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Miami nights
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VIEW COSMOPOLITAN WARSZAWA

BEFOR MIAMI DISAPPEARS

An island wedged between Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic, Miami Beach is predicted to be one of the first places to disappear under rising sea levels, with flooding already a major problem. This, however, isn't putting off developers, who are opening hotels like there is no tomorrow.

Miami Beach is already the most densely populated of the city's districts in terms of accommodation, with more than 150 properties. The past year or so has seen more than a dozen significant openings from brands such as Marriott's Edition and Starwood's Aloft, as well as numerous historic revamps on South Beach, famed for its art deco architecture.

Sporting charming Spanish-Colonial design, Casa Claridge's on Collins Avenue reopened after a six-month facelift at the end of 2014, and is now a sister property to Alan Faena's new Faena hotel across the road. The Argentinian developer is in fact creating a new neighbourhood here. The US$1 billion Faena District Miami Beach comprises the Faena House luxury apartment block, designed by Foster and Partners and unveiled last autumn, and a Rem Koolhaas cultural centre, the Faena Forum, which will open this spring. A Faena Bazaar mall and two residential towers dubbed Faena Versailles will be arriving in 2017.

Two years ago, the Versace mansion on Ocean Drive became an opulent ten-suite hotel. Last year, it launched a fine-dining Italian restaurant, Gianni's at the Villa Casa Casuarina, which overlooks a beautiful garden courtyard that can host 250 guests. Enjoy our cover article that might inspire you to spend at least one night in Miami Beach.

Marzena Mróz

Marzena Mróz
redaktor naczelna

ÖLÜDENİZ

Najczęściej wymieniane wśród najlepszych plaż na świecie Ölüdeniz, to miejsce gdzie Matka Natura pokazała na co ją stać. Turkusowe wody, błękitna laguna, soczysta zieleń gór i złote plaże... Można by się zastanawiać, czy widoki mogłoby być jeszcze piękniejsze. Oczywiście, że tak! ! Jednak żeby je zobaczyć trzeba lubić wyzwania. Paralotniarze mówią, że Öludeniz wygląda jeszcze bardziej oszałamiająco z wysokości ponad 6500 stóp.
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Lufthansa Private Jet

LUXURY TRAVEL

For the past eleven years, Lufthansa has been offering its passengers exclusive travel with private aircraft and customized flight schedules with Lufthansa Private Jet. Due to the success of this premium service, the airline has now extended its strategic alliance with NetJets, the world's largest provider of private jet flights, by five years.
Lufthansa Private Jet operates more than 1,000 flights a year. The service complements the first-class service of the Lufthansa Group within Europe and North America. Passengers often use these flights to travel to and from the Lufthansa and SWISS First Class intercontinental routes. Lufthansa Private Jet offers passengers a high level of flexibility in terms of time, since the flights are available at short notice and can be reserved up to ten hours before departure in Europe and up to twelve hours before departure in North America. There are more than 1,000 destinations to choose from. A flight from Munich to Milan, for example, in a small-size aircraft (such as the Embraer Phenom 300), costs around 7,400 euros. Lufthansa Private Jet passengers have access to the first-class terminal in Frankfurt and to all Lufthansa and SWISS first-class lounges worldwide. A limousine transfer service at the hubs Frankfurt, Munich, Dusseldorf and Zurich are part of the service, as is VIP treatment at the major North American airports. Lufthansa Private Jet also offers a limousine service from home or office directly to the aircraft;
lufthansa.com/privatejet

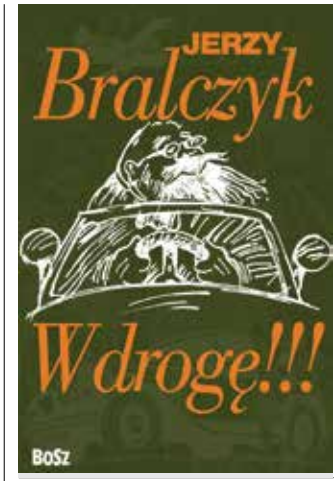
Tourism

Austria

SUMMER IN STUBAI VALLEY

Stubai Valley and the largest developed glacial area in Austria, is the perfect spot for a long ski escapade in winter as well as in summer. In June and July days are much longer and sunnier, so sports enthusiasts can fully enjoy the valley's excellent cycling, climbing and hiking routes. From 9 July until 4 September Gamsgartenbahn lifts as well as the eight-person Rotadl chair lift are open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The range of attractions in the valley includes hiking tours at different levels of difficulty, delicious culinary delights in Stubai's excellent restaurants, as well as the ice grotto situated 30 metres below

the ski slopes, where you can cool off and enjoy incredible ice phenomena. Stubai attracts also with its unique location - just half an hour drive from Innsbruck that you can reach by plane via Vienna. The valley, which begins by the Innsbruck-Brennero motorway, is more than 35 kilometres long. It's also surrounded by over 80 glaciers and more than 100 three-thousanders.



Book

„W drogę!!!"

LEXICON FOR TRAVELLERS

"W drogę!!!" ("Let's go!!!") is another richly illustrated thematic lexicon by Professor Jerzy Bralczyk. This time the author analyses words related to travel, the road and wandering.

Each entry is a separate article packed with witty humour and funny titbits, as well as numerous interesting facts. Professor Bralczyk tells us about the origin of several words, their meanings that have changed over the years, surprising contexts in which they are used, as well as about associations they arouse. No wonder that the lexicon is as involving as the most thrilling novel.

Jerzy Bralczyk is a well-known linguist, a specialist in the fields of language of media and politics, and the Chairman of the Polish Language Councile.

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Tourism

Portugal

HOW DOES PORT WINE TASTE IN PORTO?

Porto is Portugal's second largest citym situated on the hills, by the Douro River where it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. You can find here traces of the country's former economic and military power, as well as modern, interesting architecture. Visiting Porto, you simply need to taste the famous wine that owes its name to the city. To buy the best port wine in Porto, go to Vila nova de Gaia waterfront, where you will find wine cellars of the largest manufacturers, such as Taylor's Port, Sandeman, Ferreira, Porto Cálem or Ramos Pinto. You can also take a guided tour combined with tasting of this sweet and strong wine. History and wine aficionado should also visit the Museu do Vinho do Porto, situated on the waterfront in a former wine warehouse. One of the exhibitions displays the history of the wine trade in the city that greatly influenced its rapid growth.

Tourism

Antibes

PICASSO AND JAZZ

For many years Antibes has been a Mecca for numerous poets, painters and musicians, including such famous ones as Nikos Kazantzakis, Graham Greene or Claude Monet. But arguably the biggest enthusiast of the city was Pablo Picasso, who in 1946 moved to Château Grimaldi and converted a part of the castle into his private studio. It's there where he created a lot of marine-themed paintings, using unusual techniques. In 1966 the same castle became home to Picasso Museum, which is famous for its excellent collection of works by the Spanish master. The museum also regularly hosts temporary exhibitions; until 26 June you can admire there some of the greatest works by Pierre Soulages. Antibes is also considered the French capital of jazz. This year's edition of Antibes Jazz Festival will be headlined by the likes of Charles Lloyd, Archie Shepp and Gregory Porter.

Airline

Air France

NEW DESTINATIONS

KLM has announced launching two new intercontinental routes to Miami, USA and Colombo, Sri Lanka - both to appear in the airline's flight schedule since the end of October 2016. In addition, KLM plans to add to its winter schedule daily flights to Havana, Cuba, as well as retain additional flights to Kuala Lumpur. Recently the Dutch carrier has launched two long-haul connections to Astana, Kazakhstan and Salt Lake City, USA.

Throughout the whole summer season KLM will be offering two daily flights on the new Cracow - Amsterdam route. Increasing the number of flights from 5 to 14 a week is a direct result of the huge popularity of this route. With the additional morning flight from Cracow, passengers now have an easier access to a vast number of connections offered from the Amsterdam hub. Note, that throughout the year KLM also offers three daily flight from Warsaw to Amsterdam.

FOT.: MATERIAŁY PRASOWE

Warsaw

Park Lane Apartments

TACIT HAS NO COMPETITION

Tacit Investment, a pioneer in the luxury estate in Poland, has unveiled yet another prestigious apartment building in Warsaw, following the opening of Cosmopolitan Twarda 4 that took place 2 years ago. Park Lane Apartments, situated in the immediate vicinity of the Royal Łazienki park, boast the highest standards in the residential market in Warsaw. The apartments are a turnkey investment, which means that they are ready to move in.

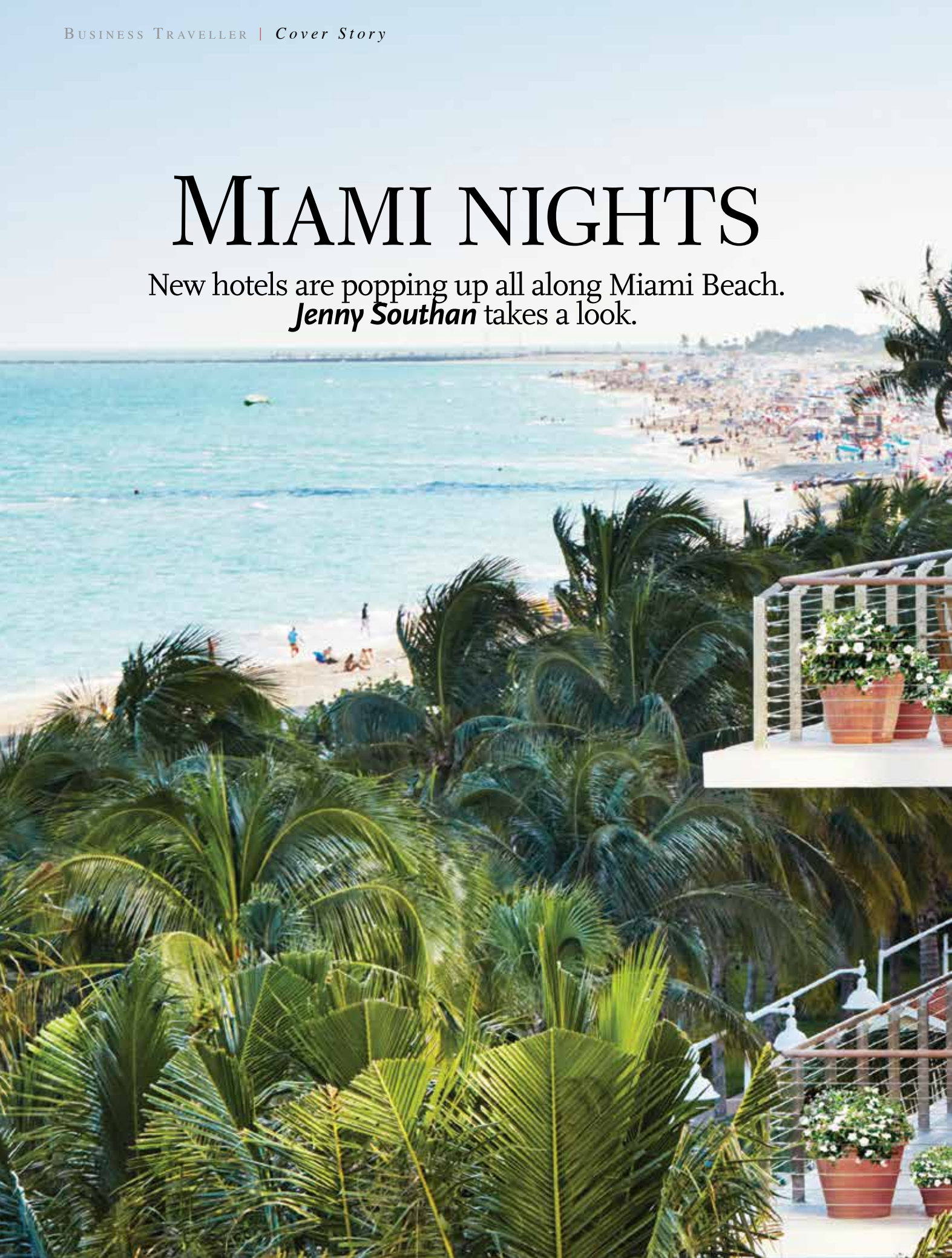
"Park Lane is yet another project implemented in line with our philosophy that a luxury product is a completely finished one," says Karolina Kaim, the Chairwoman of the Board at Tacit Investment.

Park Lane Apartments have been designed for people who like the vicinity of the city centre, but also appreciate peace and harmony in their lives, which is reflected by "The Art of Slow Living" motto.

The ground floor of the building features a lobby with a 24/7 reception desk, a relaxation zone available only for the residents of Podchorążych 83, as well as a Beauty & Spa salon. The upper floors offfer 12 spacious and comfortable apartments, finished and equipped to the highest standards. These include state-of-the-art Miele kitchen appliances, Duravit, Dornbracht and Kaldewei bathroom equipment, walk-in wardrobes, a laundry room with a washing machine and a tumble dryer, air conditioning and the intelligent apartment management system (HMS). The building also features an underground garage, as well as a 24-hour security service; **apartamentyparklane.pl**

Miami nights

New hotels are popping up all along Miami Beach. ***Jenny Southan*** takes a look.



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William D Talbert, president and chief executive of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, says: "Hotel room inventory increased 3.7 per cent from January to October 2015, to more than 51,000 rooms. The destination's robust growth is expected to increase by more than 7,000 rooms by 2019." Here are ten new openings to suit all budgets.

FAENA HOTEL MIAMI BEACH

Opened in December, this independent property from Alan Faena was designed in conjunction with film director Baz Luhrmann (Moulin Rouge, The Great Gatsby), which will give a clue to the décor.

Formerly the Saxony hotel – one of the first luxury resorts in the city when it opened in 1948 – it was bought by Faena's business partner, Warner Music owner Len Blavatnik, in 2007. A reinvention began four years later, with efforts made to retain original features such as the two-floor cabaret theatre.

Rather than a traditional lobby, there is the "Cathedral", an expansive entry hall with chunky gold pillars down both sides. The walls sport eight vivid, dream-like murals of wildcats, jungles and tropical birds by Spanish artist Juan Gatti. At the far end are double-height windows facing the pool terrace and Damien Hirst's Gone but not Forgotten – a skeleton of a woolly mammoth covered in gold leaf. There is also a statue of a unicorn by Hirst, Golden Myth, in Asian restaurant Pao. A second restaurant, Los Fuegos, features leopard-print banquettes and serves contemporary South American food.

There are 169 rooms and suites with free wifi, iPad control hubs and colourful art deco-inspired design. Guests also have access to a butler, the 2,000 sqm Tierra Santa spa and a fitness centre facing the sea.

- Rooms from US$740

3,201 Collins Avenue **faena.com**

MIAMI BEACH EDITION

The first luxury hotel to open on South Beach was the Pancoast in the early 1920s. Knocked down in the 1950s, the Seville was built on its site; in 2014 it was turned into

Marriott's Edition (the red neon Seville sign remains).

The property exhibits all of the signature traits associated with Ian Schrager's five-star "lifestyle brand". (There are four now, with ten more to arrive by 2020.) The co-founder of New York's legendary Studio 54, Schrager has placed entertaining at the heart of the hotel, with a basement ice rink, rainbow-lit bowling alley and dance club, plus bars and pools.

The mood is set in the public spaces with a fresh signature scent, abundant palms, a Latino soundtrack and the warm glow of white gold throughout. Sweeping through the curved, high-ceilinged lobby will take you to chic all-day restaurant Market, which has a pizza station, patisserie and raw bar; on the other side is the oval-shaped Matador Room, where Frank Sinatra used to dine. Catering is overseen by Jean-Georges Vongerichten. Outside is a huge candle-lit terrace, accessible from the beachside boardwalk.

Each of the 294 rooms has minimalist oak and white interiors and Bluetooth speakers by Beats. There is also a luxurious spa and a 920-capacity ballroom.

