

Business Traveller Poland

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NR 8/10 SEPTEMBER 2010

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English summary

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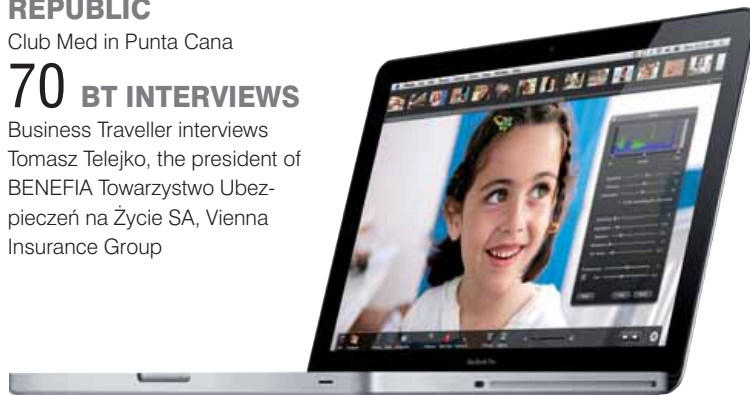
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We answer all your questions regarding travelling



The world is changing – this is the first thing that comes to our mind on seeing the metamorphosis of Istanbul. This year, the Turkish metropolis is one of three European Capitals of Culture, which fact triggers a lot of investments. Right before our eyes Istanbul is turning into a modern city, which is becoming more and more open to business. A similar process can be observed in a number of other European cities. For example in Prague, whose Ruzyně airport we visited, or in Amsterdam where new districts are being developed, providing a strong impulse to the economic development of the area.

In this issue, we will also take you on other fascinating journeys, particularly to luxurious and unique hotels which we visited in Zurich, Milan, Warsaw, and Rawa Mazowiecka. We will give you hands-on reports from flights to Tokyo, Nice and Milan.

Talking about business trips, let's not forget about the other, more pleasant part of such journeys i.e. about those rare moments when we can find some time to rest and unwind. In this issue, we have prepared for you a few top-shelf recommendations. A cruise on board luxurious Silver Spirit ship provides the essence of what is the best in such voyages: elegance, great cuisine, and a very interesting programme. Holidays spent in a Club Med's village located in the Dominican Republic are a great occasion to "recharge" your batteries,

especially because Punta Cana is an unforgettable place. And if you wish to visit Montreal – you may take advantage of our pieces of advice on how to spend your free time in the city in an interesting way.

This month, as always, we provide you with various articles on wine, electronics and vehicles, writing about new technologies, solutions, and giving recommendations.

We tend to think that "the older the wine, the better it is", but in this issue of Business Traveller you will find out that that is not always the case. Well, the world is changing...

Enjoy your reading.



Robert Grzybowski
Publisher BT Poland



Read more details! Visit businessstraveller.pl

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Printing house
Drukarnia TINTA

Business Traveller

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Perry Publications, Cardinal House,
39-40 Albemarle Street, London, W1S 4TE
tel. +44 (0)20 76 47 63 30
www.businessstraveller.com

In the US, Business Traveler is published at 303 Fifth Avenue, 1308, NY 10016, tel 1 212 725 3500. In Germany, Business Traveller is published at Schulstrasse 34, 80634 Munich, tel 89 167 9971, fax 89 167 9937. In Denmark, Business Traveller is published at Rymarksvej 46, 2900 Hellerup, tel 45 3311 4413, fax 45 3311 4414. In Hungary, Business Traveller is published at 1074 Budapest, Munkas utca 9, tel 36 1266 5853. In Hong Kong, Business Traveller Asia-Pacific and China are published at Suite 405 4/F Chinachem Exchange Square, 1 Hoi Wan Street, Quarry Bay, tel 852 2594 9300, fax 852 2519 6846. In the Middle East, Business Traveller Middle East is published jointly by Motivate Publishing, PO Box 2331, Dubai UAE, tel 9714 282 4060, and Perry Publications. In Africa, Business Traveller Africa is published by Future Publishing (Pty) Ltd, PO Box 3355, Rivonia 2128, South Africa, tel 27 11 803 2040.

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a subsidiary of Panacea Publishing
International Ltd, United Kingdom





NARESZNIE... NEX-5

Lustrzanka z kilkoma obiektywami - to za dużo w wielu sytuacjach. W górach, na rowerze, na codzienne spacerowanie po mieście. Zdarzało się, że przed większym wyzwaniem stawałem - tym bardziej potrzebowałem czegoś lekkiego, małego, ale ciągle zapewniającego normalną pracę z aparatem. Sony NEX-5* - jest wyposażony w dużą matrycę rozmiaru APS-C posiadającą ponad 14 milionów pikseli. Oferuje nie tylko możliwość pracy w plikach JPG, ale również w trybie RAW. Wymienne obiektywy są zaopatrzone w solidne, metalowe złącza bagnetowe. Na początek zaproponowano trzy ciekawe obiektywy, łącznie z bardzo płaskim, szerokokątnym „naleśnikiem” 16/2,8 z dwoma konwerterami - w tym rybie oko**. Opcjonalnie dostępny jest także wizjer lunetowy.

I najważniejsze: natychmiastowa reakcja na spust. I ten „klik” - tak dobrze znany z pracy lustrzanki. Tryb seryjny do 7 klatek na sekundę przerósł moje oczekiwania. Lista „miłych zaskoczeń” jest dłuższa. Podwójne gniazdo kart

pamięci - akceptujące Memory Stick™ i SD, adapter pozwalający na wpięcie obiektywów z lustrzanki Sony z mocowaniem A - od superjasnych standardów do teleobiektywów włącznie!

I te wspaniałe, rozległe panoramy - jeszcze w tym roku w wydaniu 3D.***

Możliwość filmowania wydaje się być naturalną. NEX-5 zapewnia jakość dalece ponad przeciętną, nawet wśród urządzeń Full HD. Model ten rejestruje pliki wideo w formacie AVCHD z dźwiękiem stereofonicznym. Dostępny jest także opcjonalny, kierunkowy mikrofon zewnętrzny.

Waga aparatu, wraz z obiektywem SEL 18-55, poniżej 500 gramów przyjemnie zaskakuje i pozwala na to, by aparat NEX-5 był zawsze pod ręką.



Zdjęcie i tekst Marek Arcimowicz

Z wykształcenia architekt - pianista, od ponad 10 lat zawodowo zajmuje się fotografią. Współpracował niemal ze wszystkimi fotograficznymi i podróżniczymi czasopismami (m.in.: National Geographic, Traveler, Poznaj Świat, Voyage, Podróże) w Polsce. Uczestnik XII i XIII Biennale Fotografii Górskiej (jest dwukrotnym laureatem I nagrody) i wielokrotny juror międzynarodowych konkursów fotograficznych.



Zdjęcie przedstawia rodzinę produktów α systemów A i E. Założenie obiektywu systemu A do aparatów NEX jest możliwe po użyciu dostępnego opcjonalnie adaptera (tylko ręczna ostrość).

* NEX-5 będzie dostępny pod koniec czerwca, ** Wspomniane konwertery są kompatybilne z obiektywem 16/2,8, *** Po aktualizacji oprogramowania w 2010.

LOT TELEGRAM LOT TELEGRAM LOT TELEGRAM LOT TELEGRAM LOT TELEGRAM

New Destination: Damascus

PLL LOT is launching a new connection to the Middle East. Starting 2 November, LOT's aircraft will operate three times a week on Warsaw - Damascus route. The prices for round-trip tickets start from 1184 PLN.

The new destination is a natural consequence of the success achieved by the Polish airline with Warsaw-Beirut route. A journey from Warsaw to Damascus - Syrian capital will take 3 hours and 40 minutes and will be available three times a week: on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. The flights will be operated by Embraer 175 aircraft.



