swimming pools, as well as museums and a sport centre, where you can play squash, badminton or football.

Another huge ski resort is Les 2 Alpes. It's located an hour's drive from Grenoble. It offers 104 ski slopes of total length of 225 kilometres. Thanks to the glacier,





Val Thorens



Megeve

tourists coming here can expect access to natural snow and ski all year round. The ski pistes stretch from 1300 to 3600 metres above the sea. These elevation differences can be reached while skiing only, without the need to use ski lifts. What is special about Les 2 Alpes, is the fact that the beginners slopes are to be found on higher levels, and the bottom ski lift stations are on the same level as hotels and hostels. The region is famous for variety of slopes, and lots of attractions for freeride lovers, who enjoy skiing off-piste.

Val Thorens station is the highest situated ski resort in Europe. It's located at 2300 metres above the sea, and is in the centre of an area called Les Menuires (Three Valleys), with the total slope length of 600 kilometres. Starting from mid November to May you can expect good snow conditions. The beginner skiers will be delighted to stay at Val Thorens – there are four free ski tows, and eight easy ski lift, which you can use at 50% discount. Another huge local attraction is a snow park, covering the area of 90 square kilometres. It offers a huge selection of skiing attractions, mostly aimed at freestyle fans. What is also worth mentioning is a mountain cycle path, which makes it possible to cycle down a snow-covered mountain. It's 6 kilometre-long and the elevation difference amounts to 700 metres. In Val Thorens, there is also the

longest luge track in France, and car enthusiasts may enrol for ice driving lessons. at 3.00p.m. the fans of dancing can have fun in an outdoor disco, La Folie Douce, located at 2400 metres above the sea.

WHEN YOUR SKIING DAY IS OVER

Skiing is indeed a great sport, but a stay in the Alps is also an excellent idea to spend your time in an interesting way. Especially, as the local towns are really charming. Annecy, is a town with impressive old town area and 12th-century castle, situated by a lovely lake. In the summer season, the lake is a true paradise for all water sports enthusiasts, while in winter it's a nice area to go for a walk. There is the Imperial hotel overlooking the lake. Annecy is well-known for organizing International Animated Film Festival. Recently it was also a candidate to host Winter Olympics in 2018, but unfortunately it lost to Pyeongchang, South Korea. Another town worth visiting is Megeve. It has everything a mountain town needs to offer – atmospheric mediaeval-like streets, restaurants and pubs, as well as shops selling wine and cheese. During Christmas season, this town has yet another attraction – a huge 10-metre high Christmas tree decorated with 3 thousand Swarovski crystals, which stands each year in the market square.

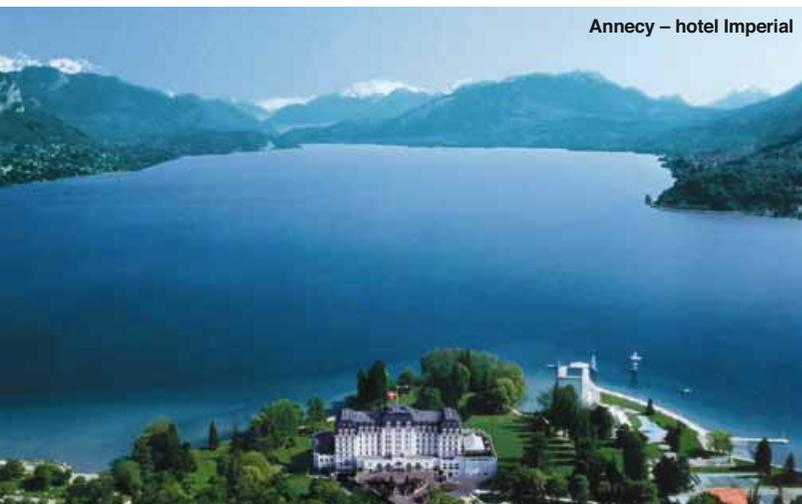
A stay in the mountains would not be complete without the extensive offer of the