- Rooms from US$597

2,901 Collins Avenue
editionhotels.com/miami-beach

SHELBORNE WYNDHAM GRAND SOUTH BEACH

The Shelborne celebrated its 75th anniversary with a US$150 million remodel of its interiors in autumn 2014. Only the art deco façade and the much-photographed 1940s diving board have remained.

The 200 bedrooms take inspiration from vintage cars, using brown leather, glossy paintwork, dark wood and chrome. Cocktail shakers and martini glasses come as standard. The Desoto Beach Side barbecue area can be hired for private parties (up to 300). A presidential suite is opening in May, along with the Sarsaparilla Club restaurant for American dim sum.

- Rooms from US$392

1,801 Collins Avenue
shelbornewyndhamgrand.com

1 HOTEL SOUTH BEACH

1 Hotels is a new eco-conscious but highly luxurious brand launched last year, with two in New York and one in Miami. It sets out to "reinvent the industry standard for socially responsible hospitality", with the use of organic materials, quality food sourced from local suppliers and lots of natural light.

Green hotels aren't normally glamorous, but the 1 Hotel South Beach is a trendsetter. Opened in March last year, it has a stunning welcome lounge with moss growing out of the walls, air plants, reclaimed timber cladding and driftwood furniture. It's the ultimate in "biophilic" design.

Energy-efficient elevators take guests to the 426 rooms, which feature "wet bars" with free-flowing triple-filtered water, yoga mats, boxes for donating unwanted clothes, and minibars stocked with kale chips.

The décor is a calming combination of white, pale grey and blue, with walls and floors clad in Colorado "beetle kill" wood repurposed from forests that have been destroyed by bugs. Sheets and bed socks are organic cotton, mattresses are hemp-blended, and digital newspapers and magazines can be read on Nexus tablets.

FOT: MATERIAŁY PRASOWE

Walk past reception and you can help yourself to fruit grown at a nearby farm, or buy a homemade smoothie from Sprout coffeeshop. Even the 350-seat ballroom has a living wall of greenery.

There are numerous poolside "ultra cabanas" for ten people, four outdoor lap pools (one on the roof), a private beach garden with a tikki bar, a restaurant by celebrity chef Tom Colicchio, and a 500-capacity terrace. There is a Soul Cycle studio next door, and coming this summer will be an extensive Spartan gym.

- Rooms from US$749

2,341 Collins Ave **1hotels.com**

THOMPSON MIAMI BEACH

Anyone who's stayed at a Thompson hotel (there are ten others, including properties in Toronto and Chicago) will know that the brand has an emphasis on nightlife, so if you are looking for peace and quiet, this might not be the best option. That said, this is Miami Beach, so there's no escape.

Thompson has revamped this 1940s building in mid-century style, installing gold carpets, sea-green curtains and custom-made drinks trolleys in the 380 bedrooms. Open since November 2014, the property has two pools, a rooftop spa and more than 4,300 sqm of event space, with the Vista Terrace (for 180 people) and the Spanish-style 1930s House (for 100) being the standout venues.

For civilised meals with clients, there is Seagrape's al fresco garden patio, while Tal-de dishes up Asian-American street food in a loud, graffiti-splashed space.

- Rooms from US$335

4,041 Collins Avenue **thompsonhotels.com**

ALOFT SOUTH BEACH

Open since June last year, Starwood's Aloft is located in the former Banana Bungalow hostel building behind the new Continental diner on Collins Avenue, next to the canal. (There are plans for guests to be able to do watersports here.)

This limited-service hotel centres around its open-plan lobby, which has a signature WXYZ bar serving breakfast and evening drinks. There's also a pool table, two Macs, a grab-and-go deli, comfy couches and a bike hire station.

The property's 235 rooms and suites feature quirky digital art prints and offer free wifi, fridges, zesty Bliss Spa amenities from sister hotel brand W, and take-away coffee. There are three boardrooms, and a rooftop deck facing the outdoor pool opens this summer. Two other properties under

the brand – Aloft Miami Brickell and Aloft Miami Doral – opened in 2013.

- Rooms from US$240

2,360 Collins Avenue **aloftsouthbeach.com**

AC HOTEL MIAMI BEACH

Marriott's AC Hotels brand (originally a Spanish chain) made its US debut with the New Orleans Bourbon but today's flagship is the AC Hotel Miami Beach, which came last summer. It's a no-frills, new-build business property with functional design.

The ground floor has a casual reception area, lounge bar and dining space where a continental breakfast costs under US$20. It has a gym, a rooftop pool and 150 rooms with open closets, free wifi and rainshowers. Some have balconies or terraces. There's also a small meeting room, with another opening in June.

- Rooms from US$241

2,912 Collins Ave **marriott.co.uk**

HYATT CENTRIC SOUTH BEACH

Hyatt's new four-star lifestyle brand launched with the Loop Chicago last year. South Beach came second, in June, and there are plans for 15 more this year.

Set back from the beach, the entrance is hard to spot and it feels like an apartment complex in that you have to take a lift up to the lobby via a communal space. The 105 rooms have minibars, smart TVs, Hyatt Grand beds, free coffee and rainshowers. Room service is provided, along with on-site parking, a bar, a gym, a small outdoor pool and an all-day restaurant. Guests can use the spa in the Loews hotel.

- Rooms from US$363

1,600 Collins Ave **hyatt.com**

NAUTILUS SIXTY SOUTH BEACH

Another 1950s hotel that was revamped last autumn, the Nautilus, is now under the management of Sixty Hotels, a group of high-end properties in Miami, New York and LA. The lobby is a little lacking in buzz, but continue through and you'll come to an attractive terrace bar and pool with loungers. There are 250 rooms and suites (book a sea view) with minibars and Nespresso machines in trunks. An eighth-floor penthouse will be added this spring, along with a panoramic bar.

- Rooms from US$375

1,825 Collins Ave **sixtyhotels.com**

NOBU HOTEL AT EDEN ROC MIAMI BEACH

Three years ago, Japanese chef Nobu Matsuhisa opened his first "hotel within a hotel" in Caesars Palace, Las Vegas. Manila followed in 2014, and Miami is now partially open. Nobu has taken over one of the two towers that comprise the Eden Roc Miami Beach. The 350-room property is expected to open fully by the end of the summer, with the Nobu restaurant already up and running.

Described as being "Japanese beach house" in style, bedrooms have been designed by David Rockwell. Some facilities are shared with the Eden Roc, but guests have their own reception and pool, and all catering will be from the Nobu menu.

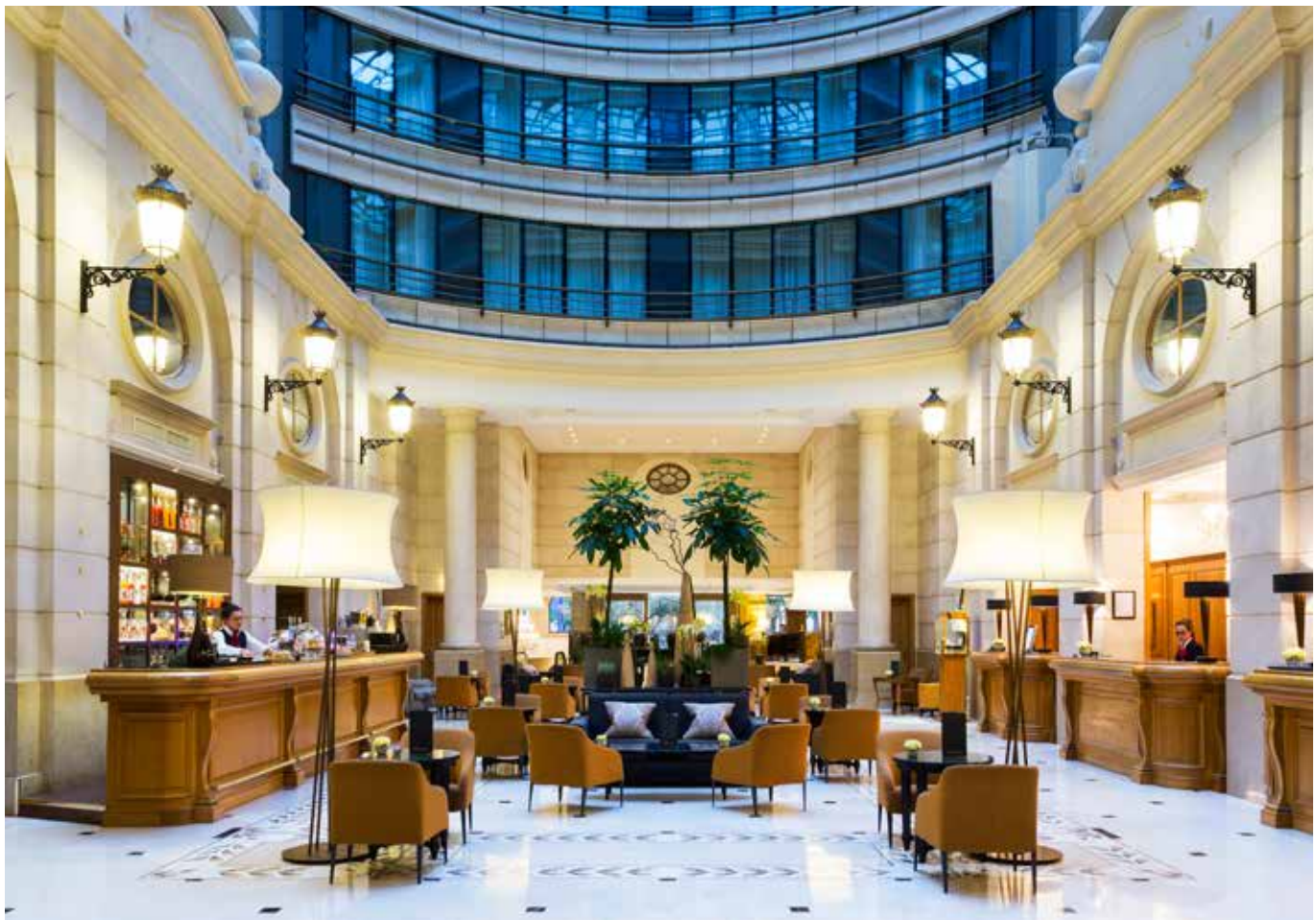
4,525 Collins Avenue **edenrocmiami.com**

Upcoming openings

- Me Miami (March 2016): 129 rooms
- Atton Brickell Miami (June 2016): 275 rooms
- East Miami, Swire Hotels (summer 2016): 352 rooms
- The Surf Club Four Seasons (late 2016): 80 rooms
- SLS Lux Brickell (2017): 85 suites
- Aloft Coral Gables (2017): 137 rooms
- Yotel Downtown (2017): 250 rooms
- Marriott Marquis Miami World Centre (2018): 1,800 rooms
- Miami Beach Convention Centre Hotel (2019): 800 rooms

Hotel PARIS

PARIS MARRIOTT CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES HOTEL



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Champs-Élysées Hotel
Paris, France
tel.: +33 1 5393 5500
www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/pardt-paris-marriott-champs-elysees-hotel

If you are planning a trip to Paris and would like to stay in a good hotel situated in the centre of the city, then Paris Marriott Champs-Élysées seems to be one of the best choices.

WHERE IS IT?

Paris Marriott Champs-Élysées is one of the best addresses in Paris. It's the only 5-star property situated on the most prestigious Parisian street - Champs-Élysées. Located between Place de la Concorde and the Arc de Triomphe, it enables you can quickly reach the most interesting spots on the tourist map of Paris. It's close to the Avenue Montaigne packed with luxury boutiques of such famous brands as Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel, Fendi, Valentino, Ralph Lauren or Bulgari. One of the most famous Parisian cabarets - Lido - is also a stone's throw from the hotel.

Paris Marriott Champs-Élysées is housed in a historic art nouveau building, quite narrow, but very long. On entering the place, the most striking feature is its old, but incredibly cosy lobby.

ROOMS

All rooms at Paris Marriott Champs-Elysées are for non-smokers only, and come with air conditioning, state-of-the-art AV equipment as well as WiFi. There are as many as seven different types of rooms in the hotel. The smallest ones are the 28 sqm Guest Rooms. Slightly larger are the 40 sqm Superior Rooms. The Skyline View rooms located on upper floors are 28 sqm and feature a balcony overlooking the Champs-Elysées. Also larger Guest Rooms (32 sqm) and Suites have their

own balconies, and the largest suites (50 sqm) feature a separate living room.

RESTAURANTS

There are two restaurants in the hotel. Le Restaurant serves mainly French cuisine, while The Adjoining Terrace located on the hotel's terrace overlooks the Champs-Elysées, is heated in winter and open to the city in summer. You can try here various international dishes, including French, Italian and Asian specialities. Both restaurants also serve sumptuous breakfasts. If you feel like having a light snack, you can go to the Lobby Bar Atrium (open until midnight), which is also a perfect place for a drink enjoyed in the spacious lobby of the old building. The culinary offer is complemented by Marriott Square, a restaurant that specializes in international cuisine and is well-known for its excellent deserts.

ENTERTAINMENT AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

Since the hotel is situated in an old town house, it has no swimming pool. There is, however, a well equipped fitness club and a sauna.

Marriott Champs-Élysées is also a good venue for small business meetings. It has 9 meeting rooms, the largest of which can hold up to 350 people. The hotel offers special catering for conference participants, as well as a private car park.

VERDICT

Due to its location in an old house, Marriott Champs-Élysées may have certain limitations, but its main advantage is the fact that it's situated in the vicinity of the Champs-Élysées and the centre of the French capital. Many attractions of Paris are within just a 15-minute walk from the property. It's a good choice both for a getaway for two and for a medium-sized conference.

Rafał Sobiech

Paris Marriott Champs-Élysées is one of the best addresses in Paris. It's the only 5-star property situated on the most prestigious Parisian street - Champs-Élysées.

Hotel

COOK ISLANDS

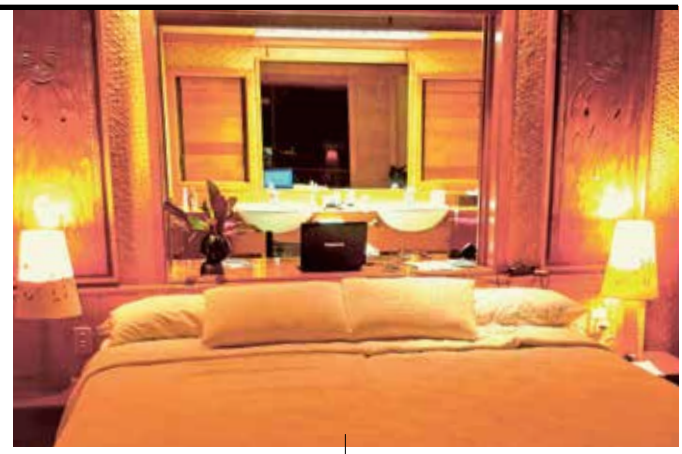
AITUTAKI LAGOON RESORT&SPA SANCTUARY RAROTONGA

Aitutaki lagoon is considered the most beautiful in the world. And not without a reason - the local landscapes are used in wallpapers and posters, as well as in banners of travel agencies all over the world.

Cook Islands can be compared to the most valuable pearls scattered by a generous hand on the surface of the azure waters of the South Pacific. Rich coral reefs, white beaches, outstanding Maori cuisine and luxurious, as well as cosy resorts blended into the landscape, make this place a true paradise, though staying there may seem a sort of surreal, dreamlike experience. The most attractive of the 15 Cook Islands include Aitutaki and Rarotonga.

