

Business Traveller ^{Poland}

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BOGOTA

Business and politics - is it a new era for Columbia?

COPENHAGEN

Work and fun in the Danish capital

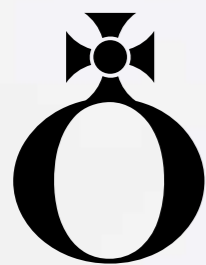
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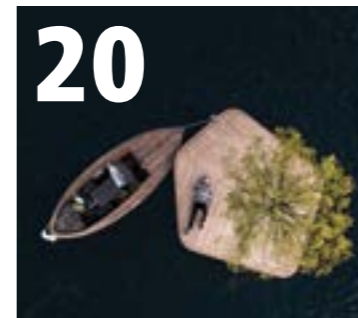
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FOCUS ON COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen is a perfect place for both businesspeople and those seeking good entertainment. According to the "2017 Better Life" report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD), Danish people have one of the best work-life balances in the world, with only 2 per cent regularly working long hours (more than 50 a week), compared to the international average of 13 per cent. At the same time, in a study from Expert Market that divided the GDP of the world's biggest economies by the number of hours worked per person, Denmark was ranked the fourth most productive country in the world (after Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden, respectively). What's more, Denmark is consistently voted the best place in the world to be a woman – thanks to its flexible parental leave policy, its earnings-based childcare system and its active promotion of gender equality. To top it all off, national healthcare and education are virtually free. Add to this the famous Danish "hygge" - the art of appreciating life's simple pleasures: family, friends, nature, soothing environments, a feeling of "a cosy togetherness". To find out more about Copenhagen and its exciting life, read our article entitled "The Hygge Life", as well as other articles in this month's issue that has received a refreshed layout. Enjoy your reading!

Marzena Mróz

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
REDAKTOR NACZELNA



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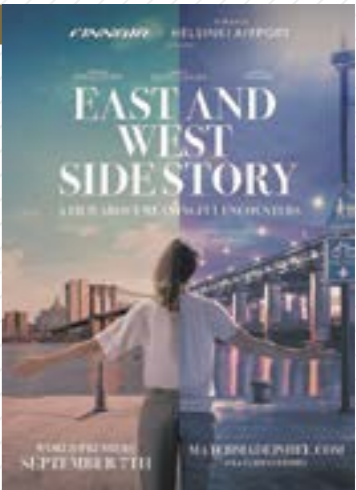
The world's first film made by an airline and an airport

Finnair and Helsinki Airport have been connecting East and West for 35 years via Helsinki. To celebrate this achievement, the two have released a short film, the first one of its kind – made by an airline and an airport. The short film entitled “East and West Side Story” speaks of meaningful encounters that take place when people travel. “East and West Side Story” follows a famous writer in need of personal privacy, while the whole world



wants to have her in the limelight. The story plays on three continents, spacing from the US to Korea and ending in Finland. As the film's title East and West Side Story suggests, the film has two directors: Young-Wok Paik aka “Wo-okie” comes from Korea and Johan Storm from Sweden. The two directors both give their point of view on the same story, produced by B-Reel Films (Bergman: a Year in Life). The leading

roles are played by Anne Bergstedt (Boardwalk Empire, Black Swan) and Jae Hoon (One Day Maybe). “East and West Side Story” is an excellent example of modern companies using branded entertainment to tell more emotional stories and reach an even wider audience around the world. The short film premiered last night in a very special event at Helsinki Airport, where an aircraft hangar was turned into a cinema for



one night. The guests were hosted by Renny Harlin, the established Hollywood filmmaker and one of the most sought-after directors in China; matchmadeinhel.com

GLACIERS WITHOUT SECRETS

Naturally snow-reliable slopes, impressive panoramas and excellent visibility, as well as an exceptionally long ski season and sunny days that last much longer than in the valley - there are many reasons to choose five Tyrolean glaciers for your winter holiday. When the autumn fog starts covering the valleys, the first days on the glaciers are still incredibly beautiful. Even in the bad weather at an altitude of 3,000 metres, there is fresh snow, as only 20 percent of precipitation on the glacier turns into rain. The five Tyrol glaciers comprise a total of 300 kilometres of ski slopes, 75 cable cars and ski lifts, and about 100 kilometres of alternative pistes. The area is the site of Alpine Ski World Cup races and hosts numerous concerts and culinary events. There is also a snow park on each glacier. The White5 pass is valid for a total of 10 days from 1 October 2018 to 15 May 2019 on all five glaciers and costs €410. Accommodation in most hotels, as well as ski passes can be booked online; gletscherhotels.at



TURKISH AIRLINES WORLD GOLF CUP

The third Polish edition of the Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup took place on 27 August at First Warsaw Golf club. So far, more than 100 tournaments of the series have been held in various parts of the world, attracting a total of 8,000 players. The series is supported by global sponsors, Titanic Hotels, Ruck & Maul, National and Financial Times. The winners of each tournament will take part in the grand final held in Antalya, Turkey in November, where they will fly in Business Class with Turkish Airlines, and stay at the five-star Titanic Golf Deluxe Hotel. This year's Warsaw tournament was won by senator dr Grzegorz Czelej who scored 43 points. The runner-up was Rhea Wiatr and third was Robert Kubiak; thy.com

PRESS MATERIALS, FOTOLIA

ASTANA

A CITY OF WIND AND SOPHISTICATED ARCHITECTURE

Surrounded by an endless steppe, the city of wind and sophisticated architecture resembles a camp of aliens, who have decided to settle in this corner of the Earth. It's a genuinely pleasant place to spend a few days, whether working or sightseeing. Architecture-wise Astana was designed as a melting pot of various cultures. No wonder then, that you will see here buildings reminiscent of American high-rises, Moscow office buildings, and constructions characteristic of Dubai, Abu Dhabi or Singapore; with a bit of luck you can find here even a typical Chinese pagoda. Meanwhile modern housing estates are built in Spanish and British style. The city was founded in the 19th century as a Russian fortress called Akmolinsk. 1961, the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR renamed Akmolinsk to Tselinograd, and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the consequent independence of Kazakhstan, the city's original name was restored in the modified form Akmola. It became the capital 20 years ago, in December 1997, and the proponent of this idea was President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Today Astana is a modern, business-friendly city.



New cabins and seats

Air France has unveiled its new Premium Economy cabin, which will be featured on its 15 A330s. The seats will feature a 130-degree recline in a fixed shell, which preserves each passenger's space and privacy, even in the fully-reclined position. It's also one of the widest seats with 48.3 cm, 102 cm seat pitch, lumbar support adapted to different body shapes, additional storage space, a wider footrest and a 13.3 inch (33.9 cm) HD screen. The softer seat cushions and wider leather armrests have also been redesigned.

On board all its long-haul aircraft, passengers can better relax with a red feather pillow and a deep blue blanket. A comfort kit renewed every 6 months is also available. Between relaxation and gourmet delights, passengers can also enjoy Wi-Fi on board, an individual socket and USB port as well as a wide choice of entertainment.

In addition to new seats and changing the colour and design of the Air France cabins, the carrier has prepared a number of little touches to make the journey more pleasant. As soon as passengers arrive on board, the crew welcomes passengers with an oshibori during or after



the flight. It's a nice gesture of welcome taken from Japanese tradition. At aperitif time, the cabin crew offer a glass of champagne in a brand new glass.

During the flight, your meal is served in a new collection of powder-coloured tableware on a black background and eco-designed in collaboration with Eugeni Quittlet.

MAZUREK

From this season, passengers departing from Chopin Airport and flying with LOT Polish Airlines outside the Schengen area can use Mazurek business lounge. Located on the ground floor, next to the Bolero lounge, Mazurek offers passengers delicious fresh meals and drinks, free press, Wi-Fi, USB sockets, as well as toilets and showers. The lounge overlooks the airport apron and is available for travellers flying with LOT and other Star Alliance members, as well as Business Class passengers and high tier members of Miles & More programme: silver Frequent Traveller, gold Senator, and black HON Circle; lot.com



NICE IN AUTUMN

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 aficionados - are very fond of this unique and unusual city. You can now fly to Nice directly from Warsaw with LOT Polish Airlines, and if you do, you should definitely visit its famous Marc Chagall Museum that features a vast collection of great paintings by this artist. Then head towards the port where the world's most splendid boats are moored, stroll along the popular Promenade des Anglais and have lunch or dinner in one of France's finest restaurants located in the Old Town.

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THE BIG SLEEP

TEKST PAUL J. DEVRIES

From openings to renovations and reflags, New York offers an ever-increasing array of places to lay your head. We explore some of the latest additions to the hotel scene

Far from being the city that never sleeps, there are always new hotels to try in New York. To take three examples, in the last few years there have been significant developments from Four Seasons, with its Robert AM Stern-designed tower next to the Woolworth Building in Tribeca, 1 Hotels with its waterfront hotel in Brooklyn, and Firmdale Hotels with The Whitby on 56th Street.

At the other end of the scale, in every sense, micro “budget-chic” hotels continue to be popular in a city notoriously short on space, with Pod Hotels creating its 665-room Times Square flagship, and newcomer Arlo Hotels setting up in both Hudson Square and NoMad (Madison Square North).

Intercontinental Barclay, a railroad hotel dating back to 1926, recently revealed the result of a \$180 million renovation, while W Hotels dropped its original flagship on Lexington Avenue after two decades.

Looking to the future, there will be more exciting developments. Virgin Hotels will open a 500-room hotel in NoMad, as part of its plans to grow to nine hotels across the United States. Coming to the same neighbourhood is a 250-room Ritz-Carlton Hotel, along with 16 residences in a Rafael Vinoly-designed tower. Waldorf Astoria New York is due to reopen as a much smaller hotel of around 350 rooms and suites, with a similar number of residences and a full restoration of its public spaces.

Over the next few pages we round up some of the most compelling new options the city will have to offer over the next few years. →



MR C SEAPORT

Open since mid-July, Mr C Seaport is the second hotel from Ignazio and Maggio Cipriani, and is the East Coast counterpart to Mr C Beverly Hills. It occupies a converted red-brick building on the corner of Peck Slip and Front Street, in the Seaport District at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge. Teak veneer contrasts with neutral greys and whites in the 66 rooms and suites, with several categories offering outdoor space. Bellini is an Italian restaurant and bar on the ground floor. Later this year, a third Mr C Hotel is due to open in Coconut Grove, Florida.

33 Peck Slip; +1 877 528 4249;
mrcseaport.com

MOXY NYC DOWNTOWN AND MOXY NYC CHELSEA

Following its debut in Times Square in 2017, two further Moxy Hotels will take the Marriott's millennial brand to a capacity of more than 1,200 rooms in Manhattan by the end of this year. Moxy Downtown comes in at 30 storeys and 298 rooms, with a 7-metre-high atrium featuring a 4x6m LED wall. On West 28th Street, Moxy NYC Chelsea pushes 37 storeys into the sky and will have 349 rooms. Like the Times Square outpost, the Chelsea branch is designed by Yabu Pushelberg. In addition to an Italian trattoria and flower shop on the ground floor, there will be a glass-enclosed rooftop bar with views of the Empire State Building. Another two projects are in the pipeline for the Lower East Side and the East Village.

Moxy NYC Downtown, 26 Ann Street; Moxy NYC Chelsea, 105 West 28th Street;
+1 212 514 6699;
moxy-hotels.marriott.com

THE HOXTON WILLIAMSBURG

Due this autumn, The Hoxton will debut in the US with a 175-room hotel in the Williamsburg district of Brooklyn, building on its international expansion from London to Amsterdam and Paris. Wooden



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Moxy NYC Chelsea; Mr C Seaport; Hoxton Williamsburg; Citizen M Bowery; The Arzen; AC Hotel New York Downtown; exterior Moxy NYC Chelsea; Moxy NYC Downtown



floors, raw concrete ceilings, brass details and velvet headboards are some of the features in the rooms. Public spaces include the brasserie Klein's, which serves food in its restaurant and in the lobby; Backyard, an informal outdoor restaurant; and Summerly, a seasonal rooftop space. Additional hotels are planned for Portland, Los Angeles and Chicago.