DEJAN GOSPODAREK

LOT Supports Breast Cancer Campaign

LOT Polish Airlines has been actively involved in a large-scale Breast Cancer Campaign.

Throughout the whole October, which is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the flight attendants employed by the Polish air carried will wear a symbolic pink ribbon in their lapels.

LOT Polish Airlines employs a lot of women,

including approximately 600 flight attendants, and as many as nine women pilots. Apart from the symbol of breast cancer awareness in their lapels, the flight attendants will also provide passengers with necessary information on the issue during the on board announcements. Also the Breast Cancer Awareness leaflets will be available in offices and at LOT's desks throughout Poland.

To France

In order to celebrate French Bastille Day, the passengers on board all LOT's planes flying to and from France were served chocolate buns decorated with the French flag. LOT's passengers have celebrated so far St. Martin's Day, Beaujolais Nouveau Wine Festival, the International Pizza Day, Fat Thursday, and St. Valentine's Day.

Alamo A Car at Hand

Alamo is one of the most popular and praised car rental companies. It's still barely known in Poland, but it's definitely going to change. Alamo was established in 1974 in St. Louis. Today it is the largest car rental company which offers its vehicles to customers visiting the USA, and a part of a global association which manages the world's largest chain of car rental companies. Such a membership is a guarantee of services pro-

vided on the highest level. 15 years ago Alamo was the first car rental company which implemented an online booking system, and today it possesses 159 self-service kiosks.

Cars with a characteristic logo of Alamo brand can now be rented also in Poland at most airports, and in larger cities.

Alamo is represented in Poland by Globair company. To find more details, go to: globair-group.com/Poland/alamopl.



Marriott Opens New Hotels

This hotel brand doesn't need further recommendation. Marriott has been present on all continents for over 50 years. Today, the company possesses almost 500 hotels in 60 countries throughout the world. Many new projects will be implemented within the next few years. By 2016 the chain will have grown by 43 new hotels - 12 of them will be open in the USA, while the others in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. As for Europe, Marriott is soon going to open a new hotel with 264 guest rooms in Krasnodar, Russia. Other plans include new hotels in Shanghai, Atlanta and Accra, Ghana.

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Economy Extra – ekonomiczna klasa premium.

Oferujemy wygodne rozwiązania zarówno w podróży służbowej, jak i prywatnej dla pasażerów, którzy oczekują więcej korzyści w przystępnej cenie. **Economy Extra** łączy przywileje klasy Business z cenami z klasy ekonomicznej. Korzystaj z odprawy dla klasy Business, większych limitów bagażowych oraz szeregu udogonień stwarzających komfortowe warunki do pracy i odpoczynku w specjalnie wydzielonej kabinie.

Specjalnie dla czytelników Business Traveller Poland przygotowaliśmy poniższą ofertę.

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Oferta dostępna dla czytelników Business Traveller Poland w biurach SAS na lotniskach w Gdańsku, Poznaniu i Warszawie w dniach 01.09.2010 – 30.09.2010 obejmująca bilety zakupione w klasie Economy Extra na rejsy w obie strony z Polski do Bangkoku, Chicago, Nowego Jorku, Pekinu, Tokio i Waszyngtonu. W celu skorzystania z oferty specjalnej prosimy o kontakt z numerem infolinii SAS: 022 8 500 500. Oferta obejmuje tylko rejsy operowane przez SAS. Zniżka ważna na hasło „Business Traveller”. Dana oferta nie łączy się z innymi ofertami.

“Child’s Happiness” in Radisson Cracow

Hotel Radisson Cracow has launched action called “Child’s Happiness”. The action involves selling colourful bracelets-donations and the proceeds of the sale will support Jan Brzechwa’s Children’s Home in Cracow. In the first days of the action, the guests staying at Radisson Blu have purchased approximately 500 green-blue bracelets. The bracelets are most popular among tour groups, but individual and business guests are also willing to contribute. Each sold bracelet is equivalent to 5 PLN contribution to the Children’s Home. They can be purchased at the hotel’s reception and Salt&Co bar.



AIRBUS: THE AIRCRAFT OF THE FUTURE

Airbus made public its thinking on the airliner of the future at the Farnborough International Airshow in England. The company says the design images are “more than a flight of pure fantasy” and illustrate what air transport could look like in 2050 – “even 2030 if advancements in existing technologies continue apace.” Airbus experts in aircraft materials, aerodynamics, cabins and engines came up with the design that they believe will meet the expectations of the passengers of the future, the company says in a media release. The design features ultra long and slim wings, semi-embedded engines, a U-shaped tail and light-weight “intelligent” body that improves environmental performance or “eco-efficiency”. “The result: lower fuel burn, a significant cut in emissions, less noise and greater comfort,” Airbus says.


AIRBUS

Academy in Hilton

Hilton Gdańsk hosted the first of a cycle of culinary workshops whose participants will have an opportunity to become familiar with the tricks of the trade of the hotel’s kitchen, and learn the secrets of numerous sophisticated dishes prepared by chef Adam Woźniak. The participants will also explore the subject of oenology under the supervision of Marek Kondrat and renowned sommeliers. The aim of the workshops is to teach how to pair dishes with wine to create a perfect duo and bring out the depth of their taste. Each meeting will have its main theme.



IBERIA, BA, AA: A JOINT AGREEMENT

British Airways, American Airlines and Iberia have received permission from the US and EU authorities to co-operate on transatlantic flights. This will allow oneworld to compete more effectively with rival global air alliances which have already received antitrust immunity and have the largest transatlantic booking share. This will allow for better connections, improved flight schedules, and overall increased level of convenience for passengers. “For Polish consumers, the agreement not only means more and better travel options but also more opportunities to earn and redeem frequent flyer miles and more convenient access to the airlines’ combined airport lounges,” said Anna Ingham-Grant, Commercial Manager East Central Europe British Airways.

SINGAPORE AIRLINES

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- Airbus 380: dwa razy dziennie z Londynu, codziennie z Paryża, Zurichu do Singapuru i dalej

Od 1 września 2010 wprowadzamy dwa dodatkowe rejsy Monachium-Singapur, a więc połączenie na tej trasie będzie codziennie.

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Alitalia to Join the Transatlantic Joint Venture

Alitalia, Italy's leading airline, today joined the Air France-KLM Group and Delta Air Lines as a member of the airline industry's leading trans-Atlantic joint venture. Wherever traffic rights permit, the airlines offer customers code-share service between the United States and the European Union, and in many cases beyond, creating one network for seamless airline-to-airline connections between points in North America and the European Union. Through the four-way joint venture, passengers have convenient access to the world's largest trans-Atlantic network, which offers almost 250 flights and approximately 55,000 seats each day, now including 20 daily trans-Atlantic flights to 5 U. S. destinations from Rome and Milan Malpensa airports. With Alitalia's addition, the joint venture represents approximately 26 percent of total trans-Atlantic capacity, with annual revenues estimated at more than \$10 billion USD.


DEJAN GOSPODAREK

Air France and Disneyland

Air France together with Disneyland Paris have prepared a special offer aimed at Air France passengers. The airline will be offering anyone who books tickets to Paris an adult admission ticket to Disneyland at the price of a child one. Each adult passenger of Air France will save almost 30% on their admission ticket, paying mere €48. The ticket is valid for one day within both amusement parks – Disneyland and Walt Disney Studios. All attractions are included in the price. The transfer from the centre of Paris is easy

and convenient. Commuter trains reach the park from Champ-Élysées or Notre Dame cathedral within 40 minutes. There is also a direct shuttle bus departing from Terminals 2D and 2F at Roissy/Charles de Gaulle airport. The trip takes about 45 minutes. The discount tickets can be booked online at disneylandparis.com/airfrance or bought at the gates of the park on presenting a copy of the Air France ticket, the boarding pass, and the identification card or the passport. The special offer is valid up to 3 October 2010.