AITUTAKI LAGOON RESORT & SPA

Aitutaki lagoon is considered the most beautiful in the world. And not without a reason - the local landscapes are used in wallpapers and posters, as well as in banners of travel agencies all over the world. There are a few hotels on Aitutaki, but only one remarkable resort with chic bungalows designed in a Polynesian style. What makes it stand out? Perhaps the fact that it's located on one of the private little islands within the Cook Islands. Besides, it's the only Aitutaki resort directly bordering the lagoon. Only Aitutaki lagoon resort & spa offers its guests romantic overwater bungalows with terraces, from which you can descend directly into the water. Guests can also book other bungalows situated on the island: Beachfront, Premium Beachfront, Deluxe Beachfront, as well as the unique, spectacular and one-of-a-kind Royal Honeymoon Pool Villa. The rooms come with super king size beds, as well as large shutters between the room and the bathroom. When open, they let you



take the morning shower while looking at the most beautiful lagoon in the world. There are two restaurants in the resort: Flying Boat, which is located by the beach, offers its guests not only heavenly sensations for the palate, but also the most beautiful views over the lagoon. The other one - Bounty Brasserie - is located close to the pool, with a spectacular view of the sunset.

SANCTUARY RAROTONGA

Rarotonga is the biggest island in the archipelago. Its landscape is dominated by the mountains of volcanic origin, covered with exotic forest. Fans of trekking and stunning views can go through the mountain chain from the North to the South of the island under supervision of a local guide. There are two roads, an inner and outer one, which surround Rarotonga giving you an opportunity to explore authentic Maori culture, which is unspoilt by mass tourism. Guests who stay at the 4.5-star boutique Sanctuary Rarotonga resort, can relax on a hammock or a sun lounger and admire a beautiful turquoise lagoon on one side, and stunning mountain views on the other. Because of its location on the West side of the island, the guests of the resort can admire a majestic spectacle of sunset every evening. The fairytale-like garden comes with a pool and the only bar in the island accessible only to those who bathe in the surrounding waters. Guests have access to 48 identical Suites overlooking the sea. The unique Ginger Garden restaurant with tables set right on the beach, offers fantastic cuisine, which meets the expectations of the most demanding connoisseurs of Asian flavours.

LOVE TEMPLES

Both Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & SPA and Sanctuary Rarotonga are available only to adult visitors. Their offers are aimed at couples, who come here to admire the paradise corners, experience unforgettable wedding ceremonies, honeymoon or wedding anniversaries. Both resorts are ideal destinations to those, who want to deepen their relationship in a unique place, experience the beauty of the South Pacific, or just relax in luxurious conditions, far from the hustle and bustle of overcrowded mass tourism destinations.

VERDICT

There is more to it than just the fabulous surrounding. An equally important aspect is luxurious accommodation, which makes it possible to fully enjoy the visit to the paradise. Perfectly-equipped guestrooms, excellent cuisine, high quality spa services, wide range of activities, professional and discreet service, unique location is what makes Aitutaki Lagoon Resort and Sanctuary Rarotonga stand out in the crowd.

Konrad Wilk

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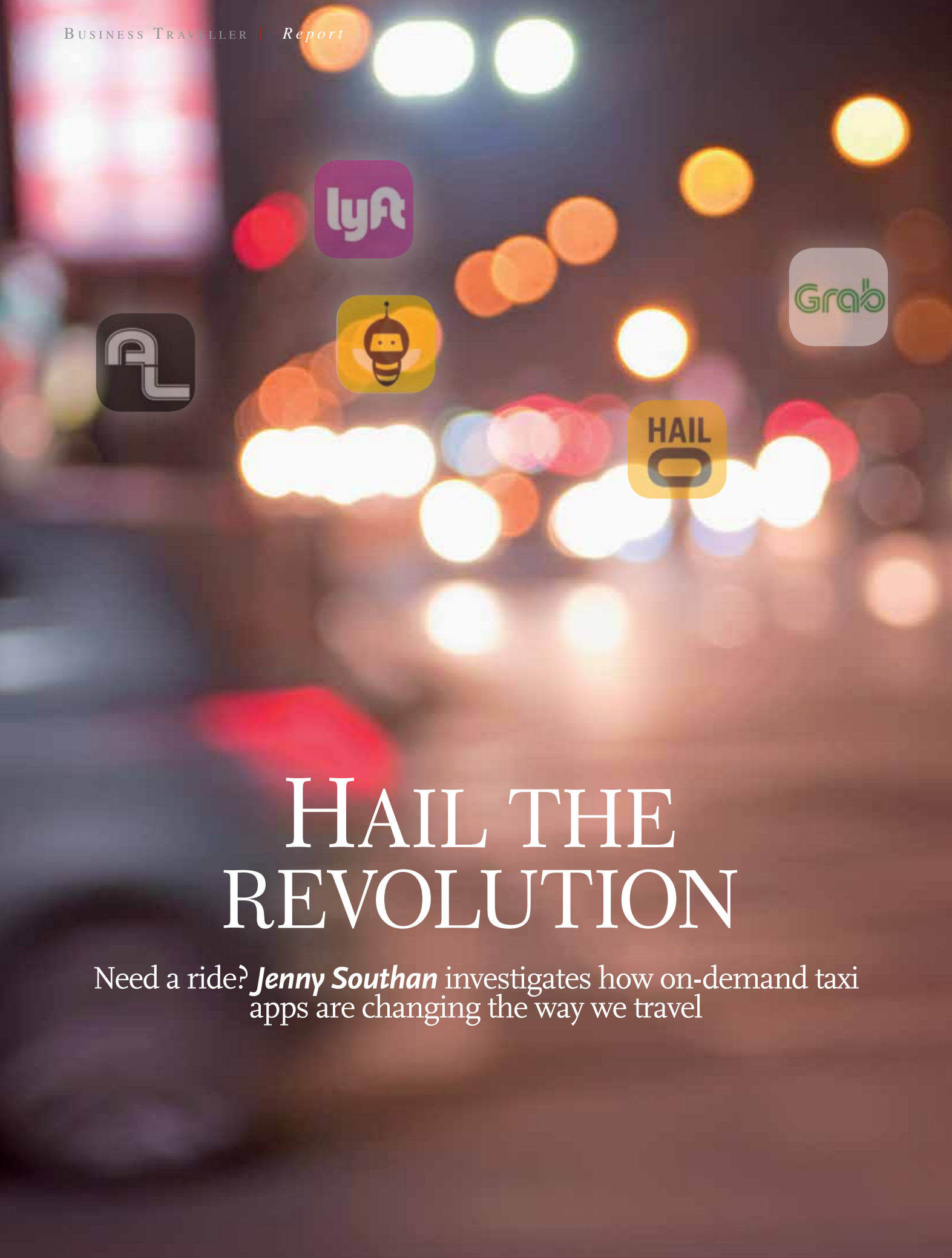

Hail the revolution

Need a ride? ***Jenny Southan*** investigates how on-demand taxi apps are changing the way we travel

curb
TAXI SERVICE
Now

One of my favourite Uber drivers was Bernhard in Miami, a part-time actor. "I do the voiceover for the McDonald's adverts in the South American market," he told me, launching into sped-up Spanish before singing the jingle at the end.

In Munich, Gerald supplied me with free mineral water and wifi, and then there was Bradley in New York, who, within minutes of me getting into his Toyota Camry, started telling me about the book he was working on.

First launched in San Francisco in 2010, on-demand taxi app Uber now operates in more than 400 cities globally. I have been using it since the London launch in 2012. I remember it feeling extravagant, with drivers often providing chocolate, gum, iPads and phone chargers, and yet it was cheaper than regular black taxis.

COMPETITIVE SERVICE

It was no surprise, then, when the Department for Transport announced last year that the number of private hire vehicles on the capital's roads had risen by more than a quarter since 2013 – from 49,854 to 62,754. The number of black cabs, meanwhile, has remained steady, at around 22,000 since 2005.

Worldwide, there are more than five million Uber trips per day. Its rapid rise has been controversial, though, with competing taxi drivers up in arms. There have been violent demonstrations in Paris and Jakarta, marches in Rome and Sao Paulo, protests in Melbourne and Brussels, and strikes in London that saw Hackney Carriages clog the roads in a river of black.

Despite numerous ongoing court cases from drivers, taxi companies and governments in which existing legislation has been challenged (as a "logistical intermediary" the firm doesn't own cars and drivers are contractors rather than employees), the company was most recently valued at US$62.5 billion. It's no wonder, then, that other companies have been following its lead and even the drivers of conventional taxis have been banding together to release apps. Hailo was founded by three London cabbies and three internet entrepreneurs in 2011. UK general manager Andy Jones says: "We challenge any other application to match the quantity and quality of supply we have available in London, with over 16,500 registered cabs in our fleet."

Does this mean the end of flagging taxis on the street? Jones says: "The typical wait time for a Hailo cab is just three minutes in London, and that gives you certainty that a taxi is coming and knows where to find you, even if you don't know where you are. But seeing the yellow light on in the street is part of the city's landscape. Our technology is rapidly evolving but we think customers will continue to want both options."

HOW IT WORKS

After downloading an app and inputting your card details, you use geolocation to pinpoint where you are and find out the estimated wait time. Once your car is booked, you will see a photo of your driver, their name, ranking and licence plate number – you also have the option of messaging or calling them. When your journey is complete, you leave a rating.

In general, transactions are cashless (in some countries, such as India, you can pay in cash, as the foreign transaction fee can be more than the fare). You will then be emailed a receipt with a map showing the way you went. If you have any problems – maybe your driver didn't turn up or took an overly long route – you can lodge a complaint with Uber (and others) and the company will quickly respond with a refund or discount on your next ride.

Safety remains a hot topic. Uber conducts background checks on its drivers, and rides are insured. Remo Gerber, taxi app Gett's chief executive for the UK and Western Europe, says: "We have a lot of corporate clients and what matters to them is that their duty of care continues when their employees are using our services. This is why we are working only with licensed taxi drivers that are properly vetted and trained by the councils."

In reality, whatever kind of taxi you get into there is a small risk that you will be exposed to unsavoury people – but this kind of technology provides added layers of security and built-in abilities for recourse.

With Uber, you can send someone your journey status so they can see your route, ETA and driver; the drivers' contact details are stored in your account; and you don't

Founded five years ago by three London black taxi drivers, Hailo can now be used in more than 20 cities, including Madrid, Singapore and Tokyo.

have to hang around on the street to find a taxi – you can order it from your office or restaurant. In India, there is also an SOS button that sends a message to the police.

At the same time, the tech is helping to keep drivers safe, too. In East London, Ali told me that when he was working as a minicab driver, he was held hostage at knifepoint, beaten and robbed. He said he felt safer with Uber because he knew who he was picking up and if anything happened he could go to the authorities with their details. Not carrying cash also eliminated the incentive for people to steal from him.

GOOD FOR BUSINESS

For corporate travellers, apps such as Uber, Gett, Hailo and Addison Lee offer the added benefit of being able to create accounts linked to a corporate credit card, and filing expenses is made easier thanks to virtual billing.

Jones says: "The Hailo app is used by over 90 per cent of FTSE 100 companies. Those with a Hailo for Business account also benefit from features such as online booking, expense and travel policy management. Information such as flight numbers can be added, making it easier for passengers and drivers to manage the complications and delays that are often linked to air travel. You can also collect Avios with every qualifying journey through partnerships with British Airways Executive Club and Iberia Plus."

Some are differentiating themselves from Uber's on-demand model by providing the ability to forward-plan, or by adding extra services. Justin Peters, chief executive of Kabbee, says: "Unlike Uber, advance booking allows business travellers to book a journey up to three months ahead and a fixed fare guarantees the price, even in London traffic."

Gett's Gerber adds: "We have just launched a courier service through the app – and if you are in the right zone in London we will deliver you an ice-cold bottle of Veuve Clicquot and two glasses in ten minutes for £39." I'll drink to that.

TEN APPS TO TRY

UBER uber.com/business

Uber's extensive global network now covers everywhere from London and New York to Lima and New Delhi. Fares with UberX are 40 per cent cheaper than a normal taxi, although beware of "surge" pricing that sees them go up during peak times. You can request more expensive UberXL (SUVs), Exec and Lux vehicles, as well as black cabs (a recent addition). Business travellers can create an account attached to their corporate credit card (company policies can also be integrated). Receipts with journey maps, driver details, times and prices are emailed to all customers.

GETTgett.com

Gett operates in 57 cities in the UK, US, Israel and Russia. It differs from Uber in that it only books licensed cabs (black taxis in London), which you can request in advance. Gett for Business has more than 4,000 clients. Fares are metered, with fixed prices available on pre-booked journeys over 10km. Gett Clicquot champagne delivery is available in the City, Shoreditch, Clerkenwell, Knightsbridge, Chelsea, Belgravia and Kensington (4pm-10pm).

HAILO hailoapp.com

Founded five years ago by three London black taxi drivers, Hailo can now be used in more than 20 cities, including Madrid, Singapore and Tokyo. It links 800,000 registered users with more than 16,600 drivers in London. Hailo for Business syncs with corporate cards and offers real-time accounting and pre-booking hours or days ahead. In London, the advantage of getting a black cab versus a private vehicle is they can use bus lanes and will seat five.

KABBEE kabbee.com

This app provides access to 10,000 drivers from more than 70 London minicab companies, with average prices up to 65 per cent cheaper than black taxis. You can book rides for within five minutes or three months, and pay by account, card or cash. Airport transfers have fixed rates. Kabbee says it will soon offer rides in the capital's Hackney carriages, and will be rolling out across other cities in the UK. Kabbee Treats is the reward

scheme that offers points on rides that can be used for upgrades, as well as free food, drink and hotel stays with partner companies.

ADDISON LEE addisonlee.com
In operation since 1975, this private hire company has moved with the times by launching an app for real-time pick-ups. Addison Lee's 4,800 central London cars all come with free wifi and phone chargers, and are available in four types including eco-friendly hybrids and Mercedes E Class. There is no surge pricing. Airport trips can be booked in advance with the "pick me up later" function. You can also pay with cash and set up a business account. Loyal users can sign up to ClubLee for points and rewards.

CABFIND cabfind.com
Designed for business people, taxi management company Cabfind connects users with a network of 120,000 drivers across the UK. It is best suited for those with a corporate account but there is also a "book now" option if you want to input your credit card details. You can pre-programme regular journeys, add "via" addresses for any route and choose your preferred vehicle.

LYFT lyft.com
This US-based "ridesharing" company provides a slightly different model, whereby you can request a lift from people in their own cars. (Extensive background checks are made to ensure safety.) Available in dozens of locations – from Chicago to Las Vegas – drivers can make up to US$35 an hour, while passengers pay less than the alternatives. Prime Time surge pricing applies. Lyft for Work partners with Concur on expensing.

EASY TAXI easytaxi.com
Launched in 2012, this Brazilian company has cornered the Latin America market, with 20 million users and 420 global cities covered (from Rio to Bangkok, but none in Europe). It offers similar features and functions to Uber. Easy Taxi Corporate is used by more than 3,000 business clients.

CURB gocurb.com
Available in 63 US cities, Curb connects users with 90 cab companies, providing 35,000 cars driven by professional taxi or for-hire drivers. Payment is generally via the app but in some places cash is accepted. The company was taken over by electronic payments provider Verifone last autumn.

GRAB grab.com
This South East Asia app can be used in cities such as Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Manila and has 200,000 drivers. All rides are legal and insured, and passengers can pay through the app or with cash. There is the option of "standard" and "limo" taxis.

FOT. FOTOLIA

AQUARIUS

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Kołobrzeg

LUFTHANSA GROUP - NEW DESTINATIONS

WITH AUSTRIAN AIRLINES TO SHANGHAI, BEIJING AND HONG KONG.

Starting on September 5, 2016, Austria's national carrier will fly up to five times per week to Hong Kong, deploying a Boeing 777 aircraft.

"As of September, we are offering flights to the three largest cities in China i.e. Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong", explains Austrian Airlines Chief Commercial Officer Andreas Otto. Hong Kong is not only interesting as a point to point destination but in particular for transfer traffic. About two-thirds of the passengers will change flights at the Vienna flight hub, especially in the direction of Western and Eastern Europe.