so-called apres ski, where you can go when you are done skiing. There are plenty of them in the Alps. There is a huge selection of fitness clubs and spa salons, numerous concerts and events are organized, and there are lots of pubs open until early morning hours. The already extensive offer can be completed with access to swimming pools, winter amusement parks, skate rinks, tennis courts, sled dog races, a snowmobile ride, not to mention the good old shopping possibilities – and the mountain towns abound in various shops and stores. Be really careful with those selling cheese – even one visit might be addictive. The hotel infrastructure in the French Alps is also fantastic. We can choose from budget hostels, as well as 5-star luxurious hotels. An interesting – and more and more popular option – is renting a suite. Bear in mind, that the most advantageous option is booking a place in a package. It's often a form of promotion, which gives us additional benefits in a form of free ski-passes, access to a swimming pool, spa, or skiing lessons. ■

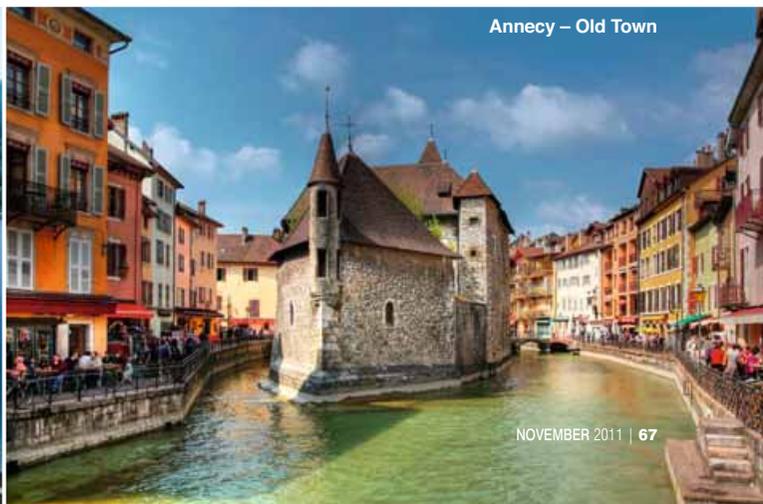
Andrzej Czuba



Choinka dekorowana przez firmę Swarovski



Annecy – hotel Imperial



Annecy – Old Town

The Colours of Autumn

It seems that in autumn nothing can compensate for the lack of sun. However, manufacturers of home electronics are doing their best to warm us up with their new gadgets. **Olga Chelchowska** has selected the most interesting ones.



Toshiba AT200

The name comes straight from Star Wars as does the technology used in this device. Toshiba prides itself on its latest tablet, which, apart from a great deal of useful features, is above all extremely thin. The company's engineers managed to stuff all the electronics in the chassis which is only 7.7 mm thick (or thin, in this case). The 10.1-inch LED, multitouch screen produces excellent image with the resolution up to 1280 x 800 pixels. The device is powered by TI OMAP 4430 processor, clocked at 1.2GHz, with 1 GB RAM, and the 32 or 64 GB hard drive. The tablet runs on Android™ 3.2, Honeycomb, and has all the necessary interfaces and ports: microUSB, microSD, WiFi or Bluetooth.

Summary: *The 32 GB version is said to cost around €700. The manufacturer claims that the device can be operated for up to 8 hours without recharging.*



Garmin eTrex

Small and handy GPS navigator for enthusiasts of hiking escapades. Three models offered by Garmin are waterproof, so they can take an accidental splash or dunk in the water and still continue to perform. Of course they can also be mounted on a boat, kayak or in the car.

The high-end model eTrex 30, also features an electronic compass and a barometric altimeter. It's also the first such device in the world, which, apart from GPS satellites receives the signals of GLONASS system, which is an independent network of satellites operated by Russia. This double tracking gives you 24 satellites extra which considerably speeds up the satellite fix.

Summary: *Over 24 hours of battery life makes sure that even the biggest loser won't get lost in the wilderness. The most expensive model costs €249.*

SANYO PLC-HP7000L

This is definitely a professional offer for a large company, where presentations must be carried out on the top level, in order to gain customer recognition. In fact, this is a professional cinema set hidden in a box weighing merely 23 pounds. The latest Sanyo projector offers Full HD image thanks to 1920x1080 resolution, and brightness of 7,000 lumens, while the technology QuaDrive enhances colour quality, enriching their range by 20 percent. Thanks to the removable lenses the projector can be adjusted to any environment, and the manufacturer provided a 3-year guarantee for the device.