97 Wythe Avenue;
+1 718 215 7100;
thehoxton.com

CITIZEN M NEW YORK BOWERY

Dutch hotel group Citizen M will open its second Manhattan hotel in September, this time on the Lower East Side. Its 300 compact and modular rooms – constructed off-site, then assembled – largely follow the brand's familiar concept, with XL king-size beds set against wall-to-wall windows. Public spaces are filled with Vitra furniture, and Canteen M serves food and drink 24 hours daily.

189 Bowery;
citizenm.com

AC HOTEL NEW YORK DOWNTOWN

Only a few blocks from Mr C Seaport is the AC Hotel New York Downtown, the second hotel on Manhattan Island for this particular brand in the Marriott stable. There are 274 minimalist rooms spread over 33 floors, a fitness centre, and a breakfast restaurant serving Spanish tapas – a nod to the many AC Hotels in Spain.

151 Maiden Lane;
+1 212 742 1900;
achotels.marriott.com

THE ARTEZEN

Aiming for an October opening is The Arzen, the conversion of a Lower Manhattan office building just two blocks from the World Trade Centre into a 21-storey hotel. It will have 89 suites as well as a two-storey "sky lounge" that includes a restaurant called Hide.

24 John Street; +1 212 679 7685;
artzenhotel.com

SISTER CITY NEW YORK

From the people behind the Ace Hotels comes this new hotel in Lower Manhattan. Rather than aiming for the thriving lobby scene of the Ace in Midtown Manhattan, it will be a refuge where guests can recharge. The 200 rooms are on the cosy side, ranging from 12-24 sqm and focus on the essentials, looking to Finnish saunas and Japanese bento boxes among other things for design inspiration. There will also be a ground floor restaurant and rooftop bar. 225 Bowery; sistercitynewyork.com

THE TIMES SQUARE EDITION

Edition Hotels has plans to add seven properties this year, bringing the total to 11. With destinations ranging from Bangkok to Bodrum, New York will welcome The Times Square Edition on 7th Avenue and West 47th Street. More than 20 blocks north-west of its Madison Avenue sibling, the hotel will have 452 rooms and suites, four levels of public spaces with multiple food and drink outlets, and a 540 sqm beer garden overlooking Times Square. 20 Times Square; +1 212 398 7017; editionhotels.com

TWA HOTEL AT JFK AIRPORT

Early in 2019, the 1962 Eero Saarinen-designed TWA Flight Centre at JFK airport will finally find a new purpose as part of the aptly named TWA Hotel. Dormant for more than 15 years, the iconic shell-shaped structure will be flanked by two newly constructed buildings with 512 soundproofed hotel rooms filled with mid-century modern furniture. There will be eight restaurants and six bars, extensive meeting facilities, and an observation deck with pool. JFK Airport; +1 212 806 9000; twahotel.com

THE CARLYLE, A ROSEWOOD HOTEL

The Carlyle has been a fixture on the Upper East Side for decades, tow-



FROM TOP: Sister City New York; The Times Square Edition; TWA Hotel (exterior and interior)



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STAY YOUNG

JESTEM TYM JAK WYGLĄDAM,
JAK SIĘ CZUJĘ, JAK MYŚLĘ.

www.holisticclinic.pl

ring above the corner of Madison Avenue and East 76th Street. While the exact details are still being kept under wraps, the hotel is in the middle of a renovation that interior designer Tony Chi is overseeing, tackling both guest rooms and a number of suites. Work is due to be completed by the middle of 2019, with the first new rooms likely to be ready at the end of 2018.

35 East 76th Street;
+1 212 744 1600;
rosewoodhotels.com

EQUINOX HOTEL

High-end fitness chain Equinox is set to branch out into hotels on a global scale over the next few years, starting with a property in the Hudson Yards development, near the north end of the High Line. Likely to open in 2019, the hotel will have the largest Equinox club to date at 5,574 sqm, along with a spa, restaurant and office space. An exact room count is not yet confirmed, but interiors will be by Yabu Pushelberg, and there will be a number of residences above the hotel.

Hudsons Yards, 11th Avenue and West 33rd Street;
equinox.com/hotels

AMAN NEW YORK

As the new decade starts, Aman New York will open inside the 1921 Crown Building on 5th Avenue and West 57th Street (not far from Central Park, on the same side as The Plaza hotel). Its 83 rooms and suites will start at 70 sqm, vast by New York standards. The tenth-floor lobby will feature double-height ceilings and a wraparound garden terrace with views of Central Park. There will be multiple restaurants and bars and a three-storey Aman spa with 25-metre indoor pool and outdoor terrace with open fire. In addition to the hotel a total of 20 private residences are part of the development, including a five-storey penthouse with private indoor and outdoor pools.

730 5th Avenue; +1 800 477 9180;
aman.com



FROM TOP:
The Carlyle; Equinox Hotel will be part of the Hudson Yards development; Aman New York



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A high-heeled cyclist in a crisp suit passes me on the street, making a hands-free call as she pedals. It's just after 3pm on a Friday, and the concrete promenades lining Copenhagen's three rectangular lakes – commonly mistaken for a single river – are baking in the unexpected spring heat. At the nearby harbour, a powerboat carrying businesspeople guns down the satiny stretch of water towards Sweden. On days like this, “bridging” is also a thing in the Danish capital, where a denim-clad crowd perches along the walls of Dronning Louises Bridge, sipping cans of pilsner and socialising until sunrise.

You can't possibly have made it through 2016 without hearing the word *hygge* (pronounced hue-gah). Just in case, it's the Danish ideal of appreciating life's simple pleasures: family, friends, nature, soothing environments, a feeling of “a cosy togetherness”. As a nation, Danes make time in their daily lives to appreciate the small but important things. It seems the rest of the world needs a manual to implement this – The Little Book of Hygge: the Danish Way to Live Well was a best-selling book in 2016. And, consistently stealing the top spots of “most liveable” and “happiest” in city rankings, Copenhagen is certainly getting something right.

The enviable Danish lifestyle could be a trump card when it comes to attracting overseas talent. “I don't think this factor should be underestimated,” says Claus Lonborg, CEO of Copenhagen Capacity, which supports foreign companies, investors and talent seeking opportunities in Greater Copenhagen.

“If you want to attract young talent, you need to offer a cool place to live, with the right framework for developing a business. Today, young people want to know: ‘What's it like living in Copenhagen? Where can I hang out?’ They spend [more]time communicating about these things [than] about the actual job and company they'd be working for.”

“If you want to attract young talent, you need to offer a cool place to live, with the right framework for developing a business”

The prototype “floating island” in Copenhagen's harbour by Australian architect Marshall Blecher and Magnus Maarbjerg of Danish design studio Fokstrot

THE HYGGE LIFE

The Danish capital combines business and pleasure with aplomb. Is Copenhagen's progressive attitude at the heart of its success?

MARSHALL BLECHER



WORDS ROSE DYKINS



WHERE TO STAY

Copenhagen Strand Hotel

Fully renovated last year, this four-star hotel sits along the waterfront in the genteel district of Gammelhavn with its understated cafés. The 174 airy rooms feature pale blue and light wood furnishings, and the inviting junior suites offer harbour views. There's a small boardroom for eight people, and the Danish pastries drizzled in chocolate served at breakfast are reason enough to stay. copenhagenstrand.com

Hotel Sanders

Opened last autumn, Hotel Sanders celebrates its location across from the Royal Danish Theatre by marrying the aesthetics of grand theatres and Danish colonialism in the

design of its 47 rooms, suites and apartments – velvet, leather and rattan furniture combine to create a high-end eclectic feel. Guests can order drinks, coffee or snacks to enjoy amid the greenery of the fifth-floor conservatory, which has a retractable roof. hotelsanders.com

Radisson Collection Hotel, Royal Copenhagen

Part of the new Radisson Collection brand, this eye-catching property was designed by modernist architect Arne Jacobsen in the 1950s, and was known as SAS Royal Hotel. Following a full refurbishment, the curvy furniture and egg chairs pay homage to the building's place in design history, while there are a handful of signature suites fitted out to reflect the style of famous architects. There's



The spacious Sanders Apartment at the Hotel Sanders

also a meeting space and a grill restaurant. radissoncollection.com

Manon Les Suites

The oasis-like central courtyard of this five-star property, with its stylish cabana-lined pool and jungle of potted and hanging plants, is an Instagram-

mer's dream. The exotic 87 suites feature wooden blinds, Balinese four-poster beds and metro-tiled bathrooms. The cushion-covered rooftop deck is set up for sunbathing and there is a sauna, too. It's a 15-minute walk from Copenhagen Central station. guldsmedenhotels.com

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

According to the "2017 Better Life" report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD), Danish people have one of the best work-life balances in the world, with only 2 per cent regularly working long hours (more than 50 a week), compared to the international average of 13 per cent. At the same time, in a study from Expert Market that divided the GDP of the world's biggest economies by the number of hours worked per person, Denmark was ranked the fourth most productive country in the world (after Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden, respectively). What's more, Denmark is consistently voted the best place in the world to be a woman – thanks to its flexible parental leave policy, its earnings-based childcare system and its active promotion of gender equality. To top it all off, national healthcare and education are virtually free.

A SCANDI STATE OF MIND

It's easy to paint Denmark as a utopia when, of course, not everything is rosy. Its harsh anti-immigration policies have been widely criticised by the international community, and its normally buoyant economy had taken a slight dip at the time of writing this.

But overall, Denmark's progressive nature has created a society that outsiders look upon with admiration, and a fitting business environment for blue-sky thinking. A key aspect of this is Denmark's digitised lifestyle, which cultivates great conditions for launching and testing new products. "The Danish government committed to the di-

gital agenda early on," says Lonborg. "Everything from renewing your passport to getting a work permit has been completely digitalised.

"As a citizen, if every time you interact with your government, it's digital, you automatically become much more tech savvy, which develops quite an interesting test market for new technologies. I think that savviness is what's driving and inspiring people here."

Skype (a joint venture with Stockholm-based entrepreneurs), Unity (the creators of the leading global platform for building computer games) and Just Eat are some of the success stories from Copenhagen's thriving tech sector, each of them unicorns (companies valued at more than US\$1 billion). Major IT corporations have a presence in the city, including IBM, Microsoft and Google, which has its Nordic headquarters in the city. What's more, the University of California established its first out-of-state university campus in the Danish capital.

How do Copenhagen's startup conditions compare to the other Scandinavian capitals? "There are probably more similarities between the Nordic countries than there are differences," says Lonborg. "We have so much shared history and culture. Having said that, there are a few ways in which Copenhagen stands out. We have the best-connected airport in the Nordic region. In a regional context, we're not that expensive. And it's very easy to work with the authorities."

He adds: "We also have, what we like to call 'flexi-curity' in Denmark. We are one of the countries in the world where

ABOVE FROM LEFT: A cyclist in Christianshavn; Amager Square; the inner harbour bridge



We've seen this tremendous increase in tourism – we hotels have had a pretty good time over the past five years

re it's the easiest to hire and fire people. Investors know that you may not be successful in the first rounds of funding, so you have to be able to scale up or down if needed. It's much more difficult in Sweden, France and elsewhere in Europe, which costs companies money and time."

The Danish government has also taken steps to place entrepreneurial acumen at the heart of its policies, some of which may seem a little out there. For example, in May, tech millionaire Tommy Ahlers – also star of TV show *Shark Tank*, the Danish equivalent of *Dragon's Den* – was appointed as minister of education and research. Having made his millions by selling his startups to Vodaphone and Citrix Systems Inc, Ahlers has reportedly criticised Denmark's current education system for not being elitist enough, saying that an "academic proletariat" exists due to the sheer number of university graduates. Instead, he believes the system should ensure that fewer students make the grade, only those who prove they can handle the pressures of starting a business – it will be interesting to see how his vision pans out.

In addition, in a landmark move, the Danish government has announced plans to integrate the sharing economy into its tax and labour laws. Although Uber was booted out of Denmark last year for failing to comply with the existing regulations, Airbnb recently agreed to report all homeowners' incomes from the home rental company to the Danish authorities, in order to crack down on tax evasion (a massive no-no in a country where the average citizen hands over 45 percent of their income to the public purse). In addition, Airbnb will

limit the number of days that Danish homeowners may list a property to 70 days per year. In return, the government will give people letting their homes via Airbnb a tax-free allowance of up to 40,000 kroner (£4,690) a year. This happy medium could set a precedent for countries all over the world, which are also witnessing that the sharing economy enterprises are here to stay, but seeking a solution to reign them in behave more like traditional businesses.