In its summer 2016 flight schedule, Austrian Airlines will offer a total of 31 weekly non-stop flights to Asia. Five flights per week on a Boeing 767 will be operated to Beijing. Flights to Shanghai, Bangkok and Tokyo will take off from Vienna on a Boeing 777 up to once a day, whereas the airline will fly to Hong Kong up to five times each week. Moreover, Colombo and Malé will be seasonally included as tourist destinations with up to two flights per week in the winter flight schedule 2016 starting in October 2016.

Flight time to Hong Kong at a distance of 8,700 kilometres from Vienna is about 11 hours 25 minutes. Tickets from Vienna to Hong Kong and back are available as of EUR 599, including taxes and charges. They can be booked effective immediately at www.austrian.com, by calling the local Austrian call centre or in a travel agency.

Flights Vienna-Hong Kong-Vienna as of September 5, 2016

Route	Flight number	Flight days	Departure	Arrival
Vienna-Hong Kong	OS067	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday	13:00 a.m.	6:25 a.m. (next day)
Hong Kong- Vienna	OS068	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday	9:40 a.m.	16:10 a.m.

WITH BRUSSELS AIRLINES TO TORONTO

Starting 8 April 2016, Brussels Airlines operates five flights a week to Toronto. Toronto's Pearson Airport is the first Canadian destination in the Brussels Airlines network and is an important hub to connect to many other destinations in Canada and the States.

With Toronto, Brussels Airlines adds Canada's economic business center to its network. Many Canadian companies have their headquarters in the city or the region. In addition Toronto is an important tourist destination, with the world renowned Niagara Falls nearby.

Brussels Airlines' flights are planned on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Flights leave Brussels Airport in the morning and depart from Toronto in the evening.

Thanks to the close cooperation with partner airlines Air Canada and United, Brussels Airlines customers can, from Toronto, connect smoothly to many other destinations in Canada (Ottawa, Edmonton, Halifax, Quebec, Vancouver, Montreal Metropolitan Airport and St John's) and the United States (Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, Denver, Detroit, Seattle). All flights are operated with Airbus A330 aircraft with Business and Economy Class. Brussels Airlines Cargo, together with its partners, offers cargo space to freight forwarders on the route

Brussels - Toronto flights

Route	Flight number	Flight days	Departure	Arrival
Brussels - Toronto	SN551	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday	10:30 a.m.	13:20 a.m.
Toronto - Brussels	SN552	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday	18:30 a.m.	07:50 (+1)*

brussels airlines

Flights leave Brussels Airport in the morning and depart from Toronto in the evening.

THE AIR WE BREATHE

We've all felt the effects of dry conditions on board – but can anything can be done about it? ***Tom Otley*** reports.

As a frequent flyer, you know that the air on an aircraft is dryer than on the ground. Depending on where in the world you live, the humidity level is likely to be somewhere between 40 and 50 per cent – on an aircraft, it might be as low as 5 or 10 per cent.

The advent of air conditioning means we can live comfortably in places we previously wouldn't have considered, using a humidifier alongside it if the climate is dry as well as hot. But when we're travelling, it's more complicated. Most modern aircraft take in air from outside via the engines and, although this is filtered, warmed and purified before being piped in, it is still extremely dry, since air at high altitude has a low moisture content. The result is that the cabin air is greatly lacking in H_2O.

Contrary to popular belief, this does not mean that you become internally dehydrated

in the same way as you would if exercising in a hot climate, through perspiration and expiration – although you may feel that you are, meaning you will have a dry mouth and dry skin. Also, since the mucous membranes of the nose and respiratory tract are one of the body's first defences against airborne bacteria, many of us believe we are more likely to become ill after long-haul flights, particularly if the passenger next to us is coughing and sneezing.

Professor John Oxford is a leading virologist and chairman of the Hygiene Council. While he does not believe that low humidity makes it more likely for us to catch a virus, he does point out that one of the principal ways of avoiding what the person next to you has is "social distancing". In other words, give yourself some room. Good luck with arguing that as a reason for upgrading your travel policy with the expenses department.

FIRST IS WORST

Although dry air might not cause harm, it does contribute to discomfort. As you'd expect, the humidity levels on an aircraft differ from cabin to cabin and depend on the duration of the flight. On long-haul flights, I have measured humidity levels and found them to be 10 per cent on average. Variations occur because of the number of people exhaling, so the more people there are, the more moisture there is in the air.

It follows that where passengers are most densely packed – otherwise known as economy – levels might be as high as 20 per cent, which is still lower than on the ground, but manageable. In first class, however, it can be as little as 5 per cent, even if the cabin is full. The same applies to business class, although it depends on the cabin's size and configuration and how many seats are full. As business seats have moved towards being fully flat, cabins have become more lightly populated, making the problem worse. In addition, flight

Variations in humidity levels occur because of the number of people exhaling, so the more people there are, the more moisture there is in the air. It follows that where passengers are most densely packed – otherwise known as economy – levels might be as high as 20 per cent.

duration has increased with aircraft able to perform longer sectors. So while premium flyers may be reducing their chances of getting deep-vein thrombosis because they have more room to move around, they may be suffering from the effects of drier air.

GENERATION GAP

Do new-generation aircraft solve the problem? It's true that the likes of Boeing's B787 and Airbus's A350 offer slightly higher levels of air moisture. Having flown long-haul on both, including a Dreamliner delivery flight from Seattle to Doha with only 50 people on board, I'd say that they do leave you feeling less exhausted, although this may be as much to do with mood lighting, reduced noise levels and increased pressurisation. It remains the case that most aircraft are not next-generation, and while the new planes have improved the situation, they have not solved the problem. Still, one company says it has a product that can: Swedish environmental equipment supplier CTT Systems and its Cair humidification system. There's a complication, however. Before you can humidify the air, you also have to be able to control the humidity and condensation in the cabin, and for that you need "zonal-drying" equipment. On the face of it, this may seem strange – to increase the moisture levels, you first have to dry the atmosphere out – but aircraft are extremely controlled environments, and every action causes a reaction.

Luckily, eliminating unwanted condensation has other benefits, and not just for long-haul aircraft. Any system that acts to reduce the condensation forming above cabin ceilings and in walls – water that is then absorbed by the noise- and thermal-insulation bags in the fuselage – will also reduce the aircraft's weight. And as airlines try to fit more passengers in, the potential problem of condensation becomes greater – particularly if operating through the winter where the plane gets cold when doors are open, and then warms up during the flight.

Easyjet has run a long-term trial with CTT's zonal drying equipment to measure how much weight is saved using the system, and how much fuel can be saved as a consequence. It has found that as well as reducing weight and fuel costs, it also cuts maintenance spend owing to fewer moisture-related faults and corrosion, and less frequent replacement of insulation blankets. Of course, whether it is fitted by an airline in part depends on the price of fuel (since that is a factor in recovering the cost of installing the system, and flying its extra weight around). For long-haul, the Cair system has been installed in cockpits and crew rest areas, as well as on business and private jets, but for commercial scheduled aircraft only Lufthansa has fitted it, in its A380 first class. In part, this is because it is a feature that is difficult for a passenger to identify as a noticeable benefit. Put a vintage champagne on the menu or offer a chauffeur-driven car to the aircraft, and it's clear that money has been spent, but a system that humidifies the air is unlikely to register with many travellers.

GOOD TASTE

Ironically, the humidifier system may help travellers to appreciate that glass of vintage champagne in a way they couldn't previously hope to. Lufthansa says that the system raises the humidity in first class from 5 per cent to about 15-25 per cent, and that "food tastes better, passengers sleep better and there is a greater sense of well-being".

The fact that the taste of food is enhanced may well be something we notice, although it could be argued that in the rest of the aircraft the less responsive you are to the taste of airline food, the more edible it is likely to be. Still, since airlines recognise that a key differentiator of their products is the quality of the food and wine served, as witnessed by the success of Business Traveller's Cellars in the Sky wine awards, the dryness of the air poses a notable challenge.

In 2011, British Airways created a flavour-boosting umami-rich "height cuisine" menu to try to overcome it. Yet if the cabin had normal humidity, we'd be able to appreciate the dining properly.

It should also be pointed out that research in this area is still being conducted. Boeing says that a study it carried out with the Technical University of Denmark in 2005

FOT. ARCHIWUM

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showed that humidity was not the only factor driving the symptoms associated with dryness, including throat and eye irritation, headaches and occasional dizziness. In fact, the most effective technology in minimising such symptoms was found to be the air filtration systems, and modern aircraft have very effective ones, much better than in offices, for instance.

In other words, you are more likely to catch a cold from a fellow worker than a neighbouring passenger.

CABIN FEVER

Still, can dry air on board affect our natural defences? John Oxford points out that in humid countries around the equator the flu virus is always present, yet there's no evidence that people who live there are better at fighting flu just because of the moisture in the air. Likewise, although it is true that the flu virus moves between the northern and southern hemispheres in winter, we catch it not because of humidity but because we spend more time indoors so are closer to infected people. "You are far more likely to catch something in the taxi to the airport, which has no effective air purification in place," he says.

He adds that a prime reason for people to fall ill after a flight may not be anything in the air, but the "faecal-oral route". This is people who don't wash their hands after leaving the toilet, then leave traces of their faeces on the door handle and everywhere else they touch. In such circumstances, if you then touch the handle on your way out (having washed your hands) but then eat a bread roll, you are more likely to fall ill. The quality of air will be irrelevant.

Still, if sitting in a dry atmosphere is not good for us, what can we do about it? Well, the WHO advice is probably worth looking at – a mixture of moisturiser for our skin, a spray for our noses – although note that some research says regular use of the latter can cause problems, and certainly Oxford sees no reason for nasal sprays and doesn't use them himself.

Instead, wash your hands, take hand gel with you when you travel and if you see someone coughing and sneezing, try to keep your distance as much as possible.

THE NEW-GENERATION GAME

When Boeing launched the B787, it called it the Dreamliner. While this was partly marketing, it was also a reflection of what it hoped the aircraft would represent for flyers based on the research it had conducted over many years.

As was explained to me at the manufacturer's factory in Seattle in 2009, Boeing knew that regular flyers preferred some aircraft to others for lots of reasons – namely comfort, on-board technology and perceived safety. So the trick was to find out the sort of things that flyers valued, and then design an aircraft that could supply them.

Kent Craver, regional director of passenger satisfaction and revenue marketing at Boeing at the time, told me: "The irony was that when we held focus groups of passengers, we found out that most people did not look forward to the flying experience. As a company, that was an acute challenge – imagine making something that your customers did not enjoy using."

From that came a desire to help passengers rediscover their love of flying, so windows were made 30 per cent bigger than those on the B777 – allowing people to see much more, which begins the process of reconnecting them to the physical act of flying, as well as enabling those in the centre of the aircraft to see the horizon.

There was also a reduction in cabin altitude. On all commercial aircraft, a balance is struck between offering a breathable atmosphere (something that most travellers would say is quite important), and not overpressurising the plane (lowering altitude), which is expensive and stresses the fuselage.

For decades, the average altitude on board has been kept at 8,000 feet. After research at Oklahoma State University, Boeing found that most of the low-level effects of altitude sickness, such as headaches, nausea and fatigue, dissipated below 6,000 feet. Hence, the aircraft is now pressured to 6,000 feet, something that the composite structure allows. When combined with the slightly higher humidity it also allows for, Boeing thinks travellers will see the benefits.

The first customer for the B787 was ANA in 2011. Since then, the aircraft has been commercially flown in two models, the B787-8 and -9. It was joined in 2013 by the A350 XWB, Airbus' answer to the Dreamliner, which employs a new air-conditioning system that splits the cabin into multiple zones, providing fresher air and better temperature control.

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CHILDREN'S WORLD FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY AT NOVOTEL HOTELS

KONTAKT
accorhotels.com

Children and their parents are counting down the days left for the holidays. Some of them have already planned a part of their summer, others are still pondering the options.

Well, they don't need to any more, as the summer offer by Novotel is what they need. As a part of the Family&Novotel campaign the hotels of the brand have prepared comfortable family rooms along with special attractions related to the popular Angry Birds game.

CHILDREN STAY FOR FREE!

Summer is a perfect season for inspiring outings or a true relaxation with the family. To make your holidays truly unforgettable both in Poland and abroad, simply use the offer by Novotel. In all Novotel hotels up to two children under 16 are given free accommodation in the room with their parents, as well as free breakfast. However, if they choose to live separately the parents will be offered a 50% discount on another bedroom. The modern, spacious and friendly bedrooms are designed in such a way, so that both the parents and children can feel comfortable. The bedrooms are equipped with a double bed for the parents, a

FOT.: ORBIS S.A.

TV with children's channels, as well as an easily-convertible sofa bed. As for baby infants, the offer includes gratuitous fittings such as a bottle warmer, cribs, high chairs and diaper changing tables. The offer also includes the option of a late check-out until 5:00 pm.

FUN AND JOY

Novotel is known for providing a vast choice of attractions for the youngest guests. Especially for them the hotels have arranged modern and colourful play areas situated in the hotel lobby and equipped with practical furniture and various educational toys. The modern-looking "Kids Corner" features video games, Kapla blocks and a fully equipped library. Some of the hotels also offer a swimming pool and an outdoor playground. Thanks to the partnership of the brand with Microsoft, each Novotel hotel also comes with Xbox 360 gaming consoles and Xbox Kinect motion sensor.

ANGRY BIRDS INVITE YOU TO PLAY

At the turn of May and June, thanks to the partnership of Novotes with the producers of the "Angry Birds Movie", 180 members of Le Club AccorHotels loyalty programme will have an opportunity to attend a special screening of the film. In Warsaw they will see a film version of the popular game, which is present in 76 countries and over 2 billion people have it installed on their smartphones.

BALANCED DIET IS THE KEY

Guests of Poland's Novotel hotels can also enjoy the offer of the unique NOVO² Lounge Bars. This includes an extensive menu of international dishes prepared with a balanced diet in mind. You can also order here gluten-free and vegetarian dishes (some of the items in the menu are also available in room-service offer). Under the Family&Novotel programme specialists have also developled a special menu for kids, where the youngest guests can find their favourite treats prepared with the products of the highest quality. Waiting for their meal, kids can develop their creativity working with colouring books.

ALWAYS ONLINE

Staying at Novotel hotels you can go online at any time. In the lobby of each hotel there are special Web Corners on a Mac equipped with Apple computers. Guests can easily check there their e-mail messages or find out about the most interesting attractions in the city. Some of the hotels also feature the Virtual Concierge service with which guests use a special touch-screen situated in the hotel lobby to explore the most interesting places in the area. In addition, all rooms in Novotel hotels come with free WiFi.

ABOUT IBIS

Novotel hotels provide a wide range of services addressed to both business and leisure travellers. These include spacious rooms with a modular arrangement, a 24/7 culinary offer with balanced meals, conference rooms, attentive and dedicated staff, kids zones, as well as multifunctional lobbies and fitness centres. Under PLANET 21 AccorHotels sustainable development programme, Novotel engages in a range of activities for the benefit of people and the planet. Novotel has more than 450 properties in 61 countries, located both in centres of large cities, business districts and tourist resorts.

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SHERATON GRAND KRAKÓW

Sheraton Kraków has joined the elite group of 25 Sheraton Grand hotels located in various spots around the world. ***Angela Saliba***, the General Manager of Sheraton Grand Kraków talks to us about this milestone for the property, as well as about its renovation.

You have just announced that your hotel has become Poland's first Sheraton Grand property. I assume that this is a great accolade both for you and the employees, but what does it mean for guests?

The Sheraton Grand title is granted only to properties located in exceptional tourist destinations, those that boast guest service at the highest level and stand out with their outstanding culinary offer as well as unique interior design. Sheraton Grand Kraków has joined this family of Sheraton best hotels worldwide and we are extremely proud of this fact. It is also a promise and a guarantee given to all guests who book a room with us, that our personalised service along with our passion will translate into a unique experience.

How many Sheraton Grand properties are there and what are the criteria for selection?