DISNEY

BRIDES FOR A SICK CHILD

Brides Conquering the City for a Sick Child! is a charity action which takes place each year in Poznań. In August this year it was organized for the third time. The action involved a photo shoot with brides and models wearing wedding dresses. The shoot took place in several venues in Poznań – one of them being Sheraton hotel. The photos from the shoot are given to companies which support the action financially.

The proceeds from this year's shoot will support treatment of 5-year old Maciej Kreft — an epileptic and autistic child whose mother left him in a hospital and who was adopted by one of the hospital's physicians. The boy, who presently lives in Poznań, need intensive rehabilitation and is presently helped only by his mom. The boy's father has recently had a serious car accident and now is on a long way to full recovery. Maciej's website: www.maciuj.123strona.pl.

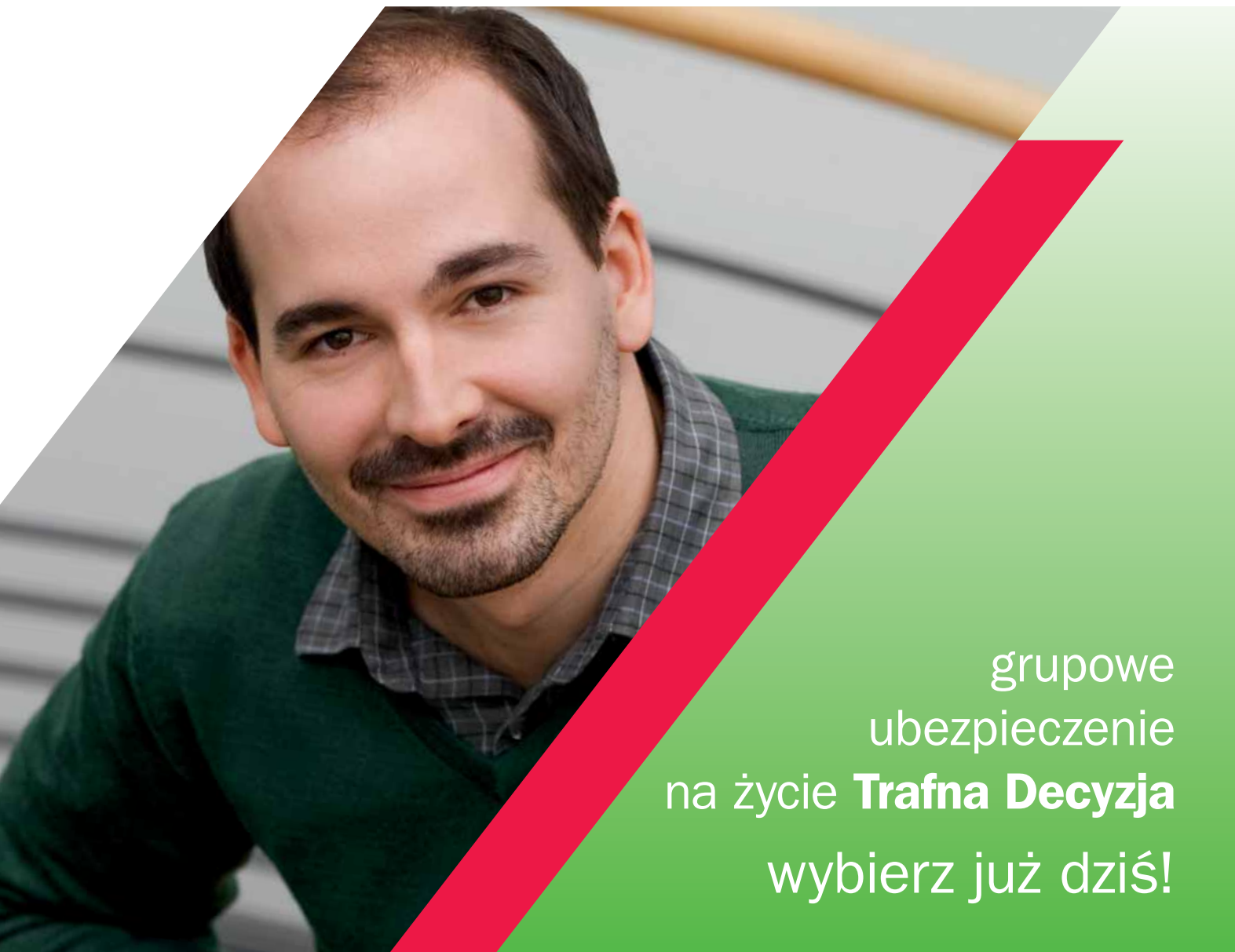


Max Sałuda Wins in Międzyzdroje

Amber Baltic's golf course was the venue of the 4th round of Deutsche Bank Pro-Am Tour series (with total 15,000 PLN prize money), taking place on 14/15 August 2010. Almost 100 players took part in the event which was eventually won by Max Sałuda from Binowo Park, Szczecin. Sałuda managed to defend his last year's title, producing a stunning result of total (-8) strokes, and beating Peter Bronson of the USA and Mike O'Brien of England. It's Sałuda's third professional title this season. Thanks to this win, the golfer from Szczecin has taken the lead in the general ranking of Deutsche Bank Pro-am Tour series, with just one more, final event which will take place on 18/19 September in Warsaw.

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Finnair's News

Finnair will open a new route to pulsating Singapore on 30 May 2011. The airline wants to become one of the three largest air carriers operating Asia-Europe connections, and is planning to increase the number of flights to the Asian continent. Finnair also wishes to be the most frequently chosen airline by Polish passengers travelling to Asia, thanks to its unrivalled flights with a connection in Helsinki. The Finnish air carrier will be the only airline to offer a daily connection between Singapore and Northern Europe with a timetable that suits the needs of business passengers. Meanwhile, Finnair is renewing its baggage allowance rules for passengers travelling on scheduled flights. From the beginning of September 2010, the cost of a Economy Class ticket will include a single checked-in item of luggage with a maximum weight of 23 kilos. The previous limit was 20 kilos. The maximum permitted combined measurements of the bag (height + length + width) will be 158 centimetres. Business Class passengers, Finnair Plus Platinum, Gold and Silver members, oneworld tier members and holders of more highly-priced economy class tickets will be permitted to take two items of baggage, each weighing a maximum of 23 kilos, totalling 46 kilos.



Air Baltic and Rezidor to Cooperate

The Rezidor Hotel Group, has signed an agreement with one of the fastest growing European airlines AirBaltic. Thanks to the agreement all passengers who travel by AirBaltic and are members of the airline's loyalty programme which involves collecting promotional miles, will earn ad-

ditional miles while staying at hotels belonging to Rezidor chain. BalticMiles members earn 500 miles per stay at a Radisson Blu or Park Inn hotel in Europe, Middle East and Africa. The programme has over 20 partners partners – the miles can be redeemed for airline tickets or various merchandise.



RT Monopol Jazz – a New Style

RT Monopol Jazz hotel – a unique place on art map of Cracow – is a new wing of RT Monopol hotel, whose launching date has been set to the beginning of October this year.

The leading theme, which dominates in the rooms and the whole building, is jazz music. The new wing has been designed especially for guests who seek original and unforgettable interiors and appreciate breakthrough solutions and completely new aesthetic sensations.

The hotel has prepared for its guests 18 air-conditioned and thematically decorated rooms. The unique colour

shades (black, white, or grey), combined with original interior decorations which refers to jazz music, will definitely provide the hotel guests with unforgettable aesthetic experiences. Each room comes with a bathroom, a phone, an LCD flat screen with satellite TV, air conditioning and WiFi.

The hotel is located in the very centre of the city, close to the Main Market Square.