GRAND DESIGNS

The international fervour for all things Scandi – fuelled in no small part by the popularity of TV series such as *The Killing* and *The Bridge* – has steadily bolstered tourism to Copenhagen, and served the city's hotel industry well. "We've seen this tremendous increase in tourism – we hotels have had a pretty good time over the past five years," says Peter Borup, director of Copenhagen Strand hotel. "All Copenhagen hotels here have undergone some kind of renovation during this time. And, now the crisis has passed, international investors are looking at Copenhagen. Projects are underway that will increase the number of rooms in the city by about 40 per cent over the next three or four years."

Recent visitors to the Danish capital will have noticed the amount of drilling taking place in the city's pretty public squares, and the kilometres of hoarding painted with edgy

FOTOLIA

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artwork in an attempt to compensate. The development of a new metro line, Cityringen, has been a long time coming. When it is complete in 2019, the circular route will connect the districts of Vesterbro, Nørrebro and Østerbro. Afterwards, this line will also be extended by lines branching off to the north (Nordhavn extension, coming 2020) and to the south (Sydhavn, coming 2023).

In a rather nifty move, the soil dug up during the construction of the new metro line has been converted into reclaimed land – forming the new floating business and residential district where the Nordhavn line will terminate. Situated in the city's North Harbour, Nordhavn is loaded with swanky apartments and industrial charm.

Speaking of floating, in March Copenhagen's harbour gained a rather intriguing addition – a wooden island sprouting a single linden tree. Designed by Australian architect Marshall Blecher and Magnus Maarbjerg from Danish design studio Fokstrot, the 20 sqm structure is not only a resting place for kayakers and open-water swimmers, but it doubles up as event space, and was used to host lectures about the future of harbour cities. It's intended to be the first of a "parkipelago" – a network of nine islands that will add interest and activity around Copenhagen's waterways.

The idea is for them to be connected together for festivals or events, and each one will house something different: a sail-in café, a diving board, a mussel farm, a stage and a sauna are some of the current intentions.

"The harbour has been cleaned up so that it's fully approved for swimming, and we've established outdoor facilities where you can take a dip in after work," says Lønborg. "How many cities around the world are there where you can you live downtown and swim in their harbour?"

At dusk, I stroll up to Islands Brygge, the city's original "harbour bath". The winding walkway connects to the wide promenade, creating sectioned off areas of crystal clear water. A few swimming-capped heads bob in and out of the water, while the walkways are teeming revellers, tucking into barbecued food truck snacks and chattering over the celebratory sounds of a live brass band, living the hygge life. Seeing the city at its best, it's undeniable that Copenhagen has the right DNA for being the world's happiest city.

Seeing the city at its best, it's undeniable that Copenhagen has the right DNA for being the world's happiest city.

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 **Condor**

LIFTING THE CLOUDS

A new president, a peace accord and a tourism boom signal a bright future for Colombia. But Bogotanos are not ready to party just yet...



ABOVE FROM LEFT: Bogotá; coffee plantation; Workers pick coffee, one of Colombia's most important exports; unprocessed coffee berries; street in Bogotá

Colombia reels when there is a downturn in the value of petroleum, coal, bananas, flowers or coffee

In tandem with these changes are dramatically improved economic prospects. Since 2011, direct foreign investment into Colombia has more than doubled and, according to the Ministry of Commerce, more than 1,100 foreign firms have set up operations in the country. In May, Colombia was invited to join Mexico and Chile as the third Latin American member of the OECD, the select club of 36 wealthy, stable democracies.

But South America's third largest economy, behind Brazil and Argentina, relies heavily on global commodity prices. Inevitably, Colombia reels whenever there is a downturn – as at present – in the value of petroleum, coal, bananas, cut flowers or coffee. It's the world's largest producer of mild, washed Arabica coffee; in 2017, production was 14.2 million bags, mainly for export.

Economic growth slowed to 1.8 per cent in 2017 – down from 2 per cent the previous year (and way down from the 5-6 per cent notched up before the crude oil crash of 2014). But the World Bank noted an upturn in financial services. As the climatic effects of the El Niño phenomenon dissipated and the livestock sector expanded, agriculture expanded 4.95 per cent last year.

"The agricultural sector has immense potential now rural areas have seen the end of the war," says Mauricio Rodríguez, formerly Colombia's ambassador to the UK, and currently an advisor to Bogotá's mayor, Enrique Penalosa. "Even though peace is not fully consolidated, we are starting to enjoy the dividends, such as a boom in tourism and record high investment levels."

MONEY WORRIES

Most observers concur that Colombia needs to turn its fragile peace into a comprehensive social contract that tackles

crime, widespread corruption and social inequality. Reforms across business and banking are also needed to steer the country away from "cartelisation", a common trait in Latin American economies exacerbated by Colombia's particularly problematic history.

"The Colombian economy faces a number of structural challenges," says Luis Carlos Reyes, assistant professor of economics at Bogotá's Pontificia Universidad Javeriana and co-founder of the Observatorio Fiscal, an ethics-focused think tank. "Oligopolies in several industries tend to run the show. This is an issue of particular importance in the financial sector: it is difficult for entrepreneurs to find capital to fund new businesses, unless they get it from the established banks at rates that are not competitive."

Reyes also points to difficulties entering the local stock market. Leading glassmaker Tecnoglass claimed that it was easier to join Nasdaq than the Colombian Stock Exchange.

"Issuing bonds is complicated because of regulation. Some large firms resort to borrowing abroad, which is risky because of fluctuations in the exchange rate. It would be good to have a more stable exchange rate – it's currently favourable to exporters – and a more stable tax system – there's a major tax reform every other year or so, and businesses don't know what to expect in terms of their tax burden in the long run. In sum, investing is harder than it should be unless you are a big player, and that is not good for the economy. We need more competitive financial markets."

In May, Colombia elected a new president. Ivan Duque, 42, a member of the right-wing Democratic Centre party and former ally of Uribe, was widely viewed as the business-friendly choice. He assumed office on August 7 pledging to boost investment, cut taxes and shrink the state.

"The new president was the candidate of the status quo," says Reyes. "He had the backing of the large conglomerates that run the country's economy. While the business environment may not improve dramatically, his being elec-

ted avoided a number of risky economic experiments that could have come under his opponent, Gustavo Petro, who is ideologically close to the old-guard, anti-free-trade Latin American left.

"It was a choice between a candidate who was suspected of being anti-business and anti-market, and one who is at best pro-business but not really pro-market. In this sense, Duque may be better for the economy."

FROM GOLD TO GIGABYTES

The original pre-Colombian inhabitants of Bogotá, the Muisca, were master goldsmiths, and the city's Gold Museum is a world-class showcase of precious metalwork. Gold mining and other extraction industries have played a major part in the nation's economic history. While the Colombian capital is often dubbed "the Athens of South America" (a nickname given by Prussian explorer Alexander Von Humboldt in the 19th century) for its cultural riches, Bogotanos tend to be business-minded and entrepreneurial in spirit.

With a population in excess of eight million, Bogotá is recognised as one of Latin America's key business centres. A new terminal at El Dorado International airport opened in 2012. Recent hotel openings include a 297-room Grand Hyatt, a sleek W, two Four Seasons properties and the uber-cool BOG boutique hotel. It has a modern CBD in the Chapinero district, well away from traffic-hogged La Candelaria. In January, the glass-walled 4,000-delegate capacity Agora convention centre opened. In a bid to keep ahead of upstart smaller rival cities, Bogotá styles itself as the tech and coworking capital: HubBOG, a "start-up campus" set up a decade ago, claims to have mentored more than 200 countries.

Two miles north of Chapinero are several contiguous dining and drinking quarters, including the Zona T aka Zona Rosa, Zona G (for "gourmet") and Parque de la 93. While still chasing Peru as a gastronomic centre, Bogotá chefs →



Harry Sasson and Leonor Espinosa are making waves, while out-of-town eatery Andres Carne de Res (and its in-town branch Andres DC) combines fun, dancing and great food in an effervescent Colombian manner; branches of Lima's Astrid y Gaston and Rafael are also found in the city.

ABOVE FROM LEFT: Bogotá; the Gold Museum is one of the most popular tourist attractions

BECOMING A BUSINESS HUB

Behind the vivacious veneer, the city has some way to go to establish itself as a premier business hub.

"Bogota has gone through a couple of difficult mayoral administrations, involving corruption scandals and a lack of efficiency in public finance," says Juan Guillermo Moncada, a researcher at Bogota-based think tank Instituto de Ciencia Política (ICP).

"It faces transit and public transport challenges, and security problems as well. Nevertheless, Bogota has positioned itself as a major Latin American capital for its strategic geographical position and diverse population.

"It's an attractive city not only to Colombians but to other Latin American travellers, who come seeking improved job opportunities, better quality of life and education, knowing that Bogota's universities are the best in Colombia and among the best in Latin America."

Transport is a major bugbear at national level. Unlike most other Latin American nations, Colombia's economy is not totally centralised. More than ten cities have populations in excess of 500,000 inhabitants. Medellin is known for its textile, pharmaceutical (ironic jokes probably unwelcome) and service industries. Barranquilla is another industrial hub – and chief Caribbean port. Cartagena de Indias, a sultry colonial jewel on the same coast, is the tourism honeypot. The three cities of Armenia, Pereira and Manizales constitute the "Coffee Triangle".

While the even distribution of population and economic power is largely a positive, connecting up the cities of South America's fourth-largest nation remains a challenge. Bogota lies atop a 2,640m (8,600 feet) plateau known as the sabana (savannah), bordered by the eastern Andean

cordillera (chain of mountain ranges). Two further densely forested Andean ranges run north-south. The roads, considered dangerous in the dark days of guerrilla warfare, are in a terrible state of repair. Business people and tourists fly, even for relatively short distances.

Six years ago, President Santos inaugurated the \$70bn Vias 4G infrastructure programme. Latin America's largest road-building scheme, it involves 47 projects spanning 8,000 km of roads and 3,500 km of four-lane highways as well as expansion of ports and railways, all to be completed by the end of the decade.

Duque has signalled his support for the 4G programme, progress of which was delayed by Brazil's Odebrecht scandal. If he keeps his word and speeds up the implementation, and oil prices stabilise and private sector demand increases, growth – according to the World Bank – is expected to strengthen gradually over the 2018-2020 period, accelerating to 2.7 percent this year, and 3.6 per cent by 2020.

Juan Guillermo Moncada of the Instituto de Ciencia Política (ICP) believes megaprojects could play a key role in Colombia's future prospects. "4G will reduce transportation and connectivity costs, and probably make Colombia a more attractive investment destination.

"There are other big projects in line, including seven new airports, a new port in the Uraba Gulf and various fluvial ports along the Magdalena River that will improve its navigability."

TOURISM ON THE RISE

Tourism is, arguably, less an indicator of economic health than of good PR. But Colombia has some desirable USPs. It's within easy reach of all the countries of the Americas: five hours from Atlanta, and 6.5 hours from Buenos Aires. It's the only South American nation with Pacific and Caribbean coasts. It has several well-preserved colonial cities, the three Andean ranges, the Amazon river as well as Magdalena, the region to the west of the river of the same name that was the inspiration and backdrop for Gabriel Garcia



FOTOLIA, MATERIA PRASOWE, ARCHIWUM BT

Marquez's magic realism. It's also one of the world's 17 "megadiverse" countries, according to Conservation International, and is a favourite for birdwatchers.

ProColombia – the government body that promotes invisible exports – claims that, between 2010 and 2017, visitor numbers increased by 13.5 per cent, almost three times the global average. International flights have grown accordingly, with Colombian flag-carrier Avianca – Latin America's second biggest airline by fleet size and revenue – leading the way. A recent tourism campaign assured visitors, "The only risk is you'll want to stay". But it's not all a bed of hand-picked exportable roses.

US government observers claimed Colombia's coca cultivation had increased 11 per cent to 209,000 hectares (516,450 acres) in 2017, and potential cocaine output rose 19 per cent to 921 metric tons in the same year. In June, president Santos authorised the use of low-flying drones spraying controversial herbicide glyphosate – linked by the World Health Organization to cancer.