Currently there are 25 Sheraton Grand hotels worldwide. Our property is the first in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the fourth in the whole of Europe to be awarded this title. The brand will continue to expand its Sheraton Grand portfolio worldwide with a view to having nearly 100 properties of this type by 2017. Those hotels are situated in prime locations, offer the highest standard of service and are top rated by guests for satisfaction of their stay. However, their design and functionality is also of importance. Very often the designers of such hotels draw inspiration from local accents and the interiors are arranged in the most refined way possible. Our hotel meets all these criteria. With its prime location, Sheraton Grand Kraków offers a unique view of the Wawel Castle and the Vistula river, also from our Observation Deck & Lounge Bar. Another unquestionable advantage is a remarkably rich culinary offer, as well as the new rooms. By the end of they year we will offer our guests 100 renovated, elegant rooms and suites, which will certainly increase their satisfaction with their stay with us even more.

Can you tell us more about the ongoing renovation work?

The whole process began with a comprehensive renovation of the conference rooms, and for the last few months we have been remodelling our guest rooms. The project has been developed by a popular London architect Alex Kravetz. We are planning for the all renovation work to be completed by the beginning of 2017. At that time our guests will be able to enjoy the new Club Lounge, The Olive restaurant, Qube Vodka Bar & Cafe, as well as 232 elegant rooms and suites. The new décor concept for guests rooms is based on the composition of various fabrics and decorative elements of the highest quality, as well as bespoke furniture and works of art made by a Cracow artist. The key element of the whole project is lighting that adds a specific atmosphere to the rooms, making them bright or slightly more romantic, depending on the time of the day.

FOT.: MATERIAŁY PRASOWE

Sheraton brand is undergoing a large transformation on a global scale. How do you assess the implementation of this plan, so far?

Sheraton Grand is just one of many initiatives undertaken currently as a part of the Sheraton 2020 strategy - a comprehensive plan designed to put the brand firmly back into the global spotlight. A very important element of this plan is a new $100 million Sheraton-focused marketing campaign, an introduction of the new Paired programme comprised of artisanal small plates and eclectic bar snacks served alongside suggested premium wines and local craft beers in hotel lobbies, as well as continuous innovation in building amazing experiences for guests of Sheraton hotels. All those initiatives are aimed at repositioning of Sheraton, which is one of the most powerful brands owned by Starwood Hotels & Resorts®. The ultimate goals is to increase revenue and expand hotel portfolio by 150 properties by 2020.

What about Cracow and its hotel market? Do you think it offers opportunities for further expansion?

Cracow is undoubtedly a well-known destination worldwide. It is home to dynamic outsourcing industry especially in IT, HR and finances. The city's rich cultural offer, attractive UNESCO World Heritage sites, as well as a constantly growing flight network at Balice Airport, attract here many leisure and business travellers. Each year the city is visited by nearly 10 million tourists, including 4 million reaching Cracow by air. Cracow has gained numerous awards and accolades, also by readers of the Zover websiter, as well as in Travel + Leisure ranking published by CNN.com, where it ranked 7th among Top 10 Cities.

Also impressive is the pace of development of the city and its calendar of scheduled events. The two most notable projects and investments are building the ICE Kraków Congress Centre as well as the impressive Tauron Arena Kraków. These investments translate into the development of MICE tourism, which has been noticed by most hotel owners in the city. Statistics indicate that the occupancy rate in Cracow hotels is on an increase despite many new property openings every year. The key event this year that will promote the city worldwide is, undoubtedly, the World Youth Days. Most of the world will observe the events taking place in Cracow at that time. Personally, I am truly impressed by how dynamically Cracow is developing. Operating on such a market, our main challenge is to maintain our leading position in the industry and finding new sources of revenue.

With its prime location, Sheraton Grand Kraków offers a unique view of the Wawel Castle and the Vistula river, also from our Observation Deck & Lounge Bar.

Is there a room for a further development of Starwood portfolio in Cracow?

Cracow is a very interesting market investment-wise. I believe that it would be a good idea to locate here a property belonging to one of our other brands, such as Four Points by Sheraton or Aloft.

LIVING BY ŁAZIENKI PARK

Łazienki Park, which used to be situated outside the town, today is a part of the centre of Warsaw, being a true enclave of remarkable nature and architecture. There is no more beautiful palace garden in Poland, situated in the centre of a city.

Those that visit Łazienki Park often have an impression as if they have just entered a land of beauty, where time stopped centuries ago and where the great cultural history of Poland is still alive. It is a real journey in time to an ancient reality, preserved in such a genuine and perfect state, as if everything you can see there were created just yesterday.

THE PARK OF TEN GATES

Łazienki Park, which used to be situated outside the town, today is a part of the centre of Warsaw, being a true enclave of remarkable nature and architecture. Not everyone knows that there are 10 gates leading to the park and the whole 80-hectare area features 15 grade A historic buildings including the unique Palace on the Isle. Right next to it there is Europe's most beautiful modern amphitheatre that is still used for its original purpose. Above the escarpment of the park rises the white body of Belvedere Palace, while the boundaries of Łazienki are marked by Agrykola Street illuminated in the evening by gas lanterns. Every year the historic buildings of the park host more than 900 music concerts, most of them taking place by the Chopin statue. Guests to Łazienki can also enjoy its hippodrome, restaurants, coffee and tea houses. The picturesque park also boasts several dozens of statues and monuments. It is an ancient Arcadia - the land of happiness. Interestingly, Łazienki Palace (Palace on the Isle) is situated on water that gave birth to Venus, so we can assume that this place promotes romantic love.

A DAY IN ŁAZIENKI

In addition to the wonderful visual experiences, Łazienki also offer something for the ears. The most beautiful music of Łazienki is created by the morning silence, accompanied by the sound of streams, singing birds, croaking frogs, screeching peacocks and swans, as well as the noise of the wind. Each day in Łazienki has its colour and charm. The park in all its glory is an irresistible attraction, especially from summer until grey winter evenings when its bare trees with numerous branches contrast distinctly with the sky.

A PLACE WITH HISTORY

The semicircular Myślewicki Palace located closest to Podchorążych street, has an important place in the recent history. It is here where resided General Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszowski, the commander of the 1st Light Cavalry Regiment. Another tenant of the palace was the Prime Minister Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski. The place was closely guarded, because Kwiatkowski was preparing here detailed plans for mobilisation in the event of war. The surrounding streets - Dragonó, Kawalerii, 29 Listopada, Podchorążych, Szwoleżerów - refer in their names to the November Uprising. The unique and remarkable atmosphere is present throughout the whole area and is felt by the residents of the streets that are close to the park. They can enjoy this unparalleled ambience of festivity on a daily basis. It is an enormous asset of this place, intangible and ethereal, but also constituting its largest value. There is no more beautiful palace garden in Poland, situated in the centre of a city. Arguably, you will not find a second so magnificent place in any of the European capitals.

Tomasz M. Lerski
historian
and expert on Warsaw

FOT.: MATERIAŁY PRASOWE

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Nice all year round

The sunny Nice - the largest city of the Côte d'Azur situated on a narrow stretch of land between steep hills and a 7-kilometre beach on the Baie des Anges, has its die-hard fans. Swimmers, sailing enthusiasts, gourmets, artists and fashion aficionado - are very fond of this unusual city.

Nice is a symbol of the Mediterranean lifestyle, where tourists can experience the same things that for centuries have inspired artists from all over the world.

No doubt, Nice is a perfect holiday spot. It's both a mountain and seaside resort that, thanks to its unique nature, offers a blend of relaxation, active leisure and entertainment. Nice is also a very creative, dynamic and young city that in recent years has experienced quite revolutionary changes in its economy, culture, art and architecture.

12 MILLION TOURISTS

Located in southern Europe, Nice is a major transportation hub, with roads leading to Provence, Italy, the Alps and Corsica. The city is easily accessible, especially by air. Nice Côte d'Azur is France's second largest airport, serving more than 12 million tourists each year. It's situated just 7 kilometres west of nice, and offers flights to 104 destinations operated by 59 airlines. There is a free shuttle service between terminals and numerous paid buses that carry passengers from the airport to the city centre in less than 15 minutes. Between march and 31 October this year LOT Polish Airlines offers four weekly flight on Warsaw - Nice route. The Polish carrier operates regular flights between Warsaw and Nice on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays. The aircraft take off from Warsaw at 10:50 am and arrive in Nice at 1:25 pm. The return flight takes passengers at 2:05 pm, landing at Chopin Airport in Warsaw at 4:25 pm. The route is served by modern Embraer 170 aircraft, popular with passengers because of their convenient seat configuration and no centre seat, which makes the plane cabin more spacious.

CUISINE NISSARDE

Nice is a symbol of the Mediterranean lifestyle, a place where tourists can experience the same things that for centuries have inspired artists from all over the world. This extraordinary city likes to emphasize the charm of its originality, also when it comes to food. Nicoise cuisine has its own name and the "Cuisine Nissarde" brand. It also reflects the lifestyle of people of Nice, as well as highlights their genuine respect for local products. Two of the most characteristic elements of Nicoise cuisine are aromatic herbs and olive oil. In addition, Nice is France's only city to have its own food and wine appellation (AOC).

COURS SALEYA

With its extremely extensive cultural heritage, Nice is currently France's second larg-

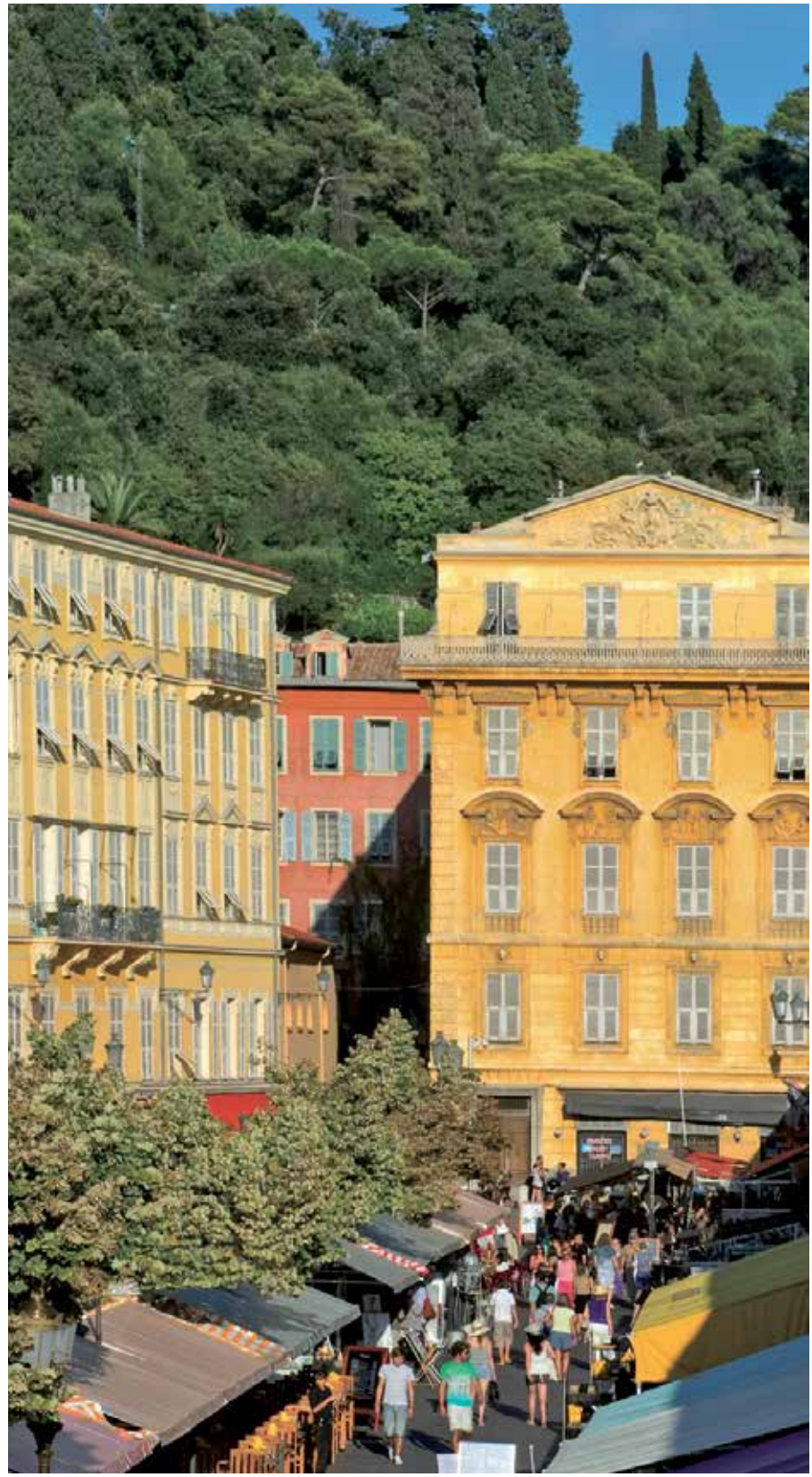
est city in terms of the number of museums and art galleries. Its diverse architecture also makes it one of the most attractive spots of the Côte d'Azur.
The obligatory expedition to the Cours Saleya - one of the most picturesque market places in France - is a unique feast for the eyes and a true delight for the palate. Cours Saleya is a great place to enjoy the sight of flowers in various colours, as well as meet local manufacturers who come here everyday with a vast cornucopia of fruit, vegetables and regional specialities. But Cours Saleya is also a very lively district of Nice, a place packed with brightly decorated cafes and restaurants. You can relax here in the sun-flooded terraces of cafes, admiring the famous Promenade des Anglais that gently surrounds one of the most beautiful bays in the world - the Baie des Anges. Also be sure not to miss the so-called Green corridor (La promenade du Paillon), which is a trail in the city park where you can enjoy the nature in the very heart of the city.

THE CITY PASS

The French Rivera Pass - see more, pay less. The pass card provides access to all the most interesting attractions and spots in the city to guarantee that you won't miss any of them. Its new version is even more friendly for tourists for whom Nice is one of the most important destination in France. Suffice to say that each year Cote d'Azur is visited by 11 million people The card is available in three versions: for 24, 48 and 72 hours for €26, €38 and €56 respectively. Together with the French Rivera Pass you will also receive a 60-page guide in French, English, German and Italian.

KEY EVENTS IN 2016

- Christmas Market: December 2016
- Nice Jazz Festival: 16-20 July, **nicejazzfestival.fr**
- Manca Festival: November **cirm-manca.org**
- Crossover Festival **festival-crossover.com**
- Nice Carnival: 10-26 February 2017. This year's motto is "The King of Energy".
- IronMan competition France: 5 June 2016, **ironman.com**
- International Nicea-Cannes Marathon: 13 November 2016, **marathon06.com/2016**
- Christmas Regatta: The 60th edition takes place in December this year, **nicechristmasregatta.com**
- Euro 2016: 12 June, Poland - Northern Ireland **fr.uefa.com/uefaeuro/**



The expedition to the Cours Saleya - one of the most picturesque market places in France - is a unique feast for the eyes and a true delight for the palate.

FOT.: MATERIAŁY PRASOWE

BOOM TOWN

India's National Capital Region, the huge metropolitan area that encompasses the city of New Delhi, stretches spoke-like into the surrounding states as a bevy of satellite cities. One of the most important of these is situated in the state of Haryana.

Once no more than a barren stretch of villages, today Gurgaon is home to more than 250 of India's Fortune 500 companies, 26 luxury malls boasting outlets for the likes of Chanel and Louis Vuitton, lush golf courses, premium car showrooms and upmarket recreation venues.

MILLENIUM CITY

Gurgaon has been nicknamed India's "Millennium City", reflecting the development the country aspires to. However, in an attempt to bring the citizens of Gurgaon closer to their heritage, the state government accepted a request in April for its name to be changed to Gurugram ("guru" translates as "teacher" and "gram" to "village").

Before India gained independence in 1947, only a few hundred people lived in Gurgaon's founding communities. By 1971 the population reached 57,000. Today, the city is home to more than 1.8 million people and has an impressive per capita annual income of Rs 446,000 (£4,700), compared with the national average of Rs 88,533 (£930).