Summary: *The excellent image quality doesn't come cheap. It's enough to say that this professional projector costs PLN 78,500 (about €14,000).*



LG LSM 100

It looks like a mouse, but features a number of other functions. LG's has created and recently demonstrated model LSM 100 with an on-board scanner. It's just enough to push a button to run the SmartScan function of the device and drag the device over the document. The result can be saved in several formats, from Word through TIFF to the traditional PDF. The device can scan documents which are as large as A3 size. Interestingly, the mouse is also equipped with OCR technology, developed by LG, to convert scanned text into a Microsoft Word document, which you can then freely edit.

Summary: *The OCR technology is a big advantage here, saving us from having to manually re-type paper documents.*





Philips Stretch Scratch

Headphones for demanding audiophiles, and above all those who choose active way of spending free time, without sacrificing their beloved music. It's not surprising then that the design of the headphones was supervised by the engineers from a well known sports brand O'Neill. SHO9567 have good parameters, provide dynamic sound quality, and possess a very flexible headband, bending in every possible direction to provide comfort and safety, even on ski slopes. The cord is made of tangle-free material. The headphones cost €100.

Summary: You may want to consider not only the traffic on the slope, but the intensity of the sound. Remember that too loud music in your ears can make you deaf.



Panasonic HDC Z10000

The 3D craze that has dominated the whole world is at its highest. No wonder then, that all reputable manufacturers show new innovations based on this technology, at almost every fair. The novelty introduced by Panasonic, should appear in stores in December, before Christmas. The camera is equipped with dual, 3MOS system which allows you to record video in full HD quality both in 2D and 3D. The new Crystal Engine Pro II processor offers excellent quality with minimum distortion and noise. The built-in microphones record 5-way stereo sound and zoom function lets you record in 3D even minor details.

Summary: The device has incredible parameters, but you will still need special glasses in order to enjoy the sense of 3D depth.

In the Shadow of

Long, Lush Grass

Among the hundreds of spices we can use to spice up our dishes, one of the most interesting is the lemon grass. It can be grown at home, has a unique flavour, adds interesting taste to your food, and if you serve it to your guests, it will leave no-one indifferent.

Cymbopogon – that's the proper name (admittedly, it fits more to some ancient dinosaur than to a spice) of lemon grass, and actually of a whole group of grass, known under this name. It comes originally from Asia, specifically from the Philippines, but it's popular around the world, enriching dishes with its strong smell and flavour of lemon mixed with ginger. The smell comes from the oil which can be found in the leaves and the stem of the plant, and which is similar to the substance found in the lemon rind.

When you use fresh lemon grass, you should only utilize the lower part of the stem - you can add it to dishes chopped or in one piece. When it's in the powdered form, we assume that a teaspoon is equivalent to one stalk, which is important while portioning and dependant of the taste we want to obtain. The stems can even be frozen for several months – they don't lose their flavour, but remember to pack them in a bag.

Lemon grass is popular in cuisine of many countries, and is ideal as an addition to meat, fish, seafood and soups. It's an excellent ingredient of Indian curry.

Lemon grass comes from Philippines. However, it's gaining recognition around the world

The stems are also added to tea, giving them unique, strong flavour. It also goes well with coconut milk, and Thais often use it in this way, making the delicious coconut soup.

To make this soup, we need have ginger (or galangal, a spice with ginger-pepper aroma), two stalks of lemon grass, leaves of Kaffir lime (you can buy them online, naturally dried), 300 grams of chicken breast, soy sauce, lemon juice, coriander, red or black paste of chilli, chopped chillies, fish sauce and coconut milk (3 cups). Mix half of the coconut milk with ginger (6 slices), add the lime leaves and 2-centimetre long pieces of lemon grass cut lengthwise. This stock should boil, then add to it chicken cut into thin stripes, the fish sauce and sugar. When chicken is cooked, add rest of the coconut milk, soy sauce, and again wait until everything boils. Place lemon juice and chilli paste at the bottom of the bowls in which the soup will be served. Pour soup into them, and finally decorate it with leaves of coriander and chilli peppers.