A Charity Auction in Hilton Gdańsk

A charity auction of works of art will be a part of a formal gala celebrating the opening of Hilton Gdańsk hotel on 4 September 2010. Honorary Patronage of the auction was taken by Bogdan Borusewicz, the Speaker of the Polish Senate. The proceeds from the auction will support a new project by "Friends of Autistic People Association" in Gdańsk, which is planning to build a group home – a small friendly place for autistic adults. The group home will be named in honour of Arkadiusz Rybicki, a great parliamentary supporter of rights of autistic people, who died tragically in Smolensk air crash on 10 April this year.



The Scandinavian air carrier has decided to gradually withdraw from use all its MD 90-30 aircraft. Presently, the airline possesses eight machines of this type with an average age of thirteen years. By next summer, Scandinavian Airlines will have sold all of its MD 90-30 aircraft to one of the air carriers based in the United States.

Bezpłatne łącze internetowe! W biznesie dobra sieć to podstawa.

Bezpłatny dostęp do Internetu dla gości hotelowych oraz uczestników konferencji w ponad 200 hotelach* w Europie, Afryce i Bliskim Wschodzie.



* Aby uzyskać pełną listę hoteli sprawdź www.radissonblu.com/freebroadband

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TRIED & TESTED

ON BOARD: WARSAW – ZÜRICH – MILAN

Swiss Airlines Fokker 100 economy class

INFO I had quite a big journey scheduled in my itinerary. It involved several dozen hours spent on various planes on Warsaw-Zurich-Milan round route. I started with the flight from Warsaw to Zurich on board a SWISS aircraft. Up to recently, the Swiss air carrier was a strategic partner of Polish LOT. Now, on behalf of SWISS, the flights from Warsaw are operated by Contact Air. There are five daily connections to Zurich from Warsaw, including the flights operated in cooperation with LOT. The first flight takes off at 7.45, while the following ones depart at 9.45 am, 2.40 pm, 5.00 pm, and finally at 7.50 pm.

CHECK-IN Flight LX 1343 departs from Warsaw at 9.45 am. I arrived at the airport on a scorching July day, about an hour before the scheduled departure of the aircraft. The day before I had completed an online check-in procedure, so now luckily, I didn't have to stand in any queue. I had only the hand luggage with me, so having a self-printed boarding pass in my hand (seat 10A), I headed for the security control zone. I took out the contents of my pockets and put them into a plastic container. I also took my laptop out of its case for the security. Several minutes later I entered the departure lounge.

BOARDING I approached gate B39 almost at the same time when boarding was announced. The queue of the passengers with their boarding passes and IDs in their hands was moving swiftly, although the plane was almost fully booked, so there were about a hundred of us waiting to board. We were transferred to the aircraft by an apron bus – the trip took just a few minutes.

THE SEAT Fokker 100 aircraft is becoming more and more popular among airlines. The plane is powered by Rolls-Royce engines, seats up to 100 passengers, and is remarkably comfortable. The seats configuration is 3+2 and my seat – 10A – was situated by the window, in a two-seat row. The seat is close to the emergency exit, which means that its back is blocked and doesn't recline. That is why, before the take-off I decided to take an empty seat which was two rows in front of me.

THE FLIGHT As you might expect it from the Swiss, the push back procedure took place exactly at 9.45. Unfortunately, the taxiing took over 20 minutes – this seems to be a standard time these days in Warsaw, especially when one of the runways is closed due to technical problems.

Six minutes into the flight, the “fasten your seatbelts” lights turned off. A few minutes later, the in-flight service began. In the economy class the passengers were offered mineral water, orange and apple juice, white and red wine, coffee and tea. The meal consisted of a croissant filled with chocolate.

ARRIVAL The captain's predictions came true. Exactly at 11.50, the Fokker landed on the runway of the Zurich Airport.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

CHECK IN On the following day I arrived at the airport in the Swiss capital just a few minutes past 11.00 am, ready to continue my journey. This time I was about to take flight LX 1628 to Milan, departing at 12.25. In comparison to the previous flight, this one seemed like a stroll. This time I decided to use one of

many self-service check-in kiosks which can be found at the Swiss airport. The procedure takes just a few minutes and one of its advantages is that you can choose the seat of your preference. I decided to take an aisle seat 17B. I still had only my hand luggage with me, so the security control procedure was as quick as the check-in.

BOARDING Boarding began exactly at midday and went as smoothly as it did in Warsaw. With the slip of my boarding pass in my hand, I entered the bus which took us to the aircraft parked on the apron – once again, it was Fokker 100.

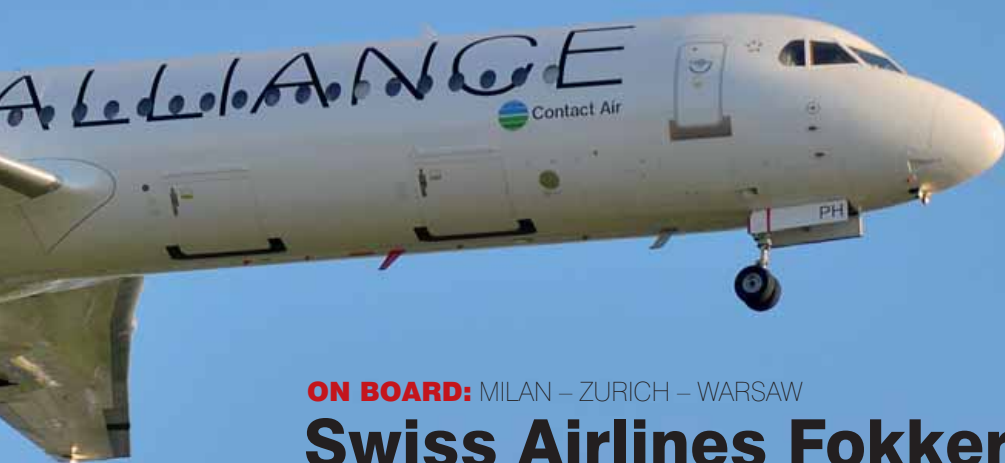
I put my luggage into the overhead bin and took my seat. Seat 17B is an optimal choice, although on such a short flight it didn't really matter very much.

Just before the take-off, the captain welcomed us on board and announced that the flight would be operated by the first officer.

THE FLIGHT Exactly as it was the day before, the push back took place according to the scheduled time, and we took off ten minutes later. The cabin crew started the in-flight service, which required a lot of organizational skills, because in a short while the plane had to be ready for landing. In the economy class we were offered mineral water, coke, beer, white and red wine, and coffee or tea.

ARRIVAL 35 minutes after departing Zurich, we arrived at Melpensa Airport in Milan.

VERDICT It was a very smooth journey, both in case of the flight from Warsaw and the short trip from Zurich to Milan. The aircraft was comfortable and the service reliable.



ON BOARD: MILAN – ZÜRICH – WARSAW

Swiss Airlines Fokker 100 business class

INFO SWISS offers six daily connections on the short (lasting only about 30 minutes) route from Milan to Zurich. The first flight takes off at 7.10 am, and the last one at 8.00 pm.

CHECK-IN The flight I chose departed Malpensa airport at 3.00 pm, and it was the most convenient connecting flight on my way to Warsaw. I arrived at the airport 30 minutes before the departure time. This time I had with me quite a lot of luggage, but luckily I was about to fly in business class, so the airport procedures were going to be much quicker and easier.

There was no-one but me standing at the check-in desk for business class passengers. I checked my luggage in directly to Warsaw and headed towards the security control checkpoint. There, I found another convenience – Fast track security – which is a special lane for express security check. The word “fast” is definitely the most appropriate to describe the procedure.