Although commonly associated with Delhi, Gurgaon also has borders with the states of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, making its location highly strategic for business. From Indira Gandhi International airport, a 40-minute drive along National Highway 8 brings you to the centre of the city. Its proximity to the capital – and the country's policy-makers – proved to be very appealing to the visionaries and investors who saw the area's immense potential.

NEW BUSINESS MODEL

As you drive along, you'll notice a large "DLF" stamped on most of the high-rise buildings. More than any other person, it is Kushal Pal Singh, chairman and chief executive of DLF – India's largest commercial real-estate developer – who is behind the city's building boom.

"When the idea first took hold of me that a world-class city could be built on the vast tracts of desolate land at the foot of the Aravallis in Haryana, nobody took me seriously. Reactions ranged from open ridicule to concern for my sanity," wrote Singh in his autobiography, Whatever the Odds: The Incredible Story Behind DLF. Yet today, the company owns about 1,200 hectares of this industrial region.

While car manufacturer Maruti Udyog (now Maruti Suzuki) was the first company to lay its foundations here when it opened in 1982, it wasn't until DLF's acquisition of land at the end of the 20th century that investors developed confidence in the area's potential.

The roots of Singh's vision can be traced back to a chance meeting in 1980 with the then soon-to-be prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi. Bumping into each other in an isolated part of Haryana, Gandhi heard Singh explain his vision for Gurgaon. In his book, Singh recalled: "He became interested and pressed me on the issue. 'What is holding it up and why don't you do it?' This one incident was to transform Gurgaon from a rural wilderness into an international city."

Gandhi urged Singh to present his idea to Arun Singh, the union minister at the time and, as a result, the area was developed under a private-sector model, with DLF paving the way.

The process of land acquisition led to the inception of a unique business model. The farmers sold their land to DLF, but then became business partners by reinvesting the money back into the company. Singh's rural and defence background, and DLF's unsullied reputation, encouraged farmers to trust him.

DYNAMIC GROWTH

Soon after, Singh invited Jack Welch of General Electric in the US to visit India and explore the idea of setting up Genpact – a business unit within GE. Latika Thukral, founder of Iamgurgaon, a charitable organisation that works to raise quality of life in the area, says: "From there on, the city has seen a meteoric rise in terms of investment, with several multinational companies setting up base."

She adds: "In the past 25 years, Gurgaon has developed rapidly and, at present, more than half of the Fortune 500 companies have their offices here, along with the manufacturing units of automobile giants such as Hero Motocorp, and most telecom companies, including Bharti Airtel, Vodafone, Sony, Ericsson, Nokia and Samsung. DLF has contributed to the real-estate boom in the city, which now boasts some of the country's premium condominiums and luxury apartments."

Add to this quality educational institutions and seven-star hospitals such as Medanta Medicity, which have mushroomed here, and it's no wonder the place was made India's first Millennium City – said to rival Bengaluru and also Chennai for its contribution to the country's software exports. A number of corporations now have thriving offshore centres here, while outsourced solution centres for the IT and software industries have also been set up.

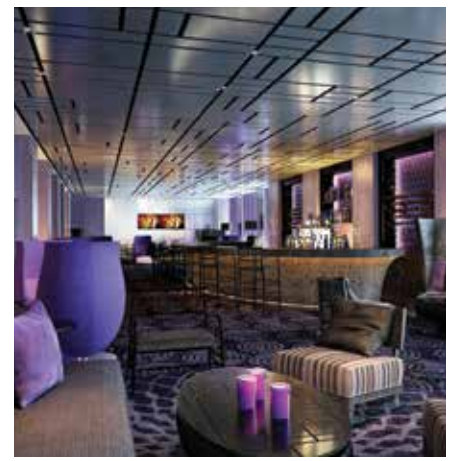
Where to stay

ACCOMMODATION

- **Hyatt Regency Gurgaon** A 30-minute drive from Indira Gandhi airport and 15 minutes from the city centre, the Hyatt Regency (top) has 451 rooms and suites, a club floor, a pool and spa. It also has more than 3,700 sqm of meeting space and four restaurants and bars. **regency.hyatt.com**

- **Dusit Devarana New Delhi** Located on National Highway 8, ten minutes from Indira Gandhi airport and a 25-minute drive from the city centre, Dusit Devarana (middle) has 50 guestrooms. Each offers pool or garden views and is equipped with free wifi, LED TVs and minibars. There is also a business centre, a lounge for casual meetings, and a Chinese restaurant. **devarana.in**

- **Lemon Tree Premier, Leisure Valley** Situated in Gurgaon's city centre, the 81-room Lemon Tree (bottom) is close to the Leisure Valley Park, Unitech Business Park and Cyber City. Rooms come with free wifi, DVD players and safes, while other facilities include a bar, restaurants, conference room, spa and pool. **lemontreehotels.com**



FOT: MATERIAŁY PRASOWE

Gurgaon's journey from a backwater to a premier model city sets a high standard for nascent satellite conurbations across the country.

HOME OF BIG PLAYERS

International companies that have picked the city for their Indian headquarters include Pepsi, IBM, American Express, Coca-Cola, Microsoft and Bank of America. Such rapid industrialisation has created job opportunities for both Indians and expats, and many corporations have developed company townships that allow employees to find accommodation close to their place of work.

These integrated communities have flourished, housing cinemas, gyms, grocery stores, social centres, playing fields and schools. Thukral says: "Multinationals that set up bases in Gurgaon invited millennials from Delhi and the rest of India to join their workforce. A huge migrant population now calls Gurgaon home."

As part of Haryana state, the responsibility for planning Gurgaon's infrastructure was handed over to the Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA). Given that the land was previously lacking in facilities, HUDA started from scratch, setting up schools, colleges, hospitals, police and fire stations, bus shelters, nursing homes and community buildings, as well as sewage systems to manage waste and maintain hygiene standards.

A vital part of the infrastructure was to build and maintain the road system, creating new motorways and wider, well-lit avenues as the population grew. The agency has also built a 70km water channel from Sonepat (in Haryana) to Gurgaon that supplies 100 million gallons a day to up to 1.6 million people.

THE DRIVING FORCE

As the economic driver for Haryana state, which has a mostly rural population that exists incongruously near to the city's gleaming skyscrapers and Mercedes cars, the city bears some responsibility for the broader development of the area. This is helped by the boosting of state coffers from foreign direct investment. However, in the midst of the multinationals, a Gurgaon-based company called Oxigen is aiming to bring economic empowerment to rural India.

The company's footprint now stretches across 192 towns and is the brainchild of founder Pramod Saxena. Oxigen seeks to bridge the gap between India's villages and financial services of all kinds. This is done via its vast network of more than 200,000 retail touchpoints offering mobile phone top ups, bill payments, money transfers, banking and travel services.

"Currently, banks cannot penetrate the remote areas of Haryana because of high operational costs," Saxena says. "However, Oxigen has [developed] its presence in these rural locations by tying up with retailers who provide money transfer services to people who previously didn't have access to banks."

DIGITAL INDIA

The firm's business model aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for a "digital India", which made headlines late last year following his visit to California's Silicon Valley.

The company has developed a rural engagement programme to connect with a large potential customer base living in inaccessible places, and support people in access to health, education and employment. Saxena says: "We also routinely conduct financial literacy camps in these villages, where we distribute leaflets and show videos to educate [people] on financial services and money transfer facilities."

In a place where more than half the population doesn't have a bank account, and only 23 per cent have a usable credit history, Oxigen's efforts are commendable, and underscore the region's contribution to India's growth.

Gurgaon's journey from a backwater to a premier model city sets a high standard for nascent satellite conurbations across the country. It's also an example of what can be achieved when?a bright vision is backed up by harmonised?planning and development. From burgeoning multinationals to homegrown companies that foster the development of Haryana, and of India as a whole, this city's success is a milestone in the chronology of a forward-thinking India.

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GREAT OCEAN ROAD

From Miami to Key West, ***Jenny Southan*** drives the long highway linking the coral archipelago of the Florida Keys

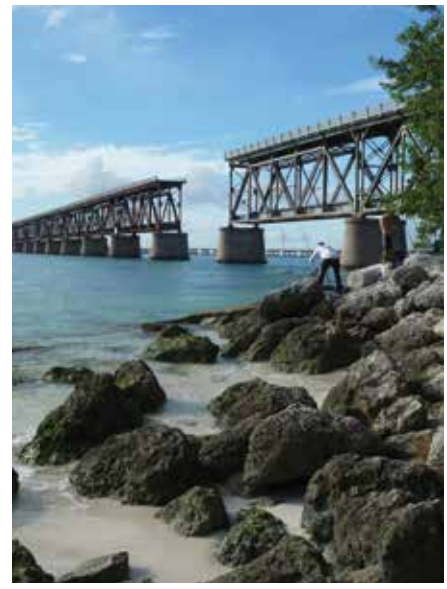
After an hour of swooping flyovers, the towers of Miami have disappeared behind us and we are cruising down the South Dixie Highway, through the Everglades. A sign warns of crocodiles crossing, and I am sure I see a squashed anaconda glistening by the side of the road.

Soon we are entering Key Largo. It's the first of the Florida Keys, a coral archipelago that stretches more than 100 miles like an unfastened necklace – flat little islands held together by a single strip of tarmac – all the way to Key West. United by turquoise, on one side is the Atlantic, on the other the Gulf of Mexico.

GOING SOUTH

You can't beat an American road trip, and if you're in Miami for work, there is no better weekend escape than jumping in a car and cruising down to the most southerly point in the continental US. We pick up our wheels from the Hertz office on Alton Road in South Beach, two cups of strong black coffee sat between us as we pull out of the car park into the morning sun.Last year, Florida saw a record 105 million international visitors, 1.7 million of them from the UK. I can see the appeal – it's the Sunshine State, after all. And down in the Keys, it's a kind of kitsch, palm-strewn paradise.

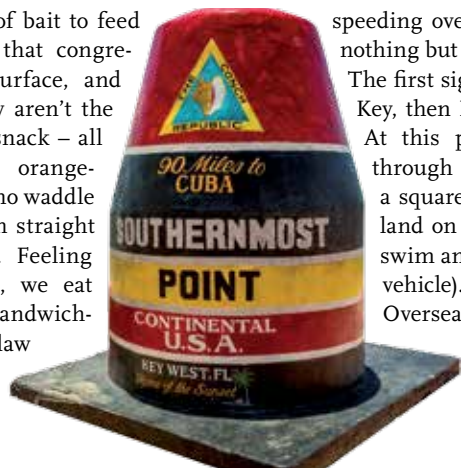
At 165 miles, the journey can be done in a few hours (the maximum speed limit is 55mph), but the fun comes from pit stops along the way. The 113-mile Overseas Highway takes us past the ramshackle Caribbean Club in Key Largo – the oldest bar in the Upper Keys, dating from the 1930s and



popular for daiquiris by the shore – through Plantation Key and down to Robbie's Marina in Islamorada.

Robbie's marks the halfway point, about two hours out of Miami, so we slide off the highway into its dusty car park. There are stalls selling tikki mugs and hand-painted surfboards, while down by the water is a wooden jetty lined with motorboats.

We buy a bucket of bait to feed the giant tarpon that congregate below the surface, and soon discover they aren't the only ones after a snack – all around are bold, orange-beaked pelicans who waddle up to snap the fish straight from our fingers. Feeling peckish ourselves, we eat blackened mahi sandwiches with fries and slaw at the Hungry Tarpon restaurant, under the shade of a tree.



IN THE SHADOW OF ISLANDS

Back on the road, we pass through Long Key, Fat Deer Key and Marathon. We don't have time to visit the Sunset Grille and Raw Bar but I'm told it offers great views of the Seven Mile Bridge, which we are soon speeding over. It's magnificent, with nothing but the ocean on either side.

The first sight of land is Little Duck Key, then Missouri and Ohio keys. At this point the highway cuts through Bahia Honda State Park, a square mile of protected coastland on Big Pine where you can swim and snorkel (US$8 per vehicle). In 1935, the Florida Overseas Railroad was hit by a hurricane, and you can see the remains of the Bahia Honda Rail Bridge from the white-sand beach.

After passing through the likes of Cudjoe Key, Sugarloaf and Saddlebunch, the final stretch takes us into Key West for sundown. Only 90 miles from Cuba, the Conch Republic, as it is known, is an island of just five square miles in the Florida Straits. Cruise ships come into port here, bringing hoards of pleasure seekers disembarking in search of Key Lime pie (the best is found at Kermit's Pie Shoppe at 200 Elizabeth Street) and quirky souvenirs (buy the Donald Trump Presidential Hot Sauce from Peppers of Key West, 602 Greene Street).

HOTELS APLENTY

The town may be small but there are numerous good hotels, including the Waldorf Astoria Casa Marina and Southernmost Beach resorts. We are staying at the Sunset Key

FOT.: FOTOLIA, MATERIAŁY PRASOWE, JENNY SOUTHAN

Hemingway's Spanish colonial villa is now a museum, with the rooms left as they were when he lived here in the 1930s – even his studio, complete with typewriter, where he wrote his best work.

Cottages, part of Starwood's Luxury Collection, on a nearby private island. Check-in is at the Westin Key West Marina (245 Front Street), and the crossing takes about ten minutes by boat. From a distance, we see crowds gathering on the harbourfront for the daily sunset celebration on Mallory Square.

Winding paths lead us past lush lawns, jasmine and frangipani, swimming pools and pastel-coloured weatherboard bungalows, down to the shore and our home for the night. The luxury resort has 40 one- to four-bedroom cottages, each with wraparound verandas and fresh beach-chic décor.

We sit outside with a cold glass of wine and watch the stars come out, before strolling to Latitudes restaurant for dinner – it's a magical place with tables on the sand by the sea, and palm trees wound with lights. The American-Caribbean menu includes the likes of grilled jumbo shrimp, seared scallops and butter-poached Florida lobster tail – a well-earned feast after a long drive.

KEY WEST BY NIGHT

At night, Key West is relatively sleepy, apart from a few bars on Duval Street that draw partygoers with live music, rum and craft beer. The Porch occupies what looks like a haunted house in an overgrown garden, while across the road, lit in red neon, is Sloppy Joe's saloon, which will host its 36th annual Ernest Hemingway lookalike contest in July. With their Classic Revival timber "Conch" houses, a style developed by 19th-century Bahamian immigrants, the side streets are so pristine, they look like they are part of a film set.