Now the best part, for those who may have trouble with finding lemon grass in stores, or are simply passionate about growing plants. Lemon grass can be grown at home. It's just enough to buy its seeds and put them into the ground in a pot. The pot can stand outside in the summer, preferably in hard sunlight. In winter you'd better keep it inside - preferably, of course, in the kitchen. Apart from its taste, we will also have an occasion to admire its appearance, because mature lemon grass looks especially nice. Still, there's nothing better in the kitchen than the combination of taste and good looks. ■

Artur Kolger



*The Unfulfilled
Promise of the
Wine from
Israel*

BIGSTOCKPHOTO

Israel, in the minds of the Europeans, is a country affected by war. A Western Culture representative squeezed between the Arabic world of the Middle East. Given all that, it seems especially extraordinary, that while travelling around this little country, you can sense the smell of wine originating not from Europe, but Australia – a country which is as exotic to Israel, as it's to us.

It's an unusually diverse and incoherent country. Strong, religion-based ideology, which helped this country develop so quickly, has collapsed, and on its ruins, each person tries to fulfil their dreams. Modern and Western culture-oriented, secular Tel Aviv clashes with more Orthodox and bound to Judaist traditions Jerusalem, from where you can see the West Bank barrier separating it from the Muslim world. Here you can experience the fusion of cultures, normally scattered around various continents. That is also the case with wine. The fact that the New World models mark its presents in Israel - mostly because of international mass producers - doesn't mean, there is nothing behind it. As the vast majority of wines is sold on the local market, makes it difficult for Europe to realize the colourful diversity of the wine world in Israel. And so, among the giant producers, making mediocre indistinct wines with no reference to the character of their place of origin, you can also find a great number of local garage wine makers, who just realize their own ideas. In this case, the lack of winemaking traditions, like in Bordeaux, is a huge advantage, as nothing seems to stand in the way to finding better and better grape varieties or methods of vinification suitable for a particular strip of land.

GARAGE WINE

In Europe, when we refer to garage wines, we mean those produced in small quantities, not popularized, but having a unique, often legendary quality. In Israel, the term can be also understood literally. After the times of collective farming the country was left with hundreds of kibbutzim - isolated and self-sufficient communities, usually erected by means of collective effort. And although its ideology was ambitious and impressive, the same can't be said about the quality of the buildings. And thus, the-

re are housing estates with colourful buildings - or even metal barracks - sometimes inhabited by surprisingly smart and sophisticated people. You need to remember Israel was built and developed by the Intelligentsia, on the most basic agrarian level. That's why their wines are bright and dynamic. Each one of those micro-producers, whose „cellars” are equipped only with two stainless steel tanks and several barrels, produces wines of different character and experiments with different varieties, although the most popular ones are still Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. But regardless of the idea, each winemaker aims to achieve better and better quality. They use different methods to plant the vineyards, refuse to use heavy machines, which are much common viticulture element in Israel than in Europe, and try to capture the unique character of the soil and atmosphere of their own vineyard, instead of buying grapes from all over the country, the way mass „winemakers” do it. The effects are diverse: there are feeble wines with no character, as well as highly extractable, tiring and woody ones. But that's nothing more than just childhood diseases - you just need to grit your teeth and wait.

EXPENSIVE KASHRUT

Wine in the Jewish culture has a far greater meaning than in Christianity, and there is a whole set of rigid regulations and procedures for it to be considered kashrut. And taking into account the fact that most of the wine is sold locally, hardly any winemakers dares to ignore the Orthodox consumers. In a nutshell, for a wine to be kashrut, no gentile can have anything to do with the grapes and the wine itself throughout the winemaking process, from the moment when the grapes arrive, to the last stage of wine-bottling. What it means, that only Orthodox Jews under the rabbi's supervision can

work in a vineyard, and they get much higher salary for their work than anybody else. It's often the case that the wine-producer is a non-Orthodox, and cannot even touch a barrel, which is considered absurd in other countries. That's why some of the producers gives up kashrut wine making, because they feel the need to control wine expression and character, even though the wine might become