Meanwhile, Duque's past links with right-wing paramilitaries has raised questions about the future of the current detente. In the March elections, FARC candidates polled less than 1 per cent. Colombia's second-largest left-wing guerrilla force, the ELN (National Liberation Army), is still officially active. In June 2017, three people died when a bomb exploded in a shopping centre in Bogota's Zona Rosa; a fringe group called the People's Revolutionary Movement (MRP) was held responsible.

Floods, landslides, earthquakes and other natural disasters routinely blight Colombia; infrastructure problems are by no means limited to the roads, and the poor always suffer disproportionately. It remains to be seen if Duque will balance advancing the economy with tackling long-standing challenges such as income inequality and economic efficiency.

Then there is the Venezuela problem. According to the Red Cross, more than one million refugees have arrived since 2017; while declaring solidarity with the needy, Santos put more troops at the border to deter them. If anything, Duque is likely to further tighten immigration controls.

By any standards, these are massive challenges. But consider Colombia's point of departure. In the late Eighties, if Bogota wasn't the global media's "most dangerous city on earth", then Medellin was, or else Cali. Over the past decade I've been to Bogota five times, and once each to the infamous "cartel" cities. In the capital, I was seduced by the sophistication of the bogotanos, the bicycle-only Sundays, the energy of its young workforce. In Medellin – drug lord Escobar's old fiefdom – it was the public art, eco-minded civic spaces and new cable-car network. In Cali, it was the petrol-grade firewater and the scintillating salsa dancing – which is everywhere, and always was, even when times were really tough. You've got to admire Colombia, but to really know its people you also have to enjoy yourself. If you go there on business, set aside time for pleasure – because there's heaps of it on offer.

WHERE TO STAY

W Bogota

This ultra-contemporary tower hotel opened in 2014 and looms over the Santa Barbara business district. Celebrating Bogota's mythical links with the fictitious El Dorado, public spaces glow with bold golden art and sculpture. Rooms are funky and spacious and there's an excellent spa. From £214 per night. starwoodhotels.com

Four Seasons Hotel Casa Medina

In a characterful 1946 building (below top) in the buzzing Zona G, this boutique-style property has elegant rooms with beamed ceilings, hand-carved wooden furnishings and fireplaces. The financial district and myriad food options are close by. From around £256 per night. fourseasons.com/bogotacm

BOG

Opened in 2012 in trendy Zona T in the La Cabrera district – which comes alive after office hours – this is one of the city's few truly upscale boutique properties. Design is minimalist, and the atmosphere is somewhat corporate – but a big draw is the rooftop swimming pool. From £130 per night. boghôtel.com

Hotel de la Opera

If you want to be base yourself in historic La Candelaria, this very good-value hotel – housed in a Republican-style landmark building – has lofty, graciously appointed rooms overlooking the pedestrianised streets below. There's good Italian food served here, with hearty traditional eateries nearby just off the plaza. From £93 per night. hoteloopera.com.co

Sofitel Bogota Victoria Regia

Contemporary, comfortable and filled with light, the name of this Accor property (left) honours the Amazonian giant waterlily. It has a good informal French restaurant and bar and is five minutes' walk from dining hub Parque 93. From £125 a night. sofitel.com



Standing calmly in a shuffling queue at Incheon International airport, the words “emergency status” hardly spring to mind. Yet for Seoul’s primary airport, these were precisely the words its president and CEO, Il-Young Chung, used to describe the airport’s capacity issues as it attempted to process millions more passengers than it had the capacity to handle.

While provocative, Chung’s words were a fair assessment of the status of the airport back in 2017. In the 17 years since it opened, Incheon has managed to hit its original 54 million passenger capacity and then some. In 2016 it processed a total of 57.7 million travellers, with this increasing to 62 million the following year, a jump of 7.5 per cent, according to industry body Airports Council International (ACI). In contrast, Beijing Capital International airport, the busiest in Asia-Pacific and second busiest in the world, grew just 1.5 per cent in that same period. The airport’s growth has been such that Incheon has been climbing ACI’s ranks of the world’s busiest airports, taking the number 19 spot in 2017 – up from 20th in 2016 and 22nd in 2015.

It’s little wonder that the development of the airport’s new Terminal 2 building, which opened in January this year, had for a long time been at the forefront of Incheon International Airport Corporation’s list of priorities.

Chung told Business Traveller before the new terminal building had opened its doors that “a lot of the staff [were] working under emergency status.” Now that it has opened, Terminal 2 has added some 18 million passengers to the airport’s overall handling capacity, bringing the total to 72 million across its two terminals and concourse, and hopefully reduced the stress on those working there, and perhaps passengers too.

According to Chung, Incheon’s growth has been driven by a number of factors. “We’re seeing an increase in travel from [South] Korean citizens, and as our economy develops we expect more business passengers from abroad, as well as within Korea. A lot of LCCs are also serving new routes – they’re very active in doing so – and we are attracting more foreign carriers to serve our airport.”

In particular, Incheon has developed a close relationship with US carrier Delta, which has positioned Seoul as one of its two major hubs in Asia-Pacific alongside Tokyo Narita. The airline’s newest aircraft, the Airbus A350-900, now flies both of its routes between Seoul and Detroit and Atlanta (the latter route having been launched in June 2017). Meanwhile next year, it plans to begin a new nonstop service between Seoul and the Midwestern twin cities of Minneapolis-St Paul.

Much of Delta’s focus on Incheon has been the result of the launch of its joint-venture agreement with Korean Air →

TERMINAL VELOCITY

Passenger numbers at Seoul’s Incheon International airport have boomed in recent years. The new Terminal 2 eases the burden

WORDS CRAIG BRIGHT

TERENCE YOUNG



in April this year. Under the agreement, both airlines offer full reciprocal codesharing across each others' networks, providing travellers with access to more than 290 destinations in the Americas and in excess of 80 in Asia.

"With this agreement, we will reinforce Incheon airport's position as a major international hub in Northeast Asia and support the growth of Korea's aviation industry," Delta's CEO, Ed Bastian, said when the two carriers initially announced the agreement.

TERMINAL 2: WHAT'S NEW?

The terminal is at the heart of the airport's "3 Phase Construction Project", which includes a new passenger terminal, a passenger and cargo apron, as well as connecting transport facilities. To date, the airport has poured approximately 5 trillion won (£3.4 billion) into the third phase project since 2009 – it's getting no funding from the government – with a further 4 trillion won (£2.7 billion) expected for additional expansion plans.

Since the opening of the second terminal, a number of airlines have relocated to the new facility including Skyteam members Korean Air, Delta, Air France and KLM, which moved to Terminal 2 back in January. Korean Air has even set up dedicated counters for travellers going to the US and Guam in order to comply with heightened security measures implemented by the US government.

Carriers from other alliances, meanwhile, have remained in Terminal 1, as have check-in desks for low-cost carriers flying from T1's Concourse A. Passengers can transfer between the two main terminals in about 15 to 18 minutes using the shuttle trains that go via the concourse.

The landside part of Incheon's new Terminal 2 houses many restaurants and shops

Incheon has developed a close relationship with Delta, which has positioned Seoul as a major hub

For travellers with a bit of time to spare, Terminal 2 has plenty of lounges. Korean Air has two KAL Lounges – one near gate 249 and another near gate 253 – while independent lounges including the L Lounge, Matina Lounge and SPC Lounge are available for Priority Pass members. The terminal also offers a number of shower rooms and spas, along with two "digital gyms", offering space for exercising using fitness devices and apps, a transit hotel attached to the Matina Lounge, a capsule hotel and a nap zone.

One of the key features of Terminal 2 is a focus on leading information and communications technology (ICT), with modern systems such as automated passport control systems. "We're utilising big data," Chung says. "We need to have an intelligent system in order to run the airport more efficiently. In terms of the check-in process and immigration at departure and arrival, we have to make sure the passengers are distributed evenly to reduce congestion."

From a consumer standpoint, the airport's mobile app uses augmented reality to assist travellers with wayfinding, and Incheon airport has even begun employing guide and cleaning robots. "What's really at the core is the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'," says Chung. "Utilising these technologies, we want to build an airport that is convenient, efficient and safe, and where passengers can be the owners of the airport."

While cutting-edge biometric security-screening technology, such as the facial-recognition software being imple-

mented at Changi International airport's newest Terminal 4 building, is also available at Incheon, it is largely restricted to Korean passport holders.

Terminal 2 also offers a variety of food and beverage outlets, many of which focus on Korean cuisine from different regions of the country. Chung says that the idea for a cosmetic-surgery facility right in the new terminal building has even been floated, though as yet no such offering appears to have opened up.

On the duty-free side the new terminal features outlets from Lotte, The Shilla, Shinsegae, City Duty Free and SM, along with numerous high-end brands ranging from Longchamp and Salvatore Ferragamo to Rimowa and Montblanc.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Yet even with the completion of its third phase project, Incheon Airport's passenger handling challenges won't be over. The additional 18-million capacity will provide breathing room for three years, but passenger levels are again expected to outstrip existing infrastructure by 2020.

This is what an additional four trillion won (£2.8 billion) expansion plan aims to tackle. Planning and design for this fourth phase, which will comprise the north-eastern part of the new H-shaped terminal building, began in May last year with construction expected to begin at the end of 2018. It is scheduled for completion by 2023, by which

"We want to build an airport that is convenient, efficient and safe"

The new departure halls at Incheon's Terminal 2 have greatly reduced congestion



point the airport will be able to handle 100 million passengers annually.

Aside from meeting immediate capacity demands, the plan also encompasses entertainment and leisure facilities. Back in April 2017, the new Paradise City integrated resort and casino opened its doors close to the Terminal 1 building. A new project, the Inspire Integrated Resort, is also on the way, part of a collaboration with US casino resort company Mohegan Sun and Korean chemicals manufacturer KCC. Being built at a cost of US\$5 billion, the resort will be located on Yeongjong Island near the airport and is due to open in 2020. A new golf course – the airport's second on site – is also in the pipeline and similarly has a 2020 opening date.

"What's more important for us is to expand further and actually build an 'Air City' with the airport at its centre," says Chung. "It will include hotels, resorts, casinos and even catering, and we have plans for that up to 2030." Chung adds that the main goal of the airport is to make it fun for passengers as well as convenient, such that transit passengers are tempted to spend four hours or even up to a whole day at the airport.

As for further expansions or even a third terminal, Chung says these could also be on the cards, though that depends on how growth projections play out. Despite the airport's booming growth, current levels aren't expected to continue at quite the same rate over the long term. "We will think about the fifth phase, or perhaps a new terminal," he says, "but that would have to depend on whether we actually need to expand further and what our demand projections are."

With LOT to Miami

LOT Polish Airlines announces another non-stop service to the US. From 1 June next year, LOT passengers will be able to fly to Florida. The flights will be operated four times a week by Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner. Tickets for Warsaw-Miami flights are now on sale.

FROM THE TOP:
Boeing 787 Dreamliner; Business Class cabin on board the Dreamliner



passenger aircraft in this class. All those factors help enhance passengers' comfort during such a long flight and reduce the so-called jet lag effect.

LOT also took care of convenient connecting time, among others, from the ports in the region. Passengers travelling from Budapest, Prague, Bucharest, Kiev or Tel Aviv, will be able to board the Miami flight without unnecessary long stopovers in Warsaw.

Miami will be the 14th long-haul connection in LOT's network and the airline's 6th airport operated in North America.

PRESS MATERIALS, FOTOLIA

100 DESTINATIONS

LOT's current offer includes flights from Warsaw: to New York City JFK and Newark, Chicago, Los Angeles, Toronto, Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing and Singapore, from Cracow to Chicago, from Rzeszów to Newark, and from Budapest to Chicago and New York City JFK. LOT's regular offer includes over 100 destinations, which means that since the beginning of 2016 their number has increased by over 60.

The expansion of the flight network is possible, among others, with the purchase of new aircraft. In June 2018 the 11th Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner joined the fleet. By the end of 2019, the Dreamliner fleet which serves long-haul routes will increase to 15 aircraft. The launch of a new long-haul flight is part of LOT Polish Airlines' current strategy that provides for a steady growth of flight offer available at the transport hub in Warsaw.