THE LOUNGE Thanks to the fast check-in and security control, I was left with so much time on my hands that I decided to visit the business lounge, which theoretically is just a more luxurious waiting room. The business lounge at Malpensa is operated by SWISS and Lufthansa – the entrance is granted on showing your business class boarding pass. The lounge didn't seem to be very popular, as there were only a few passengers sitting there. The snacks offered in the lounge included crisps, apples and olives. The choice of drinks included juice, sodas, beer, and wine – this, however was represented only by two empty bottles. I must admit that I was slightly taken aback by the fact that the personnel weren't particularly in-

terested in serving the guests of the lounge.

BOARDING Boarding began on time at 2.35 pm. Once again, I decided to use the fast lane for the business class passengers and after a short while I was sitting in the bus which took us to the Fokker 100. I took my seat – this time it was 2F.

The travel classes in Fokker are not separated, not even by a portable partition. However, the passengers can feel the difference owing to the excellent service they experience.

THE FLIGHT At 3 pm, which was the scheduled departure time, the aircraft started taxiing towards the runway. The whole procedure took about 7 minutes. Also, around 7 minutes into the flight, when the “fasten your seatbelts” lights turned off, the cabin crew started the in-flight service.

After a while, the business class passengers received mineral water and wet wipes. A few minutes later they were offered sandwiches with cheese or salami, and drinks: juice, coffee, tea, wine, and obviously champagne. Such abundance of food and drinks on such a short flight is definitely praiseworthy. The whole flight took about 40 minutes.

ARRIVAL I arrived in Zurich at 3.50 pm, and since I had over an hour to my next flight (to Warsaw), I decided to visit the business lounge to see if it is any better than the one at the Italian airport. I got there after a short stroll.

THE LOUNGE When I entered the lounge, I immediately knew that I had made a good decision. SWISS Business Lounge is spacious and designed in modern style with the total area of 1,100 sq m. There are 216 comfortable seats, free wifi, the

computer corner, showers, good buffet, and a Sony Playstation console for game lovers. There are several large information screens, and upstairs a paradise for smokers – The Smoker's Bar which seats up to 91 guests.

BOARDING Boarding started as it was scheduled i.e. at 4.55 pm. Once again I used the fast track security lane and a separate line for the business passengers. I entered the boarding bridge through gate A73 and boarded Fokker 100, where I took seat 3A. For the last several dozen hours I got quite familiar with those seats.

THE FLIGHT As I expected, the push back procedure took place on time. We took off at 5.25 pm. 15 minutes into the flight we were served a field lettuce salad, beef with gnocchi and beans, and cheese. The choice of drinks was the same as during the previous flight – of course, champagne was also there.

ARRIVAL The scheduled arrival time was 7.10, and I wasn't particularly surprised to find out that we landed at Okecie on time.

VERDICT The business class in SWISS is a very good choice as it offers good and reliable service complemented by Swiss punctuality. As if it wasn't too much, on leaving the aircraft each passenger received a bar of chocolate.

Janusz Koźmiński



BUSINESS CLASS

ECONOMY CLASS

Toileta

Kuchnia

Szafa

FACTS

SEAT CONFIGURATION 3+2

SEAT PITCH 78,7 cm

SEAT WIDTH 46,3 cm

CONTACT swiss.com

TRIED & TESTED

ON BOARD: WARSAW – PRAGUE

Czech Airlines Airbus 319 Business Class

INFO The Czech CSA airline offers daily flights from Warsaw to Prague. At the working week, the connection is operated three times daily, at 9.00 am, 2.25 pm, and 6.50 pm. I chose the morning flight on board Airbus 319 aircraft.

CHECK-IN I turned up at the airport at 8.15 am, a bit late as for a flight which was scheduled at 9.00 am. My delay was caused by morning traffic jams in Warsaw which greatly contribute to the overall chaos near Okęcie. The traffic jams are a result of the construction work which aims at alleviating traffic congestion around the airport. However, my delay wasn't a really big problem, as a business class ticket provides some obvious privileges. I was about to fly without any luggage so I checked in at a desk without any queuing, and used the security lane for Business Class passengers. There were only a few other people besides me, so the whole procedure went smoothly.

BOARDING Although I got to the airport quite late, I boarded the plane as a first passenger. The boarding procedure began at 8.40 am, and just a minute later I was walking along the boarding bridge to the Airbus.

FACTS

SEAT CONFIGURATION 3+3

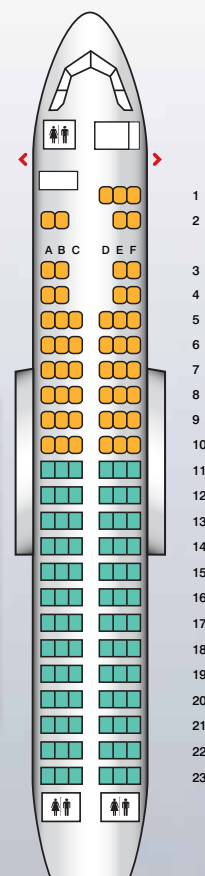
SEAT PITCH 80 cm

SEAT WIDTH 45,7 cm

COST The price for a one-way ticket from Warsaw to Prague booked online without promotion at the airline's website cost 7629 CZK (€300).

KONTAKT csa.cz

THE SEAT I had an aisle seat 2D. Business class is configured 2+3, but in the row of three seats the middle one is empty to provide more space for the passengers. Overall there are 10 business seats in the business class. It's an additional convenience, because Airbus aircraft are known to be especially comfortable – the seats are quite roomy and there's more than enough legspace.



BUSINESS CLASS

ECONOMY CLASS

Toilet



THE FLIGHT The pushback procedure started at 9.00 and five minutes later the aircraft was already in the air. The Airbus aircraft are well soundproofed, so passengers hardly ever complain about any disturbing noise on board. That's why I decided to concentrate on my work. This, however, didn't last long, because my focus shifted to the meals served by skilful and smiling flight attendants. The breakfast consisted of fruit salad, ham, cheese, tomato, jam, bread, and selection of cold drinks as well as tea and coffee. The cabin was equipped with a number of small ceiling-recessed screens which presented safety instructions, the route, and the information about Ruzyne airport as well as Prague itself. The passengers have access to the latest press offered by the flight attendants, including Business Traveller Poland.

ARRIVAL We arrived in Prague on time – touching the ground in Ruzyne at 10.02 am sharp. I left the aircraft and went through the boarding bridge to the “in-transit” gate as I was travelling further to Budapest.

VERDICT A convenient trip on board a comfortable aircraft. Very good service.

ON BOARD: PRAGUE – BUDAPEST

Czech Airlines ATR 42 Economy Class



CONTINUATION OF THE JOURNEY Having landed in Prague, I had still some time before the departure of my next plane to Budapest at 11.55 am. The Czech airline offers as many as 5 daily connections to the Hungarian capital.

CHECK-IN I was still travelling without any luggage, so I received my boarding pass at the Transfer Desk. Since I was in “in transit” zone, I didn't have to go through security control.

BOARDING The boarding began at 11.55 am and went as smoothly as in Warsaw. This time, the passengers were transported to the aircraft by an apron bus. ATR 42 is not a large aircraft (carries up to 40 passengers), and we boarded it via the back door.

THE SEAT I had an aisle seat 2C, which was situated at the very front of the plane. In other aircraft this would be equal to a seat in Business class, but in ATR 42 the business seats are located in the last two rows of the plane. In other words, I was sitting at the very front of the economy cabin. There's not much space in Economy class on this type of aircraft, but on such a short route it doesn't matter. Also, the characteristic loud sound of turbopropeller engines wasn't extremely troublesome.

THE FLIGHT The pushback procedure commenced at 11.57 am. The plane

taxied for five minutes and took off at 12.03. Seven minutes into the flight, the “fasten your seatbelts” lights turned off and the in-flight service began. This consisted of a cookie with raisins and coffee or tea. The passengers had access to the press – although the choice was limited to a Czech newspaper and an English version of a Czech magazine.