What we get in Israel, is wine of tolerable quality and absolutely unacceptable price

less popular. The whole procedure makes the winemaking much more expensive, especially with smaller producers, who then have to increase the price. And given the fact that the vineyard area almost always belong to the State, who leases it to wine producers, at the end of the day, what we get is decent wine of tolerable quality and absolutely unacceptable price. That's why when it comes to simple wines, consumed daily, Israel will never be able to compete with the rest of the world, but as for the garage wines the forecasts are quite positive. You just need to have a seat, and wait until the increasing quality of Israeli wine finally matches its exorbitant price. ■

Michał Poddany & Robert Mielżyński

A BUSINESS THEME(A)

It's a car with an American pedigree, but finished in the Italian style and designed to drive it on European roads. What model is it? You're bound to be surprised! I'm talking about Lancia Thema.

First, a few words about business. Not so long ago, Chrysler boldly sailed across the waves of the American automotive industry. Year after year, the crew of the ship found it more and more difficult

to avoid financial reefs, and finally a great storm came. Chrysler didn't endure the crisis, or – using our little sea analogy – the flagship began to sink. A helping hand was offered by Fiat, led by a visionary manager, Sergio Marchionne. The Italians took over Chrysler, but they didn't do it just to sink it completely. The company was restructured, and its technological assets – after an appropriate injection of money – was used to start a completely new venture. What did the gentlemen from Fiat do? They decided, to put it mildly, tailor all that was Ame-

rican to the tastes and requirements of drivers from Europe. In this way, they created Fiat Freemont based on Dodge Journey, and Lancia Thema – a luxury saloon based on Chrysler 300C.

ITALIAN? AMERICAN?

Technological marriages aren't always successful, especially when it comes to transplanting not only the whole construction, but also very different habits. In the case of Chrysler and Fiat these fears proved unfounded – Lancia Thema is a successful model. To put simply – it's much better than its predecessor. Why? At the cost of a billion dollars (so much money was invested in the modifications done to Chrysler 300C) the American limousine has received quite a different face. The body of Thema resembles its predecessor, but it's only a slight similarity (I'd even say – arguable). Thema differs from the 300C with many elements, such



as body panels, lights, cabin interior and – what is especially worth noticing – its finish. Here, of course, someone could interrupt me, saying, “An American car worse than an Italian one? You must be joking. We’re not dummies and don’t believe in such nonsense, after all models from the USA have always been a model to copy from.” They were, but it’s already a thing of the past. American car manufacturers have for several years, been notorious for their quality of assembly, and poor attention to detail. However, Lancia Thema is quite different. The Italian car tempts with its beautifully stitched leather which covers the dashboard (in the executive version – in two different shades), with real wood which can be found on the doors and the console between the front seats. It’s really not made of plastic! Real wood, real leather, real metal, real chrome. As a result, everything looks very stylish.

TO BE EUROPEAN

American limousines drive fast, but they are generally kings of the straights – powerful engines provide good acceleration, but in the corners you really need to be a pro to keep the car on the road. Thema is different in this respect, because the Italian designers have not only rebuilt the suspension (with a multi-link rear), but also the steering – Lancia drives very precisely, and goes exactly where its driver wants it to go. What’s more, it brakes like a sports car. Finally, it doesn’t consume that much petrol (which is just natural for cars “made in the USA”). The Italians know that in this part of the world we don’t like the typical “gas-guzzlers”. I mean, we do like them, but we can not afford to buy and maintain the V8s. That’s why Thema has indeed a strong petrol unit, but only a 6-cylinder one (286 bhp), and is also available with two 3-litre, 6-cylindre diesel engines pro-