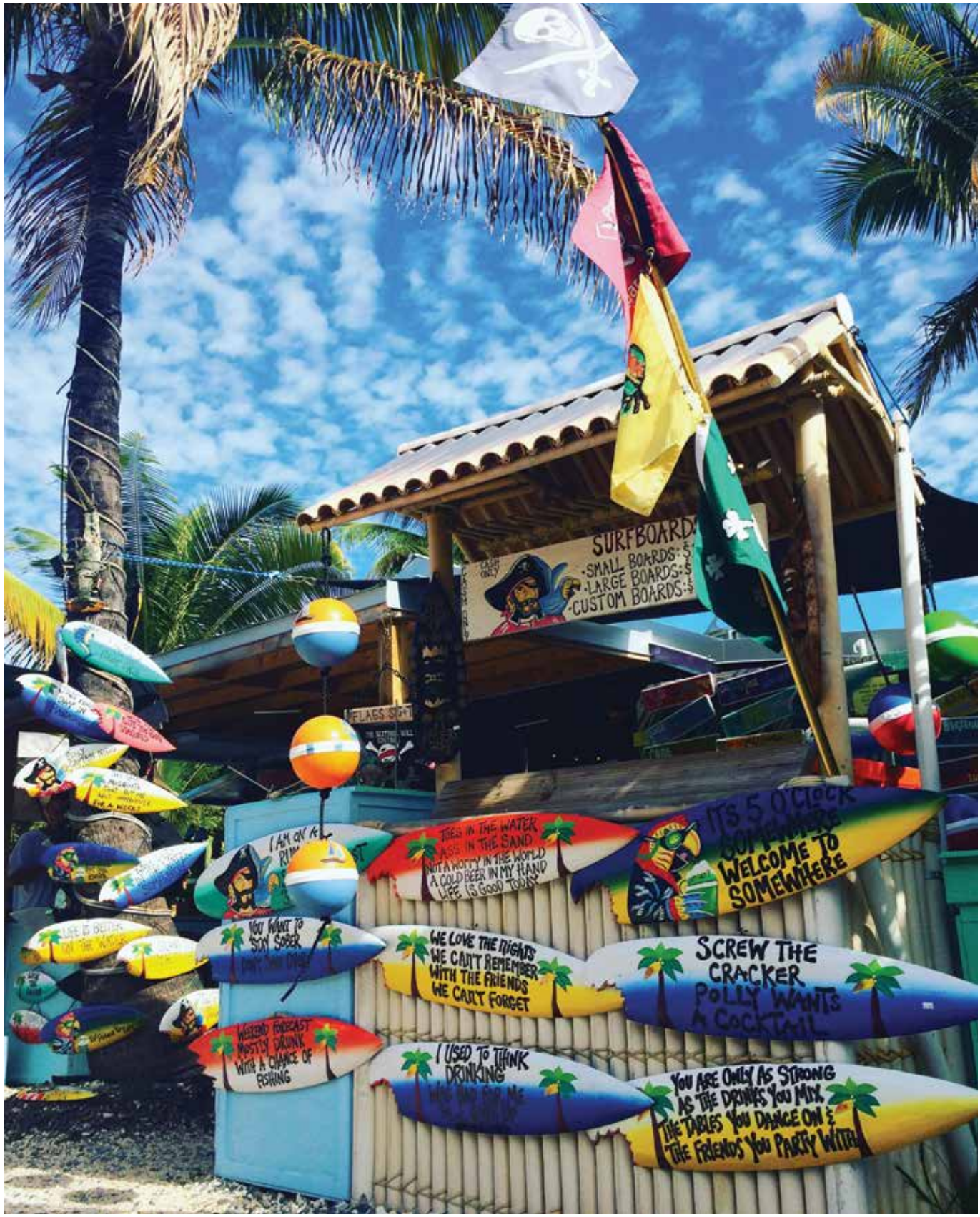
VISITING HEMINGWAY

Hemingway was one of Key West's best-known residents; Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote are among the other writers to have been drawn to its tropical climate and bohemian lifestyle. Reviving ourselves in the morning with a caffe con leche from Cuban Coffee Queen (284 Margaret Street), we mosey down to Hemingway's Spanish colonial villa at 907 Whitehead Street.

Now a museum (US$13; hemingwayhome.com), the rooms have been left as they were when he lived here in the 1930s – even his studio, complete with typewriter, where he wrote his best work. "He had a policy of writing 700 words or until lunch, whichever came first," says the inimitable MJ Pierce, one of the guides who gives free tours.

In the gardens are more than 50 six- and seven-toed cats, descendants of Hemingway's first polydactyl feline, Snow White. "Here we have Cary Grant, Duke Ellington and Humphrey Bogart," MJ says. "But Hemingway gave his funny names such as Dillinger, Friendless and Whorehouse."

A short walk away, or a long swim from Havana, brings us to the concrete buoy that marks the Southernmost Point. In 2013, after 35 years of trying, endurance swimmer Diana Nyad conquered this section of the Florida Straits in just under 53 hours. With our own long journey to Miami ahead of us, we take a pedal-powered rickshaw back into town, scattering free-roaming chickens along the way. With any luck, there'll be time to taste a portion of those famous conch fritters before leaving...



Robbie's marks the halfway point, about two hours out of Miami, so we slide off the highway into its dusty car park.

FOT.: ARCHIWUM, JENNY SOUTHAN

CITY OF CONTRAST

From rich cultural heritage to hipster hangouts and verdant parkland – Johannesburg has it all, says local resident ***Caroline Hurry***

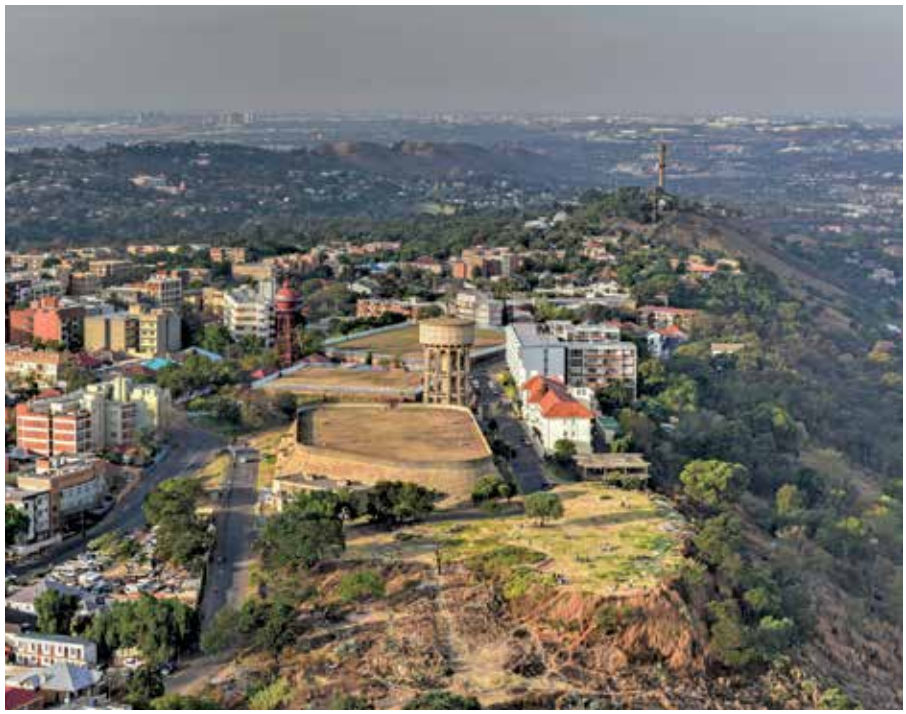
Johannesburg is a large city covering 1,645 sq km, about the size of greater London. Linked by looping highways, it can be difficult for first-time visitors to get a handle on. Nevertheless, it's a fascinating place, from its historic buildings to new galleries and the regeneration of various downtown areas.

WAYS TO GET AROUND

In a weekend you want to make the most of your time, and since it's not easy to use public transport to explore, you should ask your concierge to hire you a taxi for short trips, use a red city bus (see below), or the Gautrain (gautrain.co.za), which runs from the airport to the affluent suburbs of Sandton and Rosebank. The central business district is reasonably safe, although keep your wits about you. The area of Hillbrow, Berea and Joubert Park are best avoided.

PLACES OF INTEREST

A good place to get your bearings is from the 50th floor of the Carlton Centre, the



continent's tallest building, on downtown Commissioner Street (open 9am-6pm, 9am-5pm Sat, 9am-2pm Sun; R15/£0.70). Known as the "Top of Africa", its wraparound deck offers 360-degree views of the suburbs, which fan out from the centre all the way to Pretoria. It's a far cry from Johannesburg's early days as a 19th-century gold-mining settlement, when it was only grasslands and hopeful prospectors with rusty pans. Today, six million trees make it one of the world's biggest urban forests.

Jumping on a red sightseeing bus (city-sightseeing.co.za) allows you to take in a number of the museums. Among them is the Origin Centre in Braamfontein (daily 10am-5pm; R80/£3.80; origins.org.za), which brings the history of humankind to life. Exhibits include Stone Age tools and 15 skull casts that depict man's development over millions of years. Particularly captivating is the art and objects of the San, an ancient hunter-gatherer people whose practices included trance dancing and the shamanic use of hallucinogens.

The Wits Art Museum offers similarly intriguing exhibits (Wed-Sun 10am-4pm; free entry; wits.ac.za/wam). An airy, glass-walled space about a five-minutes' walk away on Jorissen Street, its permanent col-

Food and drink

SPOTS YOU MUST VISIT

One of the finest places to head in the city, and not just for food, is the Orbit jazz venue in Braamfontein (Tues-Sun 5.30pm-1.30am; theorbit.co.za). Offering hearty fare ranging from Tandoori chicken wings to Karoo lamb rib, plus tempting puds, it plays host to world-class acts such as South African trumpeter Marcus Wyatt and salsa Afro-Cuban ensemble En Fuego.

Coobs in Parkhurst (Tues-Sat 12pm-9.30pm, Sun 12pm-4pm; coobs.co.za) sources most of its produce from an organic farm in Magaliesburg. Its meat – pork, lamb, beef, and wild boar – is free-range. Likewise, the Che Argentine Grill in Maboneng (Fox Street; Tues-Sun 11am-11pm), run by two South Americans, uses free-range meat to make its amazing chorizo.

For something different, head out of town to the Lethabo Estate (lethaboestate.com), set in the wild surrounds of Rhenosterspruit Conservancy, close to the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage site (it's a 45-minute drive from Sandton). It's home to free-range horses, Nguni cows, and Delilah – the resident Nyala. Herbs and veggies are grown on the premises and eggs are sourced from the estate's hens. Chef Kelly Laurence creates delicious meals while owner Lise Essberger teaches poi and horse whispering. Enjoy a picnic on the banks of the Crocodile River, eat on the deck overlooking the water and bush, or dine in a hammock under a tree.

FOT.: ARCHIWUM, FOTOLIA (3)

The Wits Art Museum features a permanent collection of more than 10,000 historical and contemporary African works.

lection comprises more than 10,000 historical and contemporary African works. One of the first things you'll spot is an asen from Benin. The West African Fon people used these 19th- and early 20th-century metal sculptures to commemorate and connect a dead person with the living. Other artefacts include Nelson Mandela's notes on the Rivonia trial, a 1578 bible, and the fossil of a southern ape called Sediba.

Photographs and letters, including one from former Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, bring to life the rich history of Constitution Hill, home of the court where cases concerning human rights are decided (Kotze Street; open daily; free entry; constitutionhill.org.za). The magnificent architecture is movingly contrasted with the old dank, solitary confinement cells.

Prefer a pint? Then you'll enjoy a guided tour of the SAB (South African Breweries) World of Beer in the revamped Newtown district (daily 10am-6pm; R160/£7.60; worldofbeer.co.za). Opened by Mandela in 1995 to mark its centenary, it explores the history of beer, from the brewing techniques of the Sumerians in Mesopotamia more than 6,000 years ago, through its European and African heritage, to the present day. Expect an Egyptian chamber, shebeen (illicit bar) and two free lagers. It's busiest on Saturdays, so it's best to book.

Also easily reached by bus is the Maboneng precinct (mabonengprecinct.com), the city's hipster quarter, home to jazzy restaurants and clothing shops, an independent cinema (thebioscope.co.za), a theatre (popartcentre.co.za) and, on Sundays, a foodie market.

Heading north out of town, the business and residential suburbs of Sandton and Rosebank offer high-quality shops. You'll find an ethnic vibe at Rosebank's daily African Craft Market, browsing at Pankhurst's Fourth Avenue (4thavenue.co.za) and crafts, curios and fresh produce at the Bryanston Organic Market (Thurs and Sat 9am-3pm; bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za).

There are also lots of options if you're craving the great outdoors. Bounded by the suburbs of Parkhurst, Craighall Park, Blairgowrie, and Victory Park, Delta Park is one of the city's biggest, at 104 hectares, with three dams and a bird sanctuary. Melville Koppies Central nature reserve offers hikes and tours on Sundays (R50/£2.40; mk.org.za).

Only 6km from the CBD, you can canoe on Emmarentia Dam on the Braamfontein river, soak up the sun in the gardens, or visit the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Gardens (sanbi.org/gardens/walter-sisulu) and see if you can spot the nesting Verreaux's black eagles in the cliffs by the Witpoortjie Waterfall.

FOT.: ARCHIWUM

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Zdrowa i smaczna wołowina kulinarna to sprawa dobrej rasy bydła mięsnego, warunków jego hodowli i sposobu żywienia.

Zamawiając u nas HerefordBeef masz gwarancję jego pochodzenia z naturalnej hodowli HerefordWarmia.pl zlokalizowanej w atrakcyjnym ekologicznie zakątku Warmii.

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SITTING PRETTY

A firm focus on art, architecture and dining means once-dull Dusseldorf is now ranking high for quality of life. ***Andrew Eames*** goes exploring

Dusseldorf's new underground railway line caused a stir when it opened earlier this year. And it wasn't just because the final cost of the project was Ä200 million over budget, at Ä843.6 million – it was the way in which contemporary art was built into each station.

At Graf Adolf Platz, would-be travellers follow what looks like a giant, hallucinogenic green rock strata down on to the platform. At Schadowstrasse, a mesmerising giant screen above the tunnel turns the figures exiting the station into streaks of light and spiky geometric dodgems.

When the line opened, media from across Europe came to admire the art as much as the engineering, and locals found themselves able to forget about the huge overspend. The city's credibility had gone up a notch.

On first impression, it is not easy to praise the capital of Germany's most populous state (Nordrhein-Westfalen), because Dusseldorf is not much of a looker. Its proximity to the industrialised region of the Ruhr, and the fact that it has long been those industries' "writing desk" – ie, administrative headquarters – made it a top target during the Second World War.

It's not an obvious destination, therefore, for a business traveller looking to extend their stay, and yet it appears at number six in Mercer's 2016 quality of living survey – two places behind the first German entry, Munich, which has quite a different vibe. So I have come to find out why.

THE CITY BY A RIVER

The first raison d'etre is the River Rhine, which divides the urbanisation in two. Dusseldorf started as a fishing village in the 7th century but once the Industrial Revolution coalesced around the coalmines of the Ruhr, the river's purpose changed. It became an essential transport artery, ideal for heavy goods, and still is – but these days the city is also a place for passenger boats to stop over, for families to picnic on green meadows by the water, and for festivals to take place, particularly since it diverted the riverside road traffic into a tunnel, bringing peace to the riverbank.

In the room called What Things Dream, by Wiebke Siem, visitors are invited to construct abstract figures.

As a result, the Rhine-side promenade has become a place of recreation, while the city's former port, now re-christened the Medienhafen, has gone the way of many a former docklands, becoming a haven for showrooms for local fashion designers, media companies and hotels. Its buildings are either conversions of former warehouses, or eye-catching new-builds such as Frank Gehry's stunningly organic Neuer Zollhof, clad in gleaming stainless steel – a reference to the region's continuing steel production.

The Ruhr's powerhouse is still going strong, as I discover when I ascend the towering Rheinturm (9 Euros; guennewig.de/en/rheinturm-duesseldorf), a TV tower-cum-restaurant viewpoint that looms 172 metres above the former harbour. Smokestacks litter the horizon, but even closer is Dusseldorf's newer economic engine, the Messe trade fair centre (messe-duesseldorf.com), next to the airport. The exhibitions and events that take place here are a huge pull for business travellers, and this year there will be a bumper crop, mostly prosaic affairs focused on the likes of printing, plastic and glass.

Dusseldorf's new underground railway line caused a stir when it opened earlier this year, mostly owing to contemporary art that was built into each station.

SHOPPING AND ARCHITECTURE

Downtown, the focus is more glamorous and ephemeral. I go Tussi-spotting on the city's best-known shopping boulevard, the "Ko" – Konigsallee – which looks like a slice of Amsterdam, running as it does down both sides of a leafy canal. A "Tussi" is a certain kind of woman of indeterminate age, immaculate coiffeur, skin unseasonably tanned, handbag to the fore, who totters along the Ko, greeting her friends and dipping into one designer store after another. She's a well-known Dusseldorf type, and I find examples easy to spot.