ARRIVAL We arrived in Budapest at 1.12 pm, that is 3 minutes before the scheduled time. A few minutes later an apron bus transferred the passengers from the apron to the terminal of the Ferihegy airport.

VERDICT A fast and convenient connection between Prague and Budapest.

Janusz Zasiński

FACTS

SEAT CONFIGURATION 2+2

SEAT PITCH 76 cm

SEAT WIDTH 45,7 cm

COST The price for a one-way ticket from Prague to Budapest booked online without promotion at the airline's website for the beginning of September cost 10,467 CZK (€410).

CONTACT csa.cz

TRIED & TESTED

ON BOARD: WARSAW – NICE

PLL LOT Embraer 175 economy class



DEJAN GOSPODAREK

INFO The Polish air carrier offers daily connections from Warsaw to Nice. Flight LO 341 departs from Okęcie airport at noon.

CHECK-IN It was one of those extremely hot days this summer. The scorching heat was in full swing, draining everyone's energy, but the temperature at Warsaw airport was quite bearable. I arrived there exactly when the clock struck 11.00 am. Luckily, I didn't have any heavy luggage with me apart from a briefcase and my laptop thanks to which I was able to write this account while still on board.

I went directly to PLL LOT's check-in desk for passengers carrying only hand luggage. It is located at the end of the row of check-in desks, close to the entrance to the departures lounge. There was no queue, so the whole procedure took just a few minutes. I received my boarding pass with seat 20D and walking through the maze of blue tape barriers I headed towards the security control. Although only two security control checkpoints with two scanners were working, the whole procedure went quite smoothly. Of course, I had prepared for it in advance, taking my watch off and putting the contents of my pockets into a plastic container.

BOARDING When I left the security control, it turned out that I didn't have too much time to even browse through the new products in the duty free shops, as it was around the time of the scheduled boarding, which in my case was 11.15. Getting to gate B40, from which I was about to board, takes considerable time as for the airport in Warsaw. The same distance at much larger

airports in Amsterdam or Frankfurt would be considered just a stone's throw.

I approached the gate the moment when boarding was announced. I prepared my boarding pass together with my ID, and after a while I headed down the stairs leading to the airside transfer bus which was waiting outside. The trip, as it's always the case, took just a few seconds. The bus came to a halt in front of the neat Embraer 175. We got off and started embarking the aircraft.

THE SEAT I was assigned seat 20D, which is situated in the last but one row of the aircraft, where the configuration is 2+2. I must admit that it's not my favourite section on this type of a plane. Luckily, the larger Embraers are extremely solid and comfortable. What's more, their cabins are widely known to be excellently soundproofed, so the noise of the working engines is barely audible during a flight. The seats are quite wide – over 46 centimetres, and offer enough legroom to comfortably travel on medium distances across Europe.

I put my luggage into the overhead bin, placed the laptop under the seat in front of me (just for the time of take-off), and took the window seat.

THE FLIGHT When everything seemed to be completely ready and we were about to start taxiing, the captain of the aircraft informed us that owing to large air traffic over Austria our flight would have to be delayed by 30 minutes.

And so we did... As it always happens in such situations, the announcement caused a lot of commotion, with some of

my fellow passengers making hasty phone calls.

After having "served" the 30-minute sentence, we started taxiing and from then on the whole take-off procedure went smoothly. A few minutes into the flight the captain switched off "fasten your seatbelts" lights, and the cabin crew started the in-flight service. In the economy class, where I was sitting, we were offered mineral water, juice, coffee or tea, and Chilean Frontera wine (red or white). Unfortunately, the tortilla-shaped sandwich I ordered, wasn't the tastiest. For the dessert each of the passengers received a chocolate bar.

ARRIVAL The aircraft landed at Nice airport 30 minutes past the scheduled time – which meant that we weren't able to make up for the time we had lost in Warsaw. This inconvenience was partially rewarded with the beautiful aerial view of Monte Carlo.

VERDICT The flight to the French Riviera in a very comfortable aircraft takes about 2.5 hours.

Jakub Olgiewicz

FACTS

SEAT CONFIGURATION 2+2

SEAT PITCH 78,7 cm

SEAT WIDTH 46,3 cm

COST A ticket from Warsaw to Nice booked at the end of August via the airline's website was available at 682 PLN.

CONTACT lot.com

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HOTEL: RAWA MAZOWIECKA

OSSA Congress&Spa



WHAT IS IT LIKE? Set among lush greenery, the body of the grand hotel seems to appear out of nowhere as you are driving a narrow asphalt forest road. The building certainly impresses with its size, and this feeling only grows stronger with the time spent here. Built on the grounds of the former estate of the Suffczyński family (former landowners of the Ossa village) this congress and hotel complex is interesting from an architectural point of view and it offers truly astonishing solutions. With a beach made of tons of fine sand and a man-made lake stocked with fish, the hotel boasts impressive leisure facilities. The feeling of awe, which already starts on entering one of the several spacious car parks, doesn't leave you throughout the whole stay. Needless to say, this place is one of the most amazing of its kind in Poland.

WHERE IS IT? Ossa Hotel is located several kilometres from Rawa Mazowiecka, slightly over an hour drive from Warsaw – to reach your destination by car you need to cover a distance of 65 km. However, if you enter the DK8 road, it is barely possible to get lost.

ROOM FACILITIES During my stay at the hotel I resided in the room on the third floor which is 20 sq m. The room features navy blue carpeting, a small desk and 2 mirrors – one right behind the door, and the other in a small recess in the wall on the left side of the room. There is

a hidden laptop safe, shoe polishing gear, and a set of hangers inside the wardrobe which is situated in the hall leading to the bathroom. Behind this piece of furniture there is a rack on which you can place your luggage.

The room also features a floor lamp on the right side of the room, a round table with 2 comfortable stylised chairs, and a flat-screen TV placed on the mini-bar, with a chest of draws right next to it. Both single and double bed have soft comfortable mattresses, and are situated at the back of the room. On the wall, next to the main door, there individually regulated air conditioning which displays the temperature in both Fahrenheit and Celsius degrees.

The relatively small bathroom in soft shades of beige, features heated floor, a separate comfortable shower cubicle, and a range of the toiletries with the hotel logo on them.

Ossa Hotel comprises a total of 520 rooms and it can accommodate approximately 1,000 guests. All rooms are equipped alike and offer high standards of stay. All of them feature free wired and wireless access to the Internet and most of them have a private balcony with a soothing view of the idyllic surroundings.

There is a wide range of rooms, with the majority of those featuring both king-size and single beds (270 rooms) – they are most frequently booked by guests (including myself recently staying at one of



them). 117 rooms are equipped with 2 single beds, 17 rooms offer double king-size beds, and there are also 4 rooms for singles, plus one room with 3 single beds.

There are 71 Premium rooms, which are more spacious and offer three choices of bed configuration. The hotel also offers 40 suites decorated with a fine taste and offering bedroom, a separate bathroom and a separate lounge where guests can hold small business or private meetings. Additionally, most of the suites are furnished with antiques and pa-

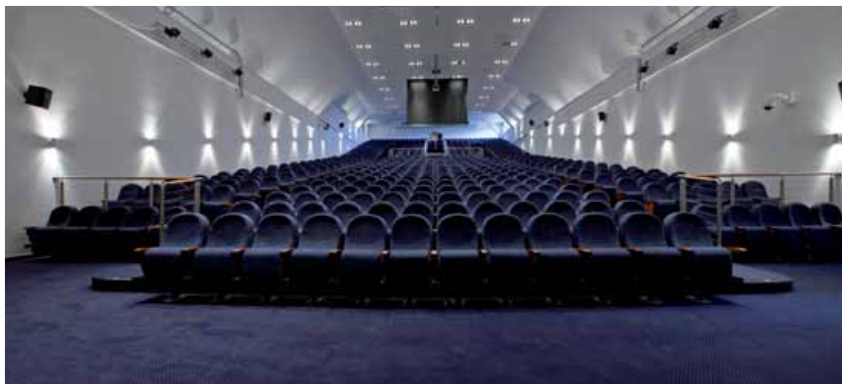
FACTS

ROOMS Ossa Hotel has 520 rooms, including 40 suites.