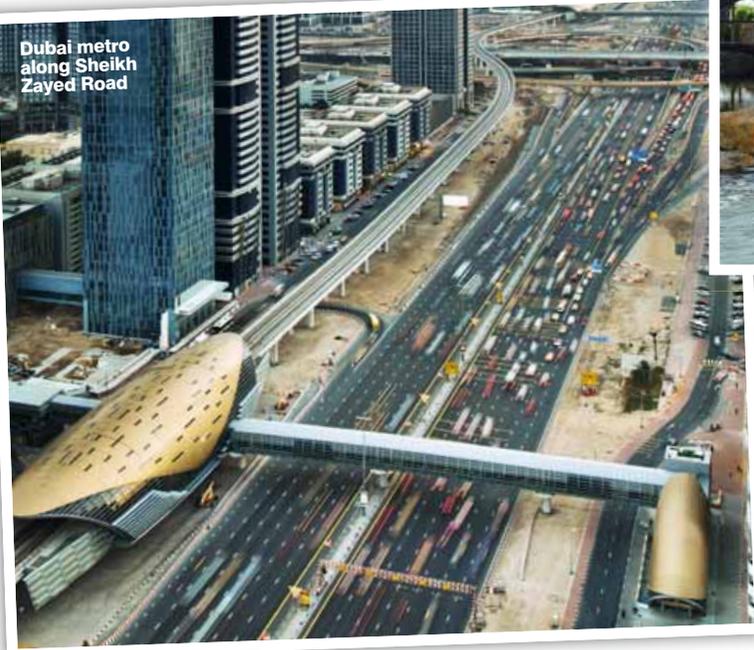
ducing 190 and 239 bhp. These are exactly the motors we like in Milan, London, Paris or Warsaw – they’re dynamic, but also quite economical! Let’s keep our fingers crossed for the success of this model, which will be quite difficult to achieve. This is because Lancia has a number of its rivals, and not everyone wants to believe that the times of miserable Italian quality are a thing of the past. Especially because Thema is Italian, but is assembled on production lines in... Canada. Well, globalization, you see. ■

*Rafał Jemielita
autor jest dziennikarzem
miesięcznika Playboy i współprowadzi
program Automaniak w TVN Turbo
zdjęcia: materiały producentów*

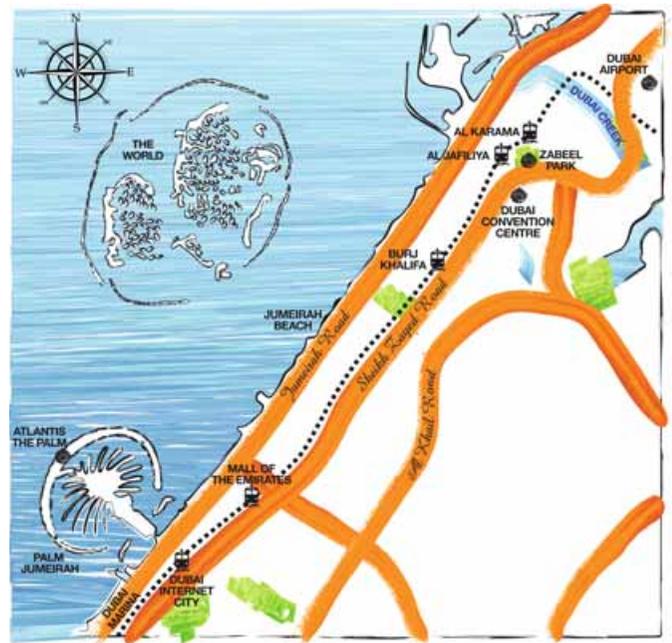


Dubai

Dubai metro
along Sheikh
Zayed Road



Zabeel Park



Dominic Ellis finds the new metro offers a quick and easy way of getting around the ever-changing emirate

AL KARAMA

Dubai's swish new metro has given visitors a comfortable alternative to navigating the city by air conditioned car. This year has seen ten more stations open on the Red line, which runs from one end of the city to the other, and eight remaining stops are due to open before the end of the year, by which time all 29 will be operational.

If you only have a short time to explore, the metro is an ideal way to get a snapshot of the city, although bear in mind that the trains – which are driverless – don't race along quite as fast as the cars beneath on the Sheikh Zayed Road (perhaps that's a blessing). Trains run from 6am to 11pm Saturday to Thursday and 2pm to 12am on Fridays.