In 2017, LOT carried a total of over 6.8 million passengers, up more than 25 per cent year on year. This year, it plans to carry approximately 9 million passengers and intends to exceed the 10 million mark in 2019. Today, LOT has nearly 3,000 employees in several dozen countries around the world.

The tickets for flights on Warsaw-Miami route can be purchased using all available channels, including at the website: www.lot.com, LOT Contact Center, the LOT Travel offices and travel agents. ■

FROM THE TOP:
Miami, Florida; Economic Class cabin; Business Class cabin



SUNSHINE STATE

Florida, which is visited by thousands of tourists each year, is called "the Sunshine State". Known for its excellent beaches, wonderful climate and a broad range of tourist attractions, Florida is warm all year round and offers more than 200 sunny days. Located on the Atlantic Coast, Miami is also a major trade port and one of the biggest airports in the U.S.

"We decided to announce Miami just at the beginning of September by no coincidence. Poland is close to going below the threshold of 3% of visa refusal rate which will allow qualifying to Visa Waiver Programme, that is, visa-free regime. The score reached by 30 September, that is, by the end of American financial year, is of key importance. Currently, Florida has almost half a million Polish Americans who, thanks to our offer, for the first time can benefit from a direct connection to Poland. We wish to encourage our countrymen to travel between Poland and Miami and to submit applications for a visa this month," added Rafał Milczarski.

Flight from Warsaw to Miami will last 11 hours and 25 minutes. The connection will be operated by state-of-the-art narrow-body Boeing 787 Dreamliners aircraft. With the use of state-of-the-art technology, the B787 are able to maintain a higher pressure and air humidity on board than other

The connection will be operated by state-of-the-art narrow-body Boeing 787 Dreamliners aircraft.

Novotel - where each moment counts

Novotel is a brand with almost 50 years of tradition, and nearly 500 hotels in 60 countries around the world, visited by hundreds of thousands of people every day. Believing that every moment counts, Novotel hotels operate in line with the "Time well spent" philosophy, which can be seen both in room décor, design of public areas, as well as numerous activities providing guests with positive emotions throughout their stay.

"Time well spent" at Novotel properties focuses on offering high quality leisure: rooms and public spaces designed to facilitate relaxation, as well as creating and promoting happy moments in life. All this is done with one goal in mind: to help guests slow down for a moment in this rushing world, so that they can find a balance between work and life and fully appreciate the moments that matter.

BELOW:
"The Fans' Training Camp", Novotel

NOVOTEL FOOTBALL NIGHT

The year 2018 is special for many reasons, one of them being the FIFA World Cup that took place in Russia in June and July. Spending time together, experiencing the thrill of sports emotions - all this inspired Novotel to initiate "The Fans' Training Camp" campaign, which is fully consistent with the idea of perfect leisure.

Drawing on the brand's values, all Novotel hotels situated in Central and Eastern Europe prepared a number of activities, including mini-zones for fans with football-themed attractions, such as a football menu, competitions and the so-called football room. Ubiquitous colours of nations participating in the World Cup, dedicated menus, interesting promotions - all this helped fill the hotels with the spirit of sport and memorable moments that connect people.

"We want to create positive experiences for our guests, neighbours and friends of the brand, but also invite them



"Novotel Football Night", the brand prepared six pre- and post-match studios, arranged in hotel common spaces.



to experience important emotions together. That's why, we have decided to become the Official Fans' Partner, because we do it all for people," says Marcin Szymański, Midscale Segment Manager for Eastern Europe in the AccorHotels group.

In collaboration with Onet.pl, Novotel created a dedicated website ZgrupowanieKibicow.pl.

„Novotel Football Night”

AS PART OF

"Novotel Football Night", the brand also prepared six pre- and post-match studios, arranged in hotel common spaces: the lobby and restaurants. The events were broadcast in front of live audience by well-known sports journalists, such as Michał Pol or Iza Koprowiak. The studio hosted prominent football experts, heating up the emotions before important matches.

"One of the elements of the action included a special thematic offer called 'Novotel Football Fever.' Guests who booked a stay in a Novotel property during the World Cup, were offered discounted prices and late check-out. In line with the 'Time well spent' philosophy, every moment spent at Novotel hotels counts. That's why, we are very happy that our fan zones were popular with so many fans during this year's World Cup. We wanted to attract not only hotel guests, but also local residents, so that we could experience all those amazing sports emotions together," says Marcin Szymański.

Sport was also an important element of the National Children's Day celebrations at Novotel hotels. As part of the action, the hotels prepared for kids a number of fun activities, competitions and games.

"The Fans' Training Camp" campaign was widely publicized in the national and industry media, but most of all, it brought a lot of good emotions. This was a time well-spent at Novotel hotels.

JP's BAR - living with the pace of Warsaw

Warsaw is a city that bustles with business, cultural and entertainment life. The capital of Poland is constantly changing, as are the tastes of its residents. We like to participate in outdoor events, don't want to be perceived as reclusive, but make the most of what Warsaw has to offer us... And it has a lot.

One of the venues that are well known to both Warsaw residents and visitors, is the JP's Bar at The Westin Warsaw Hotel. With its excellent location, rich culinary offer and, above all, professional service, the bar never ceases to bustle with life, just like the city itself. From October 2018m JP's Bar will present its brand new interior, which will be even more modern, spacious and elegant.

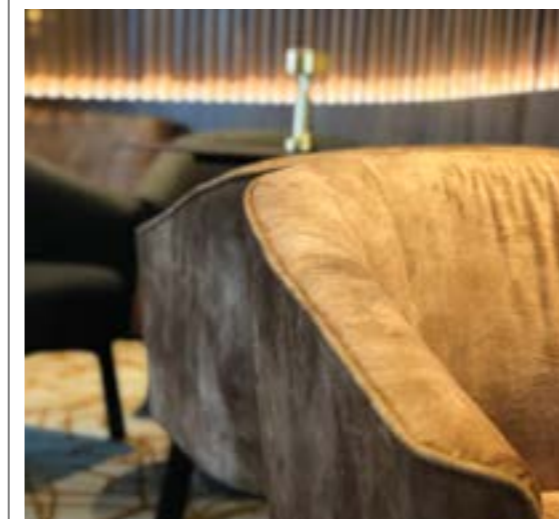
NEW DESIGN, THE SAME PRESTIGE

The new iteration of JP's Bar has been designed in a very functional way. The concept is simple. The new space can be used for both formal and social meetings. All the elements of the interior are in sync with one another. Just look down - the wavy carpet designs are redolent of Warsaw's Vistula River, while the colour palette takes hints from the Polish golden autumn. Wooden elements made of American walnut, brass ornaments in organic shapes and the marble top are inspired by nature, and perfectly complete the whole picture. The bar is separated from the rest of the space with semi-transparent partitions, creating an intimate atmosphere and encouraging exploration of what's not seen at first glance.

UNIQUE MAKEOVER

The decor of the place changes depending on the time of day. Just like Warsaw, in the morning it's soaked in the sun, while in the evening it becomes an elegant venue designed to celebrate various occasions and enjoy life. The new décor comes with a new offer. In the morning, you can pop in here to enjoy fruit and vegetable juices. At lunchtime JP's Bar offers hot pastries straight from the on-site confectionery. In the evening changes its character. The bar offers exquisite cocktails - the bartenders serve delicious classic drinks, but they don't shy away from more unusual concoctions, either. You will see it for yourself.

What favours such a makeover? Our architects have come up with an interesting solution to visibly distinguish be-



tween the bar's morning/afternoon offer, and the evening when the place teems with life. How did they do it? By designing special alcohol shelves that aren't visible until the evening. During the day, their presence remains shrouded in a mystery.

COSMOPOLITAN OFFER

Warsaw is a conglomerate of local and international influences, which is perfectly reflected in the head chef Janusz Korzyński's signature menu. Healthy lifestyle lovers, veggies, Asian cuisine aficionado - all of them will find something tasty at JP's Bar. The bar's all-time hot-seller is freshly squeezed parsley juice, a perfect option for a snack.

The concept is simple. The new space can be used for both formal and social meetings. All the elements of the interior are in sync with one another.

At lunchtime or dinner, we especially recommend the Eat Well Bowl, which is a dish that you compose yourself, choosing the ingredients according to your tastes. All served in a stylish bowl. And for slightly more undecided guests, the chef has prepared a choice of tried-and-tested dishes, such as American burgers (with or without meat), salads, wok dishes, pad thai and many other delicious options. Also the evening offer leaves nothing to be desired, with a wide selection of exclusive alcohols of world-renowned brands, including high-quality wines and other liquors. JP's Bar menu is rich in taste, deep aroma and proven, original recipes. You should also try the unique Crafted at Westin offer, comprising unique cocktails that you won't find anywhere else.

SOCIALIZING MADE EASIER

However you don't frequent a bar only for its nice décor, but first and foremost to meet people. During the day you can see here business partners closing important deals by a cup of freshly brewed coffee; young couples planning their next trip while sipping green smoothies; and a group of friends celebrating the promotion of their colleague with their favourite drinks. Whether for business or privately, every occasion seems perfect to visit the new JP's Bar at the Westin Hotel.



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GETTING HANDS ON

WORDS TOM OTLEY, LAURA MISEREZ

Hotels are enhancing their guests' stays by offering privileged access and "unique experiences". Tom Otley takes an art tour in Thailand, while Laura Miserez provides snapshots of the myriad options available around the world

There's something mesmerising about watching a pot being hand-thrown on a wheel. A huge weight of wet clay is fashioned into a ball, thrown hard against the turntable and then, gradually, something more recognisable appears. The clay is centred, opened, drawn upwards to create sides and then trimmed using simple tools, but mostly the hands of the potter. The wheel's speed is controlled by a foot pedal. Eventually, a pot, bowl, dish or vase appears, still caked in the dark colour of clay. It's an ancient art – the earliest pots made this way date from thousands of years ago, and modern electric wheels aren't very different from the ones used millennia ago, when a foot kept the wheel spinning. It looks easy when done well, yet if you try yourself it will likely result in a change of clothing.

Perhaps the most astonishing part is watching the artists at work, painting delicate flowers on a large ceramic plate, following patterns sometimes, or on other occasions merely

being inspired by a pattern from a book. It's a high-wire act – the pottery shop is full of "seconds" where the flaw would have to be pointed out to you. I was watching potters at the Prempracha Collection, one of Thailand's leading ceramics factories, where people come from far and wide to see the latest designs. The factory employs more than 100 people on premises just outside Chiang Mai, and provides tableware for top-end restaurants, local private buyers and tourist gifts for visitors (shipping even the largest items home isn't a problem).

Chiang Mai has long been known as an artistic centre. Though you can find every kind of art for sale as you wander this city in northern Thailand, from local handicrafts to pieces by Western artists who have set up home here, to gain access to some of the top studios you will need an appointment or guide or both. High-end hotels, such as Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai, which arranged my tour, can help you gain access, as they have the contacts and know the sort of experiences their guests would be interested in.

FROM FAR LEFT: A tour of the Prempracha Collection as organised by Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai; other options at the Four Seasons include a tour of the MAIIAM gallery



In turn, the galleries hope that if the guests are coming from a resort, where a room costs big money per night, there's a fair chance of making a sale.

The tours the Four Seasons organises are pretty much bespoke, so if you want to brush up on your watercolour skills, you can, as the PR puts it, "Learn to wield the paintbrush with a classical Chiang Mai watercolourist... at her own private gallery." Since I can't paint or draw it would have been very dispiriting for both of us if I'd signed up for that, so instead I opted to look at the art of others, even if all of it was well beyond my pocket.

The MAIIAM gallery, which opened in 2016 in San Khampang, 15 minutes' drive from Chiang Mai, is a converted warehouse rendered unrecognisable by a stunning façade by a Thai architectural firm. The gallery is run by Eric Bunnag Booth (Booth also runs the well-known Jim Thompson company) and his stepfather Jean Michel Beurdeley, and it houses the collection accumulated by them and Eric's late mother Patsri Bunnag. The museum's bistro restaurant, Kamphaeng Kaew, is also the venue for the lunch stop and there's a private tour of the museum with the curator.