TIPS Idyllic ambience, an excellent cuisine and organisational capabilities.

PRICE The rate for a standard double room is 440 PLN (€110). As for conference groups, rates are subject to negotiation.

CONTACT Ossa Congress&Spa, Ossa, 96-200 Rawa Mazowiecka, tel. 46 813 26 00, hotelossa.pl



intings, which is a characteristic feature of Ossa Hotel.

There are 22 rooms for smoking guests and 3 rooms for the disabled (including one suite).

BUSINESS FACILITIES The Ossa Hotel boasts impressive congress and conference facilities – an event for 5,000 guests can be held here, and the largest meeting room can accommodate up to 1,600 delegates.

The Congress Centre is located in a designated area of the hotel. It has its own entrance, car parks and a large separate reception area which guarantees efficient check-in, even with hundreds of delegates attending an event.

Located on the ground floor, an impressive exhibition centre with relatively austere design and colonnade, provides virtually unlimited opportunities when it comes to the arrangement of space.

1,600 persons can be accommodated in Theatre Hall (465sqm) and Auditorium Maximum which can be combined (1,410sqm altogether) or separated, thus creating sections (from B to H), with a spacious foyer providing ideal conditions for coffee breaks.

3 separate sections (each of them is 219 sq m) form the Congress Hall (658 sq m altogether), which can accommodate approximately 600 delegates. With their names derived from the plants, the meeting rooms are as follows: the Lavender (192

sq m) which can be divided into 3 smaller rooms, the Heather (110 sq m), the Cedar (60 sq m), the Saffron and Cornflower (each 49 sq m) and – last but not least – the Cardamom Room. Both the Fireplace (77 sq m) and the Library Room (55 sq m) are exceptional, the latter being located at the main entrance.

Moreover, there are 6 cabinets (ranging from 22.5 to 45.5 sq m) available for small board meetings and job interviews.

All the rooms are air-conditioned, with an access to the natural daylight, and they offer state-of-the-art conference equipment, including remote-controlled pull-down screens with projectors, DVD/Blue Ray players, amplifiers and microphones. Guests may also use consecutive interpreting service, should the need occur.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS Ossa Hotel boasts several fine bars and restaurants. Depending on the number of the guests present, hearty breakfast can be served in the form of buffet at Starówka Restaurant (the Old Town Restaurant), which seats up to 1,000 guests. The two-storey Kryształowa Restaurant (The Crystal Restaurant) derives its name from its enormous crystal chandelier and it can host up to 240 guests. In the lobby there is Calvados Restaurant which is ideal place for business dinner. There is also the Ułańska Tavern (the Lancer Tavern) with 3 separate rooms and a thatched roof. The Tavern is situated in the entrance area of the Ossa complex.

Ossa's head chef Marcin Kłyś offers an excellent fusion of European and traditional Polish cuisine, which will make dining an exciting adventure. Among highly recommended dishes are Stroganoff with potato pancakes, pork tenderloin wrapped in puff pastry, with green vegetables and sorrel cream soup – all served in a very creative way.

With bowling alleys and pool tables, Ossa is a perfect place to enjoy the evening while sipping your drink, plus you may want to try homemade baking and a cup of aromatic coffee that Vienna Café (Kawiarnia Wiedeńska) has to offer.

LEISURE FACILITIES YOU You can enjoy a game of basketball or volleyball on Ossa's multi-purpose sports pitch. The hotel also has an indoor court for squash lovers, 2 tennis courts, a Thermal Centre with sauna areas and steam-baths, a well-equipped gym, and a relatively large swimming pool. Featuring 16 professional treatment rooms, the Spa Centre offers a wide range of revitalising, refreshing and beauty treatments. There are also several treatment programs created specially for men.

Wojciech Chelchowski

VERDICT

Ossa is a four-star complex with top conference hotel facilities and is definitely worth recommendation.



HOTEL: WARSAW

Mamaison Hotel Le Regina Warsaw

WHAT IS IT LIKE? There are two words that come to mind on entering the Le Regina Hotel: comfort and peace. The building, belonging to Mamaison Hotels & Residences chain, is set within the historic Mokrowski Palace and that in itself makes the place unique in its style and character. Pleasant natural colours of the interior and hand-painted frescoes recreated from the antique sketches set the ambience of the hotel. With all rooms overlooking the gardens, the Old Town monuments or the hotel's courtyard, this is undoubtedly an exceptional place to stay.

WHERE IS IT? Located in the Warsaw's Old Town, Le Régina is the only hotel in this district. It is also close to The Royal Castle, The National Opera House and the Old Town Market Place. You can admire a spectacular view of the Vistula River from the top of the hill which is also within a close distance. The hotel is located 4km from the Warsaw Central Rail Station, and 12 kilometres from the Warsaw Chopin Airport – the airport limousine transfer can be arranged by the hotel upon request. However, you might want to consider the fact that the ro-



FACTS

ACCOMMODATION The Le Régina Hotel offers 59 rooms and 3 spacious suites.

TIPS The design, unique interiors, comfort and peace – all these features are only topped by the excellent cuisine.

RATES The Internet rate for a stay in a Classic room at the beginning of September, started from €96.

CONTACT Mamaison Le Regina Warsaw,
Kościelna 12, 00-218 Warszawa
tel. +48 22 531 60 00
mamaison.com/pl/warsaw-leregina-hotel.html
mamaison.com/pl/warsaw-leregina-hotel.html

ad to the Warsaw's Old Town leads through the heart of the often congested city centre.

ROOM FACILITIES The Le Régina Hotel offers 58 comfortable, uniquely-designed rooms and 3 suites. All rooms feature air conditioning, wired or wireless Internet, a safe deposit box, luxurious Italian furniture, a flat-screen TV, a minibar and an elegant en-suite bathroom with a shower and a bath. The smallest of the rooms is 25 sq m, while the largest one – 115 sqm. The equipment, shape and size of each room are unique. Classic Room is decorated in natural shades of brown and vanilla, while Superior Room welcomes its guests with dark soft shades of satin and dark-brown leather accents. As regards Deluxe Room, there are plenty of sandstone elements and pastel-coloured frescoes inviting to enjoy a majestic view of the courtyard. All rooms in the attic area feature terrace, wooden floor and have gardens - in the courtyard and the private one. The spacious Penthouse Suite with separate lounge, modern furniture and wooden floor (67 sq m) is painted in the shades of black and white. Le Régina Suite, which is literally flooded with light, has 2 bathrooms and a spacious lounge with an optional dining or conference table. This 82 sq m corner suite is decorated with natural fabrics, and it features 2 spacious bedrooms, hardwood floor and luxurious furniture. Presidential Suite is the largest of the rooms (116 sq m) and comprises a huge lounge area, fully-equipped kitchen, 2 spacious bedrooms, a dressing room and 2 flat-screen TV's.