The emirate is known for its super-sleek hotels and malls but if you want a taste of real Dubai, alight at Al Karama station for your first stop – the station is slap-bang in the middle of this bustling district. Despite the city's non-stop development, Karama looks much

the same as it did ten years ago, and therein lies its appeal. You'll find everything from sunglasses (pairs at Al Wadi Optics start from Dhs 70/£12) to tailors, and you certainly won't go hungry, with all manner of staple fast-food brands standing arm in arm with Indian and Asian eateries – Thai Terrace takes some beating.

Walk straight over to 6a Street and Digital Photo Express will print off any pictures you need in ten minutes. A few metres further on, you'll come to Open House and Singapore Deli on your right – take a look back over your shoulder for a striking image of the world's tallest tower, Burj Khalifa (more on that later), framed by an altogether more humble foreground of low-rise buildings and shops.

ZABEEL PARK

One stop on, at Al Jafiliya, you'll find Zabeel Park, a surprising green-and-aquatic oasis in the heart of the car-covered city – it's a good place to stretch

your legs or gather your thoughts. Located next to the station and a stone's throw from the Dubai International Exhibition and Convention Centre, the vast park has a split design, divided by the highway and linked by a grandiose pedestrian suspension bridge. Chief attractions include the 24,000 sqm Stargate theme park, built in the form of a spaceship with five wings that house exhibition and retail spaces covering various themes. Otherwise, wander around the innumerable paths, pedal away on the boating lake or unwind with a good book under a palm tree.

BURJ KHALIFA

You can't visit Dubai and not go up the Burj Khalifa, which is served by its own metro station, four stops on from Al Ja-



Burj Khalifa



View of Ski-Dubai from Kempinski Ski Chalet



Atlantis the Palm



Palm Jumeirah

filiya. Open since January, the stats of the shimmering, 828-metre-tall structure are jaw-dropping – with more than 160 habitable storeys, it took 330,000 cubic metres of concrete, 39,000 tonnes of steel reinforcement, 103,000 square metres of glass and 22 million man hours to build.

After some initial hiccups and stories of visitors getting stuck prompted a closure, the lightning-fast lifts to At The Top, the 124th-floor observation deck, seem to be in working order. Travelling at a speed of ten metres per second, the journey up takes about a minute, and the views that greet you really are spectacular, showing just how quickly this desert land has turned into a metropolis – it is better on a clear day, though, and if you are of a nervous disposition, bear in mind that you might, ever so slightly, feel the tower sway. Consider too that the cost is similarly stratospheric – starting at Dh100 (£17) and rising to Dh400 (£68) if you want immediate entry and to dodge any queues. Visit burjkhalifa.ae

At the foot of the tower is the ultra-exclusive Armani hotel. Open since April, its eight food and drink outlets include the sleek Armani lounge, a great spot to have a drink and watch the jaunty Du-

RECORD BREAKING

Not only is Burj Khalifa the world's tallest building, but it also has:

- the largest number of storeys in the world (163)
- the world's tallest service elevator (504 metres)
- the highest swimming pool in the world (level 76).

bai Fountain dance to music on the half-hour – the tunes are piped into the venue via speakers. Reservations recommended. Visit armani-hotels.com

MALL OF THE EMIRATES

After that performance, pop back on the metro for four stops to the shopping mecca that is the Mall of the Emirates (or “M-o-E”, as the locals call it) – there is a direct walkway from the station. The 223,000 sqm centre is home to more than 470 stores ranging from high-street to high-end, over 75 food outlets, a 14-screen multiplex cinema, the Magic Planet family entertainment centre, a Kempinski hotel and even Ski Dubai, the emirate’s very own winter wonderland in the desert. Only in Dubai. But perhaps less well known is the DUCT-AC Community Theatre and Arts Centre on level two, which regularly hosts drama, art and photography exhibitions, as well as a range of workshops – mosaic making or pottery, anyone? Open daily 10am-10pm (until 12am Thurs-Sat); malloftheemirates.com