Other options include a longer Gallery Hopping Tour, which is a "curated itinerary of eight galleries".

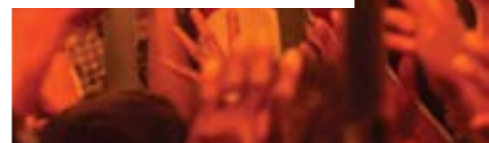
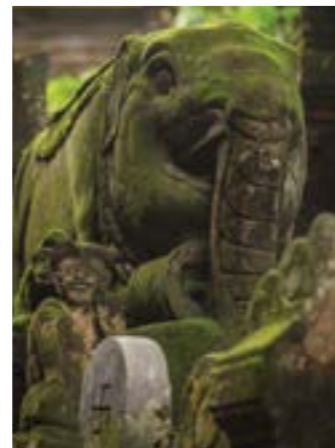
It's the sort of inside track offered by many luxury hotel chains, or by their loyalty programmes. On the following pages we give you a taste of the wide-ranging experiences you can expect to find at hotels throughout the globe...



BALINESE CULTURAL TOUR
The Chedi Club, Tanah Gajah, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia

At this five-star hotel, guests can opt for the “Explore in Style” package – a day’s guided tour of nearby Goa Gajah, the Elephant Cave Temple, which features Hindu and Buddhist imagery and artefacts from the 11th century. After visiting the temple, there’s a scenic drive through nearby Pejeng village, where you can marvel at the sacred Moon of Pejeng, the largest single-cast bronze kettledrum in the world, created in 300BC. The evening ends with a Balinese dinner of nasi campur (a rice dish) and ayam sambal tomat (chicken in chilli and tomato sauce) and a performance of Kecak, a Balinese dance style developed in the 1930s that depicts the ancient Hindu epic the Ramayana.

ghmhotels.com/en/tanah-gajah/



MAORI TRIBE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Huka Lodge, Huka Falls, Lake Taupo, New Zealand

According to Maori legend, Lake Taupo is the beating heart of the North Island. It therefore makes sense that guests should learn about the area surrounding Huka Falls, New Zealand’s most famous natural wonder, from a Maori tribesman. This day-long excursion is available via the Atamai package, with a tribesman taking guests on a scenic walk through Spa Park, home to natural geothermal hot springs. Lunch of a Maori picnic cooked in a geothermal geyser is followed by a visit to Opotaka village, home of the famous Ka Mate haka dance that the national rugby team performs before matches. Guests also get a souvenir piece of pounamu (jade), which will have been blessed during the excursion.

hukalodge.co.nz



INDIANA JONES TRAIL
Huus Gstaad, Switzerland

Daring travellers can channel their inner action hero by soaring on the flying fox (ziplining) and abseiling down the Swiss Alps in a via ferrata, a protected route in which climbers attach themselves to a steel cable. If that excursion doesn’t satisfy your craving for adventure, the hotel also offers river rafting, canyoning, mountain climbing, mountain biking and alpine walking trails during the summer, as well as skiing and hiking in the winter, all included in the price of a room.

huusgstaad.com



TEQUILA TALK AND TASTING
Four Seasons Punta Mita, Nayarit, Mexico

Is a trip to Mexico complete if you don’t try tequila? Guests staying at Four Seasons Punta Mita can visit a tequila distillery and learn about the history of the Mexican drink, which can be traced back to the Aztecs. The visit will teach guests how to distinguish the different types of tequila and give tips on how to drink it. Other experiences offered include Spanish lessons and a lecture about the indigenous Huichol people, an ancient tribe that has been living in the Sierra Madre mountain range since before the 1500s.

fourseasons.com/puntamita



MURDER MYSTERY WEEKEND
Bailbrook House Hotel, Bath, United Kingdom

Guests can step into a real-life Agatha Christie story without leaving their hotel. The plot unfolds in three stages: kicking off with Saturday afternoon tea, through dinner in the evening, and concluding at breakfast the next day. Actors are concealed among the guests so they can’t be immediately recognised, adding to the mystery.

handpickedhotels.co.uk/bailbrookhouse



NORTHERN LIGHTS EXCURSION
Icehotel, Jukkasjärvi, Sweden
This excursion involves a wilderness dinner by the campfire and a Northern Lights safari offering several photo opportunities. Icehotel's location on the Torne River in Swedish Lapland, the northernmost province of the country, puts it in a prime location for watching the Aurora Borealis. The experience also includes a snowmobile trip into the wilderness and a night in an ice room (thermal clothing is provided, as well as a lesson on how to get to sleep in sub-zero temperatures).
icehotels.co.uk

ESCAPE ROOMS
Listel Hotel, Vancouver, Canada

A growing trend that's been popping up in cities all over the world is available as part of a package at this Canadian hotel: escape rooms. These hands-on adventure games place two to six people in a themed room, where they have 45 minutes to an hour to escape by solving puzzles and clues hidden throughout the room. Participants follow a narrative, which can help lead to the discovery of more clues. The scenarios vary in difficulty and some require more teamwork to solve than others. Listel Hotel offers four different escape rooms: Pirate Ship, Lost Tomb, Buried Cabin and Rabbit Hole.
listelhotel.com



ST THOMAS MONASTERY TOUR
Augustine Hotel, Prague, Czech Republic
Travellers staying in this luxury hotel across the river from the Old Town Square can take a guided tour through the nearby monastery, which was established – along with a Gothic church – in 1285 on the site of a much older Romanesque church by King Wenceslaus II of Bohemia. The building wasn't finished until 1379 and was subsequently damaged over the centuries by fires. In the 1720s it was rebuilt in the Baroque style that survives today. In addition to the tour, the package includes a trip to a spa, breakfast and a cocktail tasting.
augustinehotel.com

A SPIN ON THE AUTOBAHN
The Ritz-Carlton, Wolfsburg, Germany

Those who purchase this package can zoom into their holidays in an Audi RS6 Performance. The hotel loans the car, with guests free to borrow it to cruise along one of Germany's famous motorways, including the no-speed-limit stretches. Also included is admission and a guided tour of the Audi Pavilion at the Autostadt museum and theme park next to the Volkswagen factory. At the end of the day, the Ritz-Carlton spa is available to those wanting to wind down after the day of revving up.
ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/germany/wolfsburg



RED PYRAMID OF SNEFRU
Conrad Hotel, Cairo, Egypt
Everyone knows the Pyramids of Giza, but the Red Pyramid of Snefru at Dahshur is little visited, even by locals. It was built by the Egyptian king Khufu's father and gets its common name from the reddish limestone used to build most of its core. Sometimes referred to as the Shining or Northern Pyramid it is a short distance from Saqqara and, astonishingly, can be fully accessed so you can enter the burial chamber and explore the cold and silent passageways inside the pyramid, free of the normal hordes of tourists.
stayinspired.com/cairo



SPIRITED AWAY

A short trip from Perth, Rottnest Island offers a capsule version of the charms, and history, of Western Australia

WORDS TOM OTLEY

Empty beaches, unique flora and fauna and single-track roads from which motorised vehicles are banned are just a few of the attractions of Rottnest Island. This limestone-based sandy island just off the coast of Western Australia is a mere 15km from Perth, and has an area of only 19 sq km. Yet, the island attracts 750,000 visitors each year, and even the least adventurous will find it a pleasant day trip. We'd only been there for 30 minutes when we saw our first bottlenose dolphin, rolling over just beyond the reef in one of the island's 20 bays. There are also fur seals galore, a nest for the eastern osprey at Salmon Point and, just offshore, passing humpback whales followed by small boats full of sightseers.

Nevertheless, for a leisure destination billed as "Western Australia's very own island paradise", the name "Rottnest" could be more enticing. The title comes from Dutch sea captain Willem de Vlamingh, who in 1696 charted the uninhabited island while on a mission for the VOC (Dutch East India Company). De Vlamingh mistook the cat-sized mammal population – now known as quokkas, the Aboriginal name – to be rats, and so termed it "'t Eylandt 't Rottenest" (Rats' Nest Island). Today these tame, protected marsupials are deemed cuddly, and it seems just about every visitor has to get a selfie with one of the 8,000 or so population, as a quick search on the internet or Instagram will confirm. Luckily, there's much more to do on the island than this activity.

The most popular way of visiting is by the Rottnest Express fast ferry, as this covers the 19km from the port of Fremantle in just 25 minutes. But you could also arrive in style by taking a trip out to Rottnest by helicopter, allowing you an aerial tour of Perth first. Viewed from above the island almost looks porous with its large lagoons and low-lying profile – the highest point is only 45 metres above

It's a leisure destination billed as "Western Australia's very own island paradise"

The island has a distinctive landscape with large lagoons



ve sea level, though the surrounding corals of the Indian Ocean were dangerous enough to warrant a lighthouse.

However you arrive, the island is car-free and there are 63 beaches, with opportunities for snorkelling, bird watching, Segway tours, cycling or walking on 45km of trails (there are information boards at heritage sites and wayfinding information), exploring World War II tunnels beneath the gun on Oliver Hill, or even skydiving from heights of more than 4,000 metres.

NON-STOP FLIGHTS

The island, along with most of Western Australia, is hoping for a boost from the non-stop Qantas flights from London to Perth (reviewed in the May edition of Business Traveller and online at businesstraveller.com). If your memories of visiting from Europe are bookended by the 30-hour journey via somewhere in the Middle East or Asia, followed by a further stop in Sydney or Melbourne, now it's possible to reach Perth direct and non-stop in just 17 hours. The time difference isn't so bad either, as Perth is only seven hours ahead of GMT. Jet lag is roughly what you'd expect flying to Bangkok, which means you're quickly on your feet and ready to explore beyond the city – Rottnest is an obvious first trip. Rottnest's idyllic appearance belies its horrific recent hi-

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: There are 63 beaches on the island; marsupials called quokkas; the Vincent Way, one of several trails on the island; corporate events can be arranged, including canapés and drinks on the beach

story. Behind the peaceful beauty (it reminded me of a drier version of Lindisfarne in Northumberland) is the disturbing fact that the island was used as a penal colony for Aborigines until the early 20th century. A total of some 2,700 men and boys were imprisoned, and 369 died. Given a history like that, you'd think they'd just give up and rebrand the island with a new name.

Of course, it did have a name prior to European settlement – Wadjemup, which means "place of spirits across the sea". Walter McGuire, of Go Cultural, offers tours of Rottnest along with mainland Aboriginal visitor experiences. He explained the Aboriginal belief that when someone dies the spirit travels to the ocean and resides where the sun sets, with Wadjemup being the last stop on the way. The west end of the island is referred to as Koorinup, the place where the spirits of Noongar people come to rest after death. The native songs or dreamings recognise not only sites such as these but also locations now under the sea between the island and the mainland – fascinating oral history considering the island was separated from the rest of Australia around 7,000 years ago.

Rottnest has undergone many changes in more recent years. The vegetation can survive arid conditions, with feather speargrass and prickly lily most evident, and, in areas where previously the island had trees, which were cut down



for building or firewood for the island's salt works, heath has taken over. Woodland is being replanted, but only with the two tree species native to the island: the Rottnest Island Pine and Rottnest Island Tea Tree, since other varieties put too much pressure on the limited groundwater.

EATING AND SLEEPING

Conservation is refreshingly top of the agenda, but since this is Western Australia there are also fantastic dining options for a wide choice of budgets. For corporate events you can have a picnic on the beach with canapés, champagne and some snorkelling, while more typical options include a range of restaurants such as the bar and bistro at the Hotel Rottnest on the beachfront of Thomson Bay. The former Governor's Residence of Charles Fitzgerald (Perth was too hot for him in the summer), it is castellated to give a castle-like silhouette. With 18 rooms and a wide veranda, you can easily while away an afternoon over dishes such as Rottnest crayfish salad – crayfish is the local name for rock lobster. Simpler but equally delicious fare includes burgers and chicken sandwich.