BUSINESS FACILITIES Le Regina Hotel is renowned for the wide range of events that have been organized here – with fashion shows, photo shoots, exclusive banquets and major conferences being some of them. The hotel offers conference rooms which can accommodate up to 120 guests and feature state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment. Partially sunlit Court Room is the main business facility (160 sq m), and the smaller in size Executive Room (50sqm) can be divided, thus creating two separate meeting rooms. Both Le Régina and Presidential Suites may also be used for conference purposes. However, these will be appropriate only for smaller business meetings. Complimentary concierge service is available for business guests. The hotel will also provide you with a dedica-

ted event planner and catering services.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS La Rotisserie with a picturesque summer patio is situated on the hotel premises. This luxurious restaurant is a real heaven for food lovers longing to discover delicate flavour hidden in the fusion of modern and traditional French cuisine. The menu dishes prepared by the renowned head chef Paweł Oszczyk and his team will satisfy even the most sophisticated and demanding palates. Here you can order hot and cold snacks, fish or meat dishes (we highly recommend lamb and duck dishes) and desserts. The restaurant offers food sampling, giving you an opportunity to become acquainted with a full range of the restaurant's offerings. There is also a 3 course fixed price menu (dinner set menu) composed by our staff – for 120 PLN you can order one of the two light starters, followed by a fish or meat entrée and a dessert. A glass of wine, mineral water, coffee or tea is also included in the price. The dinner sets are served on weekdays, while on Sunday guests can come for a late dinner – the fixed price dinner menu (175 PLN per person) includes a full meal with aperitif and 2 glasses of wine. The food sampling

set, which consists of the chef's recommendations, is a novelty, and although it changes regularly, you can always order hot and cold starters, meat or fish entrée and a dessert. La Rotisserie offers a fine selection of wines, alcoholic beverages and liqueurs, along with a decent selection of coffee, tea and cigars. The hotel's hall and bar, which serve hot and cold drinks, cocktails, liqueurs and desserts, are also suitable for business meetings.

LEISURE FACILITIES The Le Régina Hotel provides its guests with a comfortable spa which comprises the sauna area, an indoor swimming pool and a massage place offering relaxation treatment for the entire body. The stylish architecture combines here with extravagant design to set the ambience for a truly relaxing stay. You may purchase a gift card which entitles its holder to spa treatment and is a perfect present for any occasion.

Andrzej Wiśniewski

VERDICT

This stylish, comfortable hotel in the amazing surroundings offers excellent working conditions and is a perfect place to unwind.





HOTEL: TURYN

Art Hotel Boston

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The name clearly speaks for itself. The hotel is artistic in every detail – starting from the recently redecorated antique facade of the building from the beginning of 20th century, through the lobby, or conference rooms, which are devoted to works of art of particular artists, to bedrooms where art is a tangible element of the decor. At the reception desk there is an installation (concrete and metal) made by Marco Gastini. And it gets even more interesting.

The list of names of modern artists, painters and sculptors, that you can find in the hotel amounts to several dozens. These are mainly Italian artists, but there is also an original work by Andy War-

hol. Art Hotel Boston is one of three places managed by Art Hotel Italia – an extremely ambitious company, closely cooperating with Giovanna Piras Foundation, which propagates modern art and photography. Equally interesting is the Art Hotel Olympic – built and open especially for the 20th Winter Olympic Games held in the city.

WHERE IS IT? Art Hotel Boston is a few minutes away from the centre of Turin. Sandro Pertini airport is about 16 kilometres away, and getting there should not take more than 40 minutes. The closest railway station, Porta Nuova, is a few minutes' walk from the hotel.

ROOM FACILITIES The hotel, like the whole chain, belongs to Roberto Franci, who is an artist himself. It was the desire to display his own art, that inspired him to exhibit the masterpieces in the hotels..

Following recent renovation, there are 87 spacious rooms available for guests. It's difficult to talk here of any standards, as each of the rooms is slightly different, with individual quality and unique decor. They are divided into several categories: Art Standard, Art Superior, Art Theme and finally Art Junior Suites.

Each room comes with a large comfortable bed, manually adjusted air conditioning, a workdesk, a mini bar, a TV set, and broadband wireless Internet access (one hour costs €7, one day – €15; Internet access in the lobby is free of charge).

FACTS

ROOMS There are 87 rooms divided into a couple of categories: Art Standard, Art Superior, Art Theme and finally Art Junior Suites.

TIPY Interesting and surprising design, good cuisine.

PRICE Internet rate for a stay in the middle of August was €65 (about 260 PLN) for a standard room.

CONTACT Art Hotel Boston, Via Massena 70, 10128 Torino tel. 0039 011 500 359 hotelboston torino.it





The most interesting are the Art Theme rooms, which are devoted to one theme. Among them there is the Smoking room decorated in a raw tone of beige and with dozens of... ashtrays fixed onto the main wall. Another one is Feng Shui room, stylized as the interior of a Japanese house with a backlit wall, a short wide bed, a telephone standing on the floor and dim lights – all set in the atmosphere of harmony. The Letter room has walls with words and expressions printed on it, next to a window there is a cage hanging from the ceiling, in which once carrier pigeons were kept, while in the Diabolik room the decor is clearly inspired by comics books.

The suites also have the names. The one devoted to the Brazilian Formula 1 driver, Ayrton Senna, looks like an exhibition made in his honour – in the closet there are backlit display cases with various items related to Senna, and on the frontal wall, which serves as a screen, the driver's photographs are displayed.

Lavazza is a suite devoted entirely to coffee – that's why brown is the dominant colour, and the Pablo Picasso suite would be a treat to anyone who is a fan of the great painter's art – the room is supposed to look like his studio.

BUSINESS FACILITIES There are two rooms ideal for business meetings and conferences, also decorated with numerous pieces of art which make the rooms quite unique. The Ontani room is 45 sq m and can hold up to 40 participants, while the bigger Sandro Chia Space room is 108 sq m and holds up to 100 guests. Naturally, there is a possibility to rent all kind of technical equipment, to make sure your business conferences go smoothly. In summer, the

indoor hotel garden can also be used for business meetings.

RESTAURANTS AND BARS La Linea Continua is the name of the hotel restaurant managed by two chefs, Gerardo Delle Donne and Matteo Dal Canton. Piedmont is famous for its excellent cuisine, that's why the annual food fair is held here. Both chefs experiment by enriching local specialties with traces of international cuisine. In the restaurant menu you will find shrimps pickled in mojito and served with celery and candied onion, Lasagnetta with meat ragout and rosemary in zucchini sauce, or duck with oranges and celery cream. You can go for a special menu's offer and pay €38 (152 PLN) for a whole meal. If you wish to try some good wine, the price of the set goes up to €45 (180 PLN).

The artistic Fibonacci Bar provides its guests with cocktails, light snacks and interesting discussions. Each Thursday, the bar is a venue for Art Aperitif – art celebration which is also popular among the Turin inhabitants.

LEISURE FACILITIES It's worth taking advantage of hotel's offer of relaxation massages. The guests also have full access to Spa& Wellness Clamys, which is situated nearby.

Tomasz Niemaszko

VERDICT

The 4-star hotel with an artistic feel in the centre of Turin is an ideal place not only for a businessman craving for sophisticated art.

HOTEL: ZÜRICH

Dolder Grand

TRIED & TESTED

WHAT IS IT LIKE? The main building was built in the 19th century. It's a little bit fairy tale-like, modelled after Kurhaus castles and dates to 1899. More than a century later, in April 2008, after 4 years of thorough modernization it has become home to a luxurious Dolder Grand hotel. It must be said that the 5-star scale seems to be inadequate in this case. Some luxurious hotel guides simply add one more star, when evaluating this one.

The hotel was renovated and altered by a famous British design company Foster and Partners. The design involved radi-

cal changes—everything that was built on the main building within the last century was removed. Instead, two modern wings of the hotel were added. They are named Spa Wing and Golf Wing. The complex makes huge impression on newcomers—its style is a mixture of dynamic Zurich's centre and rustic, suburban atmosphere. The magnificent views of the lake and the Alps, together with a nine-hole golf course are other extra attractions.