ATLANTIS THE PALM

Back on for two stops to Dubai Internet City, and it’s a short cab ride to the opulent water-themed resort Atlantis the Palm. Situated at the apex of the crescent of the man-made Palm Jumeirah island, Atlantis has become as much a tourist draw as a place to stay since it opened two years ago – the fantastically over-the-top lobby buzzes with visitors. If you’re into attractions of the aquatic kind, you’re in luck – the Lost Chambers is home to some 65,000 marine animals, while there’s also the Aquaventure water park, and Dolphin Bay, where you can swim with the slippery mammals. Alternatively, simply have a drink in one of the sea-facing bars and enjoy the Gulf views before you return to reality. Visit atlantisthepalm.com ■ See dubaitourism.ae



Piotr Kalita has been associated with the air travel market for almost 20 years. He specializes in corporate and diplomatic travel. Do you have any questions? Ask Peter. Send your question at redakcja@businesstraveller.pl

CHANGING A BOOKING

Since the beginning of this year, I've been dealing with my boss's air travel bookings. I try to book tickets in advance, because it's cheaper. My boss often changes the itinerary, a few days before the departure. Our travel agency is never able to tell me, how much the change is going to cost. Why can't they estimate it a bit earlier?

Magda

Dear Magda,

It's indeed difficult to specifically estimate the cost of booking changes, because the price is dependant on several factors. The tickets bought in advance are usually issued at restrictive fares. The price of the ticket is relatively low, but the changing possibilities are heavily restricted. When changing such a ticket, the airline usually levies two charges. The first one is a penalty charge for changing the tickets, and it's declared in advance. It's usually between €50 to €100. If you change the reservation, and the tickets for your next chosen flight are still available in the same

fare, then it's the only charge you need to pay. The situation is a whole lot different, if there are no available tickets in a given fare. It means, you have to pay the price difference between your former fare, and the new one. It gets even more complicated if you change the booking, and fail to meet the requirements for the original fare. For instance, a fare requires at least a three-day stay in your destination, but your plans change, and you need to come back on the next day. Then you need to pay the difference to a less-restrictive fare – for instance 1-day-long stay. It's also the case if you want to prolong your stay. Special offer tickets are usually valid within 3 months. If you want to change the return date, you need to pay the difference to 6-month or 12-month fare. Additional charges are levied if you change the route or stopover airport.

Each airline has a special first minute fare – very cheap, and sold a few months in advance. These are usually not subject to any changes or refunds.

That's why it's not always possible to give the precise amount of charge you need to pay. Mostly because nobody knows what fares will be available on given routes. With business trips, it's recommended booking in higher fares, which tend to be more flexible and more available.

TIPS IN THE SEA

I bought a ticket for a cruise for me and my wife. I received an information that the price includes the keelage, but the tips will be required. How am I to pay those tips? Is it obligatory? Should I expect any other charges that might surprise me?

Adam

Dear Adam,

When booking a cruise ticket, the price usually includes taxes and the keelage. No other charges are levied, because only you can decide what ship attractions you are going to use. The basic price includes accommodation in a cabin, meals and soft drinks, access to swimming pools, a fitness centre, a theatrical performance and the cinema. To get all the details, have a look at the information brochure you received along with the booking confirmation. The price does not include shore excursions (and the visas), drinks ordered in a bar, private fitness sessions, cosmetic treatment in the Spa centre, Internet and telephone access, casino tokens and airport transfer. The service is some theme

restaurants is also charged extra. Some economic passengers limit themselves to those general attractions, but there are also some travellers, for whom the extra-paid facilities are considered are more exclusive. It's convenient to use a Sea Pass card, where all your expenses will be assessed. You can check your account balance regularly. The payment for additional facilities or shopping will be deducted from your credit card based on your authorization during the check-in.

Tips are a different story. In Poland it still isn't a common custom. Tourists from the USA and Western Europe usually leave 10-15% tips in re-



restaurant, if they enjoyed the service. Remember, it's a standard behaviour to leave tips on a cruise ship. And the service there is really excellent.

Most carriers makes it easier for the passengers and suggests the amount of the tips, and automatically deducted from your credit card. The tips are usually around 10-12 USD a person for one day. The tips are then given to the cabin crew, waiters and their assistants. Undoubtedly it's a huge facilitation for the passengers. You can always leave an additional tip to particular crew members as a token of your appreciation for really good service.

Have a great time during the cruise.

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