The vast majority of visitors return to the mainland at the end of each day but, with camping, cabins and hotels on the island, options for staying on Rottnest

INFORMATION

Rottnest Island
rotnestisland.com
Corsaire Aviation
corsaireaviation.com.au
Hotel Rottnest
hotelrotnest.com.au
Rottnest Express
rotnestexpress.com.au

itself are increasing, including more high-end accommodation. It's possible to rent historic heritage cottages or more modern apartments, to stay budget in the old barracks, or in the forthcoming Pinky's Eco Retreat Rottnest, which will have more than 80 "glamping" tents (even the Hotel Rottnest is planning to add another 80 rooms). That said, Rottnest isn't a budget destination. I spoke with several Perth citizens who told me it was less expensive for them, in terms of complete package price, to fly from Perth to Bali for a long weekend than to travel to Rottnest and stay in a similar standard of accommodation. It's the latest twist for this island that has had more than its fair share of history.

Dominican Republic Offers Great Experiences in Every Season



INTERVIEWEE: LEILA BOASIER BUDECKER
Director of the Dominican Republic Tourism Board for Poland, Czech Republic & Eastern Europe

The interest of tourists in the Dominican Republic grows every year. We met with Mrs. Leila Boasier Budecker, Director of the Tourism office in Prague, to talk about current marketing goals and plans of the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic as well as about the latest incoming trends from the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

Could you tell us more about your return to the position of Director of the Dominican Republic Tourism Board in Prague? What are your plans and goals?

To be accurate, I'm not "coming back", because I did not leave the office. In the past two years, I have been responsible for a promotion of the Dominican Republic in Spain and Portugal, and at the same time, I have been managing the Polish and Eastern European markets. It was a change for me, and every change is also a challenge. I had to get acquainted with the new market, to work with new tour operators and a team of colleagues. I have fully utilized my experience and gained new impulses. Now I came back to Prague to focus on markets of the Central and Eastern Europe.

What are the current statistics of arrivals to the Dominican Republic in general and from Poland?

From January until August, we have noticed a 5 percent increase with a total number of 5 075 627 tourists. From Poland, we recorded an impressive 9.4 percent increase during the first eight months of 2018. The increase in statistics is undoubtedly connected with the favorable economic situation, as well as with appropriately chosen marketing strategy of the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic.

Do you think that the profile of visitors has changed in recent years? How does the Dominican Republic cope with the new tourist typology and their demands?

Of course. Ten years ago, the marketing strategy was based on the "sun, sand and sea". However, tourists completely changed their preferences, and the Dominican Republic diversified its tourism product. Thanks to fact the Ministry of Tourism has been adapting to the current demand, the Dominican Republic is presented as a destination with a wide and complementary range of services and activities such as ecotourism, historical, spa, or gastronomical tourism. It is

true that the current travelers are not interested in "all inclusive" services but prefer to get to know the true face of the destination. They do not just want to relax on the sofa, but rather in an exotic spa in the middle of a flowing river. They do not want to sunbathe on the hotel's lounges, but swim with dolphins or snorkel and explore the coral reefs. And that's exactly what we are adapting to.

Which places would you recommend according to different seasons?

Every part of the year has its magic. In January, it is worth visiting the Samaná Bay in the northeast of the country. The giant humpback whales return every year to this special corner of the Dominican Republic to mate and give birth in this glorious tropical scenery. Each year in February and early March, the carnivals take place in the Dominican

Republic. In the springtime do not miss the Salto del Limón waterfall and its surrounding area bordered by tropical vegetation, from a damp tropical rainforest rich in a variety of animal species to endemic trees and plants. In autumn, head out to the Cordillera Central to the Salto de Jarabacoa and Jimenoa waterfalls. At the end of the year and beginning of the new one, welcome the New Year on one of our beautiful beaches that are perfect place for celebrations.

What distinguishes the Dominican Republic from other exotic destinations?

As our slogan says, Dominican Republic "Has It All". Beautiful beaches and high mountains, exotic flora, and fauna, unique culture and history, as well as warm and welcoming people that make our tourists feel at home. The Dominican Republic boasts the oldest monuments of the New World. Located in Santo Domingo, the UNESCO's Colonial Zone is what distinguishes us from other destinations with similar climate and ecosystems. Thanks to its geographic location in the center of the Greater Antilles, the Dominican Republic has become the first European settlement of the New World and is rich in natural beauties and geographic attractions that are worth seeing.

www.GoDominicanRepublic.pl

Beautiful beaches and high mountains, exotic flora, and fauna, unique culture and history.



PHOTOS: MINISTRY OF TOURISM OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Sheraton Cairo Hotel and Casino



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The views from the Club lounge.

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sheratoncairo.com

BACKGROUND

This hotel was Starwood's first in Africa when it opened in 1971. Now, following a lengthy closure – and Starwood's merger with Marriott – one tower (containing 326 rooms) has been fully refurbished. The second is due to open by the year end, providing another 330 rooms.

Other Marriott International properties in the city include the Cairo Marriott, Marriott Mena House – next to the pyramids – and JW Marriott Hotel Cairo. I was also given a sneak peek of the sharp-looking St Regis Cairo, expected to open in autumn this year.

WHERE IS IT?

Overlooking the River Nile, the hotel is a 15-minute walk from Opera metro station and 25 minutes' walk from the Egyptian Museum. Cairo's notorious traffic meant the 25km journey from the airport to the hotel took one hour and 15 minutes.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

After passing tight security and a small lobby, most guests head up to the first-floor reception, which links the two towers. However, as a Club guest, I was escorted to the 26th floor lounge, which affords striking 360-degree views, serves a fine breakfast and has a narrow terrace that is perfect for enviable photos of the Nile.

If you're not a Club/suite guest, and until the second tower is finished, you'll have to head down to the first floor and walk to the second, where the bulk of food and beverage venues are located. Most guests are from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and US.

ROOMS

My 17th-floor Club room was comfortable with bed, chaise longue, lounge chair and desk (38-44 sqm). The windows opened partially and offered striking Nile views (this stretch looks popular with rowers) and I could just make out the pyramids through the horizon haze.

The windows and bed were framed by wood, a trunk-style table hosted sweets and fruit, and the desk was sturdy. The bathroom had a standalone shower and tub and tight sink area, which didn't leave much room for toiletries.

FOOD AND DRINK

During our stay we were served a set menu at dinner at Giannini's New York Italian, and different dishes for lunch (seafood/beef) and dinner (grills) at the larger Rawi, which affords striking Nile views.

Other options include the Bridge Café by reception and Studio70 bar, which displays black-and-white photos of Arab stars from the 70s (and serves some novel lychee cocktails). El Mawardia Depuis 1985 café provides another historical tie-in, but it's been set back further from the road and wrapped in a see-through design.

On the last evening we watched a belly dancer perform in the lounge area of Rawi and more entertainment is available opposite Giannini's, along with a pool bar.

MEETINGS

The Ivory ballroom (capacity 160 for a banquet) was holding a healthcare conference during our visit. The larger Salah El Din

It has a fabulous Sheraton Fitness, one of the best gyms I've seen, with plentiful weights and machines



ballroom has a capacity of 350 for a banquet. There are 13 meeting rooms in total alongside a fully equipped business centre.

LEISURE

The second floor features an outdoor oval pool – which was freezing in April/May, although it caught the late afternoon sun – and a fabulous Sheraton Fitness, one of the best gyms I've seen, with plentiful weights and machines and a studio at the far end, where I took part in Zumba and yoga classes.

VERDICT

Starwood Preferred Guest members have had to wait patiently, but they should be happy with the results. *Dominic Ellis*



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Conrad Cairo

BACKGROUND

The Conrad opened in 1998 and is one of seven Hilton-owned hotels in the Egyptian capital.

WHERE IS IT?

On the Nile Corniche, next door to the soon-to-open St Regis Cairo and the Hilton Cairo World Trade Centre Residences, and close to Tahrir Square and the Egyptian Museum. It is 21km from the airport, but those who know Cairo traffic will be aware that giving an estimate of the journey time would be pointless. At 1am it took me 30 minutes from the airport, but it could take two hours or more in rush hour. The closest metro station is Ramses.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

With its 24-storey tower looking out towards Zemalok Island, the Conrad Cairo is unmissable on the skyline. The hotel is accessed via a sloped driveway, with security and then x-ray machines to clear before going into the hotel. The main lobby is large with a triple-height atrium; during my stay it was always bustling with people having drinks in the lounge bar. Though the property is in good health, the last revamp was in 2010. A renovation, including all bedrooms, public areas and meeting spaces, will start at the beginning of 2019 and last three years. Service was generally excellent, though there were occasional lapses.

ROOMS

The shape and height of the hotel ensure that all 614 rooms have either a partial or full view of the Nile, and most have balconies. Entry-level Classic rooms on the lower floors start at 41 sqm. From the 16th floor up, rooms become Deluxe by virtue of the better views. The Executive rooms then span floors 20-24, with the Executive lounge on 22. This offers breakfast and evening drinks, and has a long balcony overlooking the Nile – it's worth cancelling the final meeting of the day to enjoy a drink and an uninterrupted view across the city.

There are 52 suites: two Royal, two Presidential, 16 Executive and 32 Nile suites. Sure, the decoration in the rooms is a little passé, but it somehow seems appropriate. The thick velvet curtains in my room drew across one another so no light could penetrate. Sound-



The devaluation of the Egyptian pound makes it remarkably good value



proofing is very good, essential when the hotel bar only gets going after midnight, with guests returning to their rooms until four in the morning.

FOOD AND DRINK

The hotel's restaurants were renovated more recently than the rest of the hotel, and there are three excellent choices on the second floor alone. For breakfast and buffet lunch, Solana is a casual restaurant overlooking the Nile. I ate breakfast here and the choice of both regional and international cuisine was very impressive, as were the chef's suggestions. When I asked for some Arabic bread, I was instead guided towards a particular variety of lovely, spicy ful madames (a bean dish). Kamala offers a choice of South East Asian cuisines, while the Oak Grill serves delicious modern Lebanese cuisine. I ate twice at the Oak Grill and didn't even scratch the surface of what I wanted to try, though the smoked dishes are outstanding, and I had fattoush (a chopped salad dish) with grilled halloumi both nights.

Other options are the outdoor Jayda Nile Terrace by the pool and with Nile views, or the Stage One Lounge and Bar with music and cocktails.

BEST FOR

The location, the views and the restaurants; the exchange rate also makes it excellent value.

DON'T MISS

Dinner at the Oak Grill for Middle Eastern food.

PRICE

Internet rates for a twin Classic room with partial Nile view start from US\$140 per night.

CONTACT

1191 Nile Corniche, Cairo, Egypt;
+20 2 25808000;
conradhotels.com



Meetings The hotel's meeting spaces are all on the lobby level and total more than 3,500 sqm. They include the Conrad ballroom, one of the largest in the city, holding 750 for a banquet; and the Nile ballroom, with a capacity of 300 for a banquet, as well as a series of smaller meeting rooms on one side together with a business centre. There's complimentary wifi throughout the hotel.

LEISURE

The hotel has a large fitness centre and a good-sized open-air swimming pool. As with many Conrad hotels, there is a series of pre-bookable experiences, from a one-hour Nile cruise through to full-day excursions to the pyramids or more individually curated trips. The ground floor has a casino and a nightclub.

VERDICT

This is a very well-located hotel, popular both with Egyptians and international guests. Staff are friendly, ensuring there is a family feel that belies the vast size of the hotel. The devaluation of the Egyptian pound also makes it remarkably good value for overseas visitors, while regulars will be looking forward to the forthcoming refurbishment. *Tom Otley*

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MY OTHER WATCH IS A PORSCHE

The timepieces produced by high-tech Porsche Design now share more than just a name with the prestige car brand – and are all the better for it

WORDS CHRIS HALL

LEFT AND BELOW:
1999 Datetimer
Eternity 70Y Sports
Car limited edition;
Monobloc Actuator
Chronotimer
Flyback limited
edition



Perhaps better known for its sunglasses, luggage and cooler-than-ice looks, Porsche Design has in fact been a noteworthy name in watchmaking since the mid-1980s.

The origins of the company, which became a subsidiary of Porsche AG in 2003, date back to 1972, when Ferdinand Alexander Porsche, grandson of the car maker's founder and designer of the 911, left the car business to set up the Porsche Design Studio. One of his first commissions came from the family business itself, which was looking for a watch to give to long-serving employees: the result, the Porsche Design Chronograph 1, would go on to make history as the very first all-black watch – a look so commonplace today it's hard to imagine a time before it existed.