Also eye-catching are the city's architectural statements, which are not limited to the Medienhafen. The most recent is Daniel Libeskind's Ko-Bogen, a multipurpose building at the top of the Konigsallee that in 2014 was named the World's Best Urban Regeneration Project by major Cannes property show MIPIM. Although it's huge, its curves make it light on its feet, and Libeskind's signature "cuts" in the façade sprout greenery, echoing the city's Hofgarten on the other side of the water. When it opened, it suffered an arson attack, but it has since been so successful that a Ko-Bogen Two is planned.

THE CULINARY PARADISE

The other big form of recreation downtown is dining and nightlife, which is flourishing in the mostly pedestrianised old town between the Konigsallee and the river. Streets such as Bolkerstrasse are nothing but restaurants and bars, and there are five old-town breweries, where the local Altbier is made on the premises.

To get the full experience, I sign up for an Altbier Safari (24.50 Euros including five tasters; altbier-safari.de), a tour which lets me sample beer that is much more like British bitter than typical German brews. With no artificial preservatives or food miles involved, it is lip-smackingly fresh.

Despite the name, there's little that's truly vintage in the old town's nest of cobbled streets – only the tower remains from the city's original castle, for example. Still, what it lacks in antiquity it makes up for in energy and conviviality. The nightlife here is very multicultural – the pull of industry means more than 16 per cent of Dusseldorfers are foreign-born, and the city is home to Germany's largest Japanese community.

A telling by-product of this German-Japanese synthesis is the Michelin-starred Japanese restaurant Nagaya (tel +49 211 863 9636; nagaya.de) in the heart of "Little Tokyo". The first Asian restaurant in the country to be awarded a Michelin star, it offers impeccable service in a minimalist setting, with dishes composed so artfully that it seems a shame to eat them. The menu blends Japanese and European cuisines, mixing asparagus with miso sauce, and beef with wasabi butter.

ART AND CULTURE

Consumerism aside, the final ingredient that makes Dusseldorf particularly liveable is its cutting-edge cultural life. The city has an encampment of galleries and concert halls, all in walking distance of the Ko and the river.

The likes of Joseph Beuys and Gerhard Richter were students at the art academy here, which is also the origin of that German saying: "Ist das Kunst oder kann das weg?" ("Is it art, or can I throw it away?"). This dates from a famous incident in 2004 where part of a work by Beuys was mistakenly removed by a cleaner.

I focused on the K20 gallery (12 Euros; kunstsammlung.de) in Grabbeplatz, which features a roll call of 20th-century artists including Picasso, Kandinsky, Klee, Pollock and Chagall.

The room that transfixed me most was called What Things Dream, by Wiebke Siem. In it, visitors are invited to construct abstract figures by suspending an unlikely collection of interconnecting objects on a chain hanging from the ceiling. I did my best, but when I compared my effort with those of others, it seemed staid and unchallenging. It certainly wasn't art. Hopefully a cleaner has since cleared it away.

FOT.: ARCHIWUM

ul. Waldorffa 41,
Warszawa

ZNAJDŹ MIEJSCE DLA SIEBIE

Osiedle Awangarda – to prestiż, nowoczesność i dobra energia.

Zlokalizowane w bezpośrednim sąsiedztwie – zachwycającego zielenią – Fortu Bema na Bemowie. To osiedle stworzone z myślą o ludziach aktywnych, którzy cenią wysoką jakość życia, połączoną z wygodnymi rozwiązaniami i nowatorskim podejściem. Bliskość infrastruktury sportowej oraz terenów zielonych pozwala znaleźć równowagę pomiędzy odczuwalnym tempem życia stolicy a wewnętrzną harmonią.

605 606 606
awangarda@profbud.info

THE LUXURY OF TIME

Timothy Barber rounds up the year's most covetable new watches, from weekend options to collector's items

For pilots

BELL & ROSS BR03-92 DESERT TYPE

The aviation-inspired French watch brand whips up a desert storm with its sandy-toned latest offering. With a case made of scratch-resistant modern ceramic, it'll see off the best of what the weekend has to throw at you.

Price: £2,800 **bellross.com**

Something for the weekend

ORIS DIVERS SIXTY-FIVE

Today, Oris is known for its chunky, ultra-tough professional dive watches, but the Sixty-Five recreates the slimmer, more wearable look of a watch that first entered its collection half a century ago. Retro it may be, but on a lightweight textile strap, it's the essence of breezy, modern summer living.

Price: 100 £1,150 **oris.ch**

Star watch

VACHERON CONSTANTIN OVERSEAS

The clue, of course, is in the name: Vacheron Constantin's Overseas is a watch that is designed to travel well. It doesn't offer you extra time zones, and it will serve you just fine if you never set foot in foreign parts, but for Switzerland's oldest watchmaker it has the look of relaxation and escape – or at the very least, of loosening one's tie and switching off.

The Overseas was invented in 1977 as an answer to similarly dressed-down, modernist watches from the brand's rivals – Audemars Piguet and Patek Philippe. Simply designated the "222", it was spruced up in the late 1990s and renamed to evoke the globe-hopping lifestyle of Vacheron Constantin's haute monde clientele.

Its robust look – angular case, complex bracelet and a thickly notched bezel that draws its form from the brand's Maltese Cross logo – is a world away from the old-fashioned classicism of its other watches, although it's no less a powerhouse of top-level watchmaking and finishing.

And it has become even more travel-friendly since, along with some aesthetic fine-tuning, Vacheron has this year introduced the idea of interchangeable strap options. Besides the normal bracelet, the Overseas now comes with both rubber and leather straps that can be easily snapped on and off, effectively giving you three styles in one. In other words, all the watch you need for any kind of journey, overseas or otherwise.

Vacheron Constantin Overseas Date in steel with blue-lacquer dial;

Price: £15,600 **vacheron-constantin.com**

Convenient under water

RAYMOND WEIL FREELANCER

Raymond Weil has never previously produced a dive watch, but this simple affair is a bit of a winner. With a rotating bezel in scratch-proof black ceramic and a case in blackened steel, it's a snug and practical sports watch that's fit for a rough-and-tumble kind of weekend. There's also a variety of colour options for the luminescent markings.

Price: £1,695 **raymondweil.com**

For petrolheads

ZENITH HERITAGE PILOT CAFÉ RACER

Although this sits within Zenith's pilot's watch collection, it's a timepiece more enthused with the style of vintage motorbikes than planes, inspired as it is by the British "café racer" culture of the 1960s. The steel case, the strap and the dial have all been specially aged to increase that sense of lived-in, worn style, while inside it ticks Zenith's El Primero movement – a legendary engine that was first made when the café racers were still riding.

Price: £5,600 **zenith-watches.com**

FOT.: ARCHIWUM

First to the finish

CHOPARD MILLE MIGLIA 2016 XL RACE EDITION

For more than 25 years now, Chopard has sponsored the Mille Miglia, the rally that sees the world's finest vintage cars tearing up a thousand miles of Italian countryside every spring. This year's commemorative watch recalls the glory days when it was still a death-defying race, and is surely one of the most handsome watches that Chopard has ever created.

Price: £7,120 **chopard.com**

Collector special

PATEK PHILIPPE 5930 WORLD TIMER CHRONOGRAPH

Two styles of watch that Patek Philippe has turned into an artform are the chronograph and the world timer; however, in its entire history, it has only ever combined them in one single watch, made for a doctor in the 1940s and now in the brand's museum. Finally, though, Patek Philippe has produced a world timer chronograph, and it's a thing of rich beauty, with a gorgeously engraved blue central dial.

Price: £48,480 **patek.com**

Sports heritage

TAG HEUER MONZA CALIBRE 17

Following Niki Lauda's Formula 1 World Championship win in 1975 for Ferrari, Heuer – then a major sponsor of the Italian team – produced a zippy, cushion-cased chronograph it named after Italy's famous F1 track. Forty years on, Tag Heuer has recreated the original red-on-black look, although in a modern, lightweight case of black titanium.

Price: £4,000 **tagheuer.co.uk**

Real luxury

MONTBLANC BI-CYLINDRIQUE 110 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

The German luxury house is 110 years old this year, and is marking the anniversary with this quite sensational watch, of which only three have been created. Part of the Collection Villeret, all handmade at an ancient manufacture in the Swiss hills, it includes the collection's signature tourbillon, with a double cylindrical balance spring.

POA (about 300,000 Euros)

montblanc.com

The perpetual calendar

FREDERIQUE CONSTANT MANUFACTURE PERPETUAL CALENDAR

Powered by the brand's latest in-house movement, it's a crisp, classical beauty. It shows the month and position in the leap year cycle at 12 o'clock, with the date, moon phase and week day on other sub-dials going clockwise around the face. A system of inset buttons is used to set the date initially – all you need to do then is to keep the timepiece running; good reason, perhaps, to acquire an electronic watch-winder as well.

Price: £7,210 in steel, £7,480 steel plated in rose gold **frederiqueconstant.com**

Light and beautiful

JAEGER-LECOULTRE REVERSO TRIBUTE GYROTOURBILLON

Eight years ago, Jaeger-LeCoultre made the first Reverso containing the brand's landmark gyroscopic tourbillon, a mesmerising device that rotates in three dimensions. This year, it has revisited the concept but with a much more streamlined proposition – 30 per cent less mass than its whopping precursor. In design, it's art deco on one side and elaborately skeletonised on the reverse when you flip it over.

Price: 270,000 Euros excluding VAT

jaeger-lecoultre.com

FOT: ARCHIWUM

one number

Rozmawiaj, pisz lub prowadź wideo rozmowy na dowolnie wybranym urządzeniu.

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4 HOURS IN... HONG KONG

Valerian Ho discovers age-old customs and comfort cuisine in the heritage district of Wan Chai

DA SIU YAHN

According to traditional Hong Kong beliefs, if your daily life is consumed by stress, this could mean that there are little ghosts attached to your body. Why not get rid of them the local way before starting your four-hour tour of the city?

An ancient practice originating from Guangdong, da siu yahn ("petty person beating") is a ceremony to drive away said ghosts. Under the bridge at the intersection of Hennessy Road and Canal Road, you will find old ladies perched on small stools. Sit down, tell them your difficulties, and then one of these "professional beaters" will light candles, put a person-shaped paper cut-out on a brick and chant a curse while hitting it with a shoe. Next, she will pour pig grease oil on a white paper tiger, burn it and scatter with raw rice to drive the ghosts away.

It costs around HK$50 (£4.60) to rid yourself of the evil spirits (although you will need a grasp of Cantonese). Alternatively, observe the spectacle from a safe curse-free distance.

TAI YUEN STREET

From the bridge, hop on a westbound tram for about five minutes (HK$2.30/20p) and alight at the Wan Chai MTR station at

FOT: ARCHIWUM

O'Brien Road. On your left you'll see the bustling Tai Yuen (Toy) Street. This thoroughfare attracts people from all over the world looking for collectible items and out-of-production treasures no longer available in stores, such as movie-themed models and Japanese capsule toys. While it is called Toy Street, you'll also find watches, slippers, clothes and antiques here.

KAM FUNG CAFE

If you're feeling tired after shopping, pull up a chair at Kam Fung. This traditional cha chaan teng (Hong Kong-style tea restaurant) is located at 41 Spring Garden Lane, next to Toy Street, and has been serving Cantonese café classics since 1956 – an eclectic mix of Hong Kong-style Western food. While its décor and service are basic, fusion favourites such as the chicken pie (HK$10/90p), beef and egg sandwich (HK$18/£1.60) and cold milk tea without ice (HK$19/£1.70) are comforting and delicious. It's open daily from 6am to 7pm.

HUNG SHING TEMPLE

Back on Queen's Road East, walk west for about five minutes to reach the Hung Shing Temple at number 129. Hung Shing was a Tang dynasty official who championed advances in astronomy and geography, making him celebrated by fishermen and sea traders, and temples were built to honour him as the God of the Southern Sea. The Grade I Listed temple was built around 1847, and once stood overlooking the ocean. Following extensive land reclamation, the structure is now buried behind a sea of skyscrapers. Open every day 8.30am-5.30pm.

THE PAWN

Go north from the temple until you reach Johnston Road, and at number 62 you will see a grand four-storey Chinese tenement building. Constructed in 1888, it once housed the Wo Cheong Pawn Shop. In 2007, the government renovated the property and transformed it into the Pawn, a high-end British restaurant and bar complete with a rooftop garden sprouting crops for farm-to-table dining.

Helmed by the UK's Tom Aikens, it's the perfect urban sanctuary for winding down with a cocktail – infused with herbs grown on site, naturally – while people-watching on the buzzing balcony. Bar open daily 5pm-1am (2am Fri and Sat); restaurant open 12pm-2.30pm, 6.30pm-10pm. Tel +852 2866 3444; thepawn.com.hk

The Pawn is the perfect urban sanctuary for winding down with a cocktail – infused with herbs grown on site.

ASK PETER

Letters

Piotr Kalita is related with air transport market for almost 20 years.
He is specializing in corporate and diplomatic travel segment. Have a question? - ask Piotr.
Mail your question to: redakcja@businesstraveller.pl

Liability of the carrier

This summer I'm going to the Azores and I'm having a big problem with SATA airline. I bought a joint ticket for a flight from Warsaw to Pico with the TAP airline, and in the meantime their timetable changed. As a result, I lost a connection in Lisbon. The airline doesn't want to offer me accommodation in Lisbon for the night. There is another connection on the very same day, with no stopover, but there is a problem if I wanted to change for a more convenient flight.

Adam

Dear Adam,
Changes in the flight schedules are a common occurrence, so the safest option is to always buy tickets for flights with the same carrier. In that case, the connections are arranged optimally with stopovers organized in a way that is most suitable to travellers. On the other hand, if you connect two flight cruises offered by different carriers, there are high chances that some irregularities may happen.

I'm afraid I don't have any good news for you. According to the regulations, the airline isn't obliged to provide you with accommodation in the situations like the one you are describing. The change in the schedule happened at least two weeks before departure, so you were informed about this fact ahead of time. TAP, as the issuer of your ticket, can't be held responsible for changes in the schedule made by another carrier.

Consequently, you are entitled only to obtain a full refund for a ticket, or accepting an alternative connection offered by the carrier, who issued the travel document. Regulations specify that the airline should offer a connection at approximately the same time, as originally arranged - provided the seats are available. If the most convenient flights are already fully booked, the carrier offers other connections available.

Another possibility is to change the date and postpone reservation to another, most distant date, after prior arrangement with the ticket issuer. The situation would be entirely different, however, if the information about schedule changes reached you less than 2 weeks before the departure date. If this is the case, the airline is more responsible for providing you with an alternative connection.

Luggage limits

I've bought a ticket from Warsaw to Dallas with Lufthansa in Economy Class. I used the possibility to upgrade to Premium Economy with my miles. I had two pieces of luggage, which caused some commotion at the check-in, as I was told that I had to pay extra for the second piece of luggage, as I was flying in Economy to Frankfurt, and only the second leg of the journey was to be taken in the Premium Class. Eventually, the situation got cleared, and I didn't have to pay. What is the luggage policy exactly?

Grażyna

Dear Grażyna
Luggage limits vary depending on the airline, route, ticket type, rate or a traveller's status in the Frequent flyer programme. Everything becomes even more complicated, when you are flying with different airlines. In that case, there could be different luggage limits for each leg of the journey.

With transatlantic routes with Lufthansa, the luggage limit is one piece of luggage up to 23 kg in Economy Class, and two pieces of luggage - up to 23 kg each - in Premium Economy. Regardless of the limits, you are also allowed to take hand luggage. In your original ticket the luggage limit was appropriate for the Economy Class, but after the upgrade, it was automatically changed to two pieces of luggage. It doesn't matter that during the European leg of the journey you didn't travel in Premium Economy. The regulations specify that the longest leg of the journey should be used to determine the luggage limits for the whole route. In your case, it was the transatlantic flight.

What's the most probable, is that the agent at the check-in checked the limits for the originally issued ticket, hence the misunderstanding. If the upgrade to a higher class is caused by overbooking, passengers aren't entitled to an additional piece of luggage. That's why the information about higher limits had to be confirmed.

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