Porsche Design (which has undergone a number of name changes over the years; the watches, however, always bore the name "Porsche Design") never actually built the watches itself. Instead, it worked with various Swiss partners; firstly with a little-k-

nown brand called Orfina, then most successfully with IWC, a partnership that gave rise to the world's first fully titanium-cased watch in 1980 and oddities such as a watch with a dial that flipped upwards to reveal a compass underneath.

From 1998 to 2014 it worked with Eterna (which was itself owned by a subsidiary of Porsche AG from 1995). Sadly, the latter years of this partnership yielded little in the way of interesting watches, as Eterna was sold to Chinese owners in 2011. Then in 2014 it was announced that Porsche Design would be bringing control of its watchmaking in-house.

Today, the watches are designed at Porsche Design's Zell am See headquarters in Austria and produced in Switzerland by Porsche Design Timepieces AG, benefitting from R&D input from Porsche AG's team in Stuttgart. The company structure is complex but, in a nutshell, what used to be a brand that traded on its design know-how and derived more than a little cachet from having the word "Porsche" in its name, now Porsche Design is very much the car maker's in-house watch brand.



Now Porsche Design is very much the car maker's in-house watch brand

Regardless of this history of complicated corporate manoeuvres, talk to staff at Porsche Design and there is a proud sense that their watch business belongs with the car company. Chief technical officer Rolf Bergmann talks about bringing the car maker's expertise to bear on the watches, a process which is emerging in the brand's flagship models, through unique touches such as water-perforated leather straps (smaller holes, closer together, more comfortable) and extremely detailed dial construction. The end results are a bit on-the-nose sometimes – I've always thought that one of the best things about Porsche Design was that it didn't feel like you were buying branded merchandise (hello Ferrari!). But Porsche Design's new strategy brings it that much closer to the cars in more ways than one: the exclusive, limited editions for 911 Turbo S and GT2RS have been marketed as optional extras to the supercars, available on a first-refusal basis to the 500 or so individuals who will be taking delivery of the cars and only sold openly via Porsche dealerships after that.

Beyond the aesthetics, the brand has made a statement with the creation of a new flyback chronograph movement, a big investment that was debuted in a limited edition dedicated to the 911 Turbo S in 2017, and is

powering three new models this year. One is the superbly titled Monobloc Actuator. It may sound like the kind of thing James Bond would need to prise from the hands of an evil genius to save the world from certain destruction, but it is in fact a quirky chronograph design that does away with extruding "pushers" (watch-speak for buttons) in favour of a split-piece case that rocks from side to side when you want to start and stop timing. It's quite in keeping with Porsche Design's history of smooth-sided modern case shapes and neo-industrial textures, but some would also find it a little on the burly side. Much more my thing is the new 1919 Chronotimer Flyback in brown (pictured right) – so Seventies – with its wire frame lugs, tapered pushers and knurled crown. Also worth a look is the more discreet 1919 Datetimer 70Y Sports Car limited edition, a time-only model produced to mark the car brand's 70th anniversary this year.

I'm not quite ready to declare Porsche Design a force to be reckoned with – the proof of the pudding will be in the sales – but linking the watchmaking in more than just name with its all-conquering automotive namesake is a confident, and confidence-inspiring, move.

ABOVE AND BELOW: Monobloc Actuator Chronotimer Flyback Special Edition; Monobloc Actuator Chronotimer Flyback Brown and Leather



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WORDS OLIVIA HULTGREN

Minneapolis

Along with its “Twin City” St Paul on the opposite bank of the Mississippi, Minnesota’s state capital has a thriving urban scene

1 Stone Arch Bridge

Begin your urban exploration at one of Minneapolis’ most photographed landmarks: Stone Arch Bridge. Suspended over the great Mississippi River, this former railway bridge was built in the 1800s and converted into a pedestrian and cycle path in 1994. Stroll across it for the best ground-level view of the city skyline and the man-made St Anthony Falls. On the west side of Stone Arch lies the Mill City Museum, built within the ruins of what was the world’s largest flour mill before it was destroyed by a fire in 1991. The museum’s designers reinforced the building’s charred walls with steel and added large panes of glass, creating a beautiful contrast of old and new. Get a handle on what the mill was like in operation inside or head up to the observation deck for a panoramic view. mnhs.org/millcity

2 Tullibee in the North Loop

Head north on West River Parkway and you’ll enter the North Loop, also known as the Warehouse District, where 19th- and 20th-century industrial buildings have been revamped into hipster restaurants and art-centric startups. In the heart of the North Loop, is Tullibee, a Scandinavian-inspired restaurant on the ground floor of Hewing Hotel. With the largest ethnically Norwegian population in the US, a state forest named after Finland and an accent often mistaken for Swedish, Minnesota retains its Scandinavian influence. Tullibee’s simple, rustic interior and cuisine makes it a great place to sample Minnesota’s backwoods flavours and experience its Nordic heritage. Plus, it’s open from 6.30am to midnight.

hewinghotel.com/tullibee-restaurant

3 Foshay Tower

Walk south towards Downtown Minneapolis and turn right on Nicollet Avenue, along a stretch known as Nicollet Mall, the unofficial shopping capital of the city. You’ll pass hanging flowerpots, locals enjoying upscale food on outdoor patios and numerous skyway crossings (enclosed raised pedestrian walkways); Minneapolis is home to the largest system of enclosed skyways in the world. Down 8th Street, on the left, you’ll see the Foshay, a light brown 32-storey former office building, its design inspired by the Washington Monument in Washington DC. Now it is a W Hotel, but you can take the lift to the top and enjoy the expansive view of Minneapolis and St Paul from the observation deck, for an admission fee of US\$10.

wminneapolisshotel.com

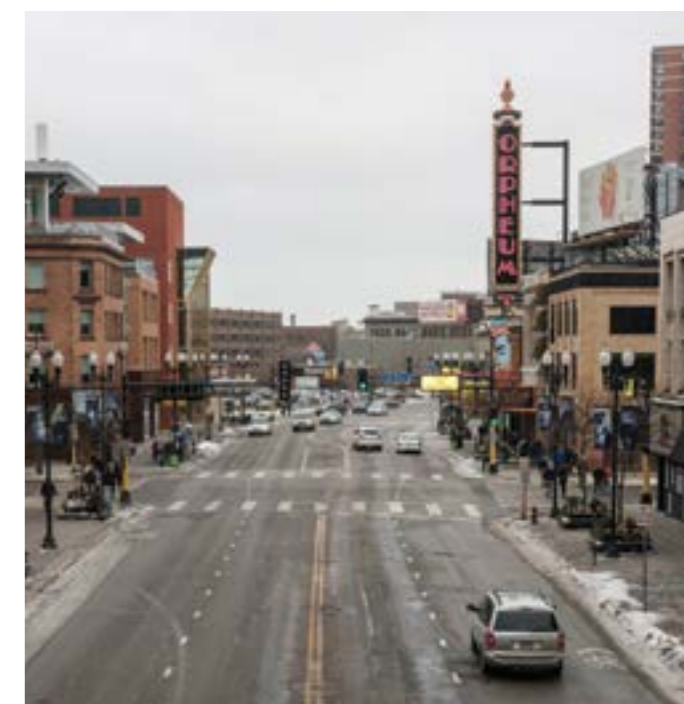


4 Walker Art Centre and Sculpture Garden

Continue south on Nicollet Avenue and turn right near the Hyatt Regency, weaving through the inner city greenery of Loring Park. Cross the highway and you’ll see the Spoonbridge and Cherry sculpture, which is just as it sounds: a giant spoon with a red cherry on its rim. Enter the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, an outdoor park housing more than 40 works of art, including Hahn/Cock, a huge blue rooster, which debuted in London’s Trafalgar Square in 2013. Next to the gardens is Walker Art Centre, a magnificent metallic and glass structure and one of the most visited museums in the country. Within its crisp silver and white walls, you’ll find a vast array of contemporary art, from simple paintings to moving image collections. walkerart.org

5 Bde Maka Ska

Minnesota licence plates read “10,000 Lakes”, though in reality the state contains even more. Just a ten-minute taxi ride from the Walker Art Centre is Lake Calhoun, recently renamed Bde Maka Ska to preserve Minnesota’s Native American culture. Among paddleboard rentals and long lines of sailing boats, the lake’s eastern shore boasts a quaint boardwalk. If you have time and fancy a craft beer, head down West Lake Street to Lynlake Brewery, where the Uptown folk gather amid bare-brick walls and bicycle wheels that hang from the ceiling. Take note when ordering a drink that in the US a pint is 473ml; a UK pint is 568ml. Alternatively, stick around Bde Maka Ska for the sunset, and witness the Minneapolis skyline reflected in the lake’s waters at twilight. lynlakebrewery.com



SUITCASE WITHOUT SECRETS

My boss has recently flown several times with Ryanair, as his meeting venue is close to Stansted Airport. Now he wants to book another flight with the Irish carrier. He will have to take some materials for a series of presentations. I've heard of the recent changes to the airline's baggage allowance, but I don't know the details. I'd be glad if you could explain the new rules and if my boss can take a small carry-on suitcase on board. He also wants to disembark the plane without too much waiting.

Elżbieta

Dear Elżbieta,
Low-cost airlines have always had a restrictive bag policy. The business model of "no frills" carriers is simple: they offer cheap tickets, but you need to pay extra for any additional services. Until recently, Ryanair has allowed you to take on board two pieces of baggage: a small cabin case weighing up to 10 kilograms and a smaller handbag. However, this policy poses logistical problems because lots of suitcases don't fit in the storage compartments in the cabin. As a result, passengers who board last are asked to put their suitcases into the baggage hold and pick them up from the carousel at the destination airport. Such procedure causes significant delays and confusion. It also makes life of ground-handling staff more difficult, because it isn't always clear how many passengers with cabin cases will turn up.

Therefore, starting 1 November 2018, the carrier introduces new rules that are more restrictive for passengers, but at the same time should greatly reduce take-off delays caused by baggage-handling issues. Passengers who have bought a priority boarding service will have more privileges. Nothing changes here, those who have purchased the service will be able to take two bags on board. For each flight the airline will set a limit of 95 priority passengers, to ensure the availability of baggage compartments in the cabin. Passengers without a priority service will only be able to take a smaller, cabin bag. A cabin case of up to 10 kilograms will have to be checked in at the airport. The baggage check-in fee starts at €8, if purchased while booking the ticket online. However, if you decide to pay this fee at the airport, it can be as high as €25. At the same time, the carrier has increased the size limits for handbags to 40 x 20 x 25 centimetres. Please check the details on the carrier's website. You should always remember to choose a priority fare, which will allow your boss to take his suitcase on board and also disembark the plane faster.

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.



TICKET HUNTING

I've been hunting for promotional tickets for next year, considering several different route options. Several weeks ago I found a decent fare to Melbourne, Australia in May, as well as low-priced tickets to Mexico and Cuba. When I checked again the next day, the price of a ticket to Melbourne was even lower, so I booked it asap. However, when I received the confirmation, it turned out that I had bought a ticket to Melbourne in Florida, US, instead of Melbourne, Australia. Is there any chance to rectify the situation? I can pay extra to fly to the destination I actually wanted to visit. I'm flying through Charlotte, can I get off there and return from another port?

Janusz

Dear Janusz,
You're not the only one who's made such a mistake. Many cities share the same name, so it's easy to get confused. That's why, more experienced travellers always use three-letter airport codes to make sure they are buying a ticket to a proper destination. The ticket is subject to limited changes. You can change the date for a fee of €180, or the route, provided that the destination is within the USA or Canada. You can change the entire ticket to another US port, such as LA, for a surcharge of €180 and a price difference of US\$265 dollars (between the fare to Melbourne, Florida and the one to LA). The second option is to get off in Charlotte and return from Melbourne. In this case, you should change the route before the start of the journey. If you quit your journey in Charlotte without informing the airline and without using the next ticket coupon, the entire ticket will expire and the return section cannot be used. The change fee is also €180. You may decide not to change the original document, and buy a ticket on a domestic route or, for example, to Cuba. Since the embargo was lifted, there are several daily flights from Miami to Havana, with prices starting from as little as US\$200 for a round-trip ticket. Fares to Mexico are equally attractive.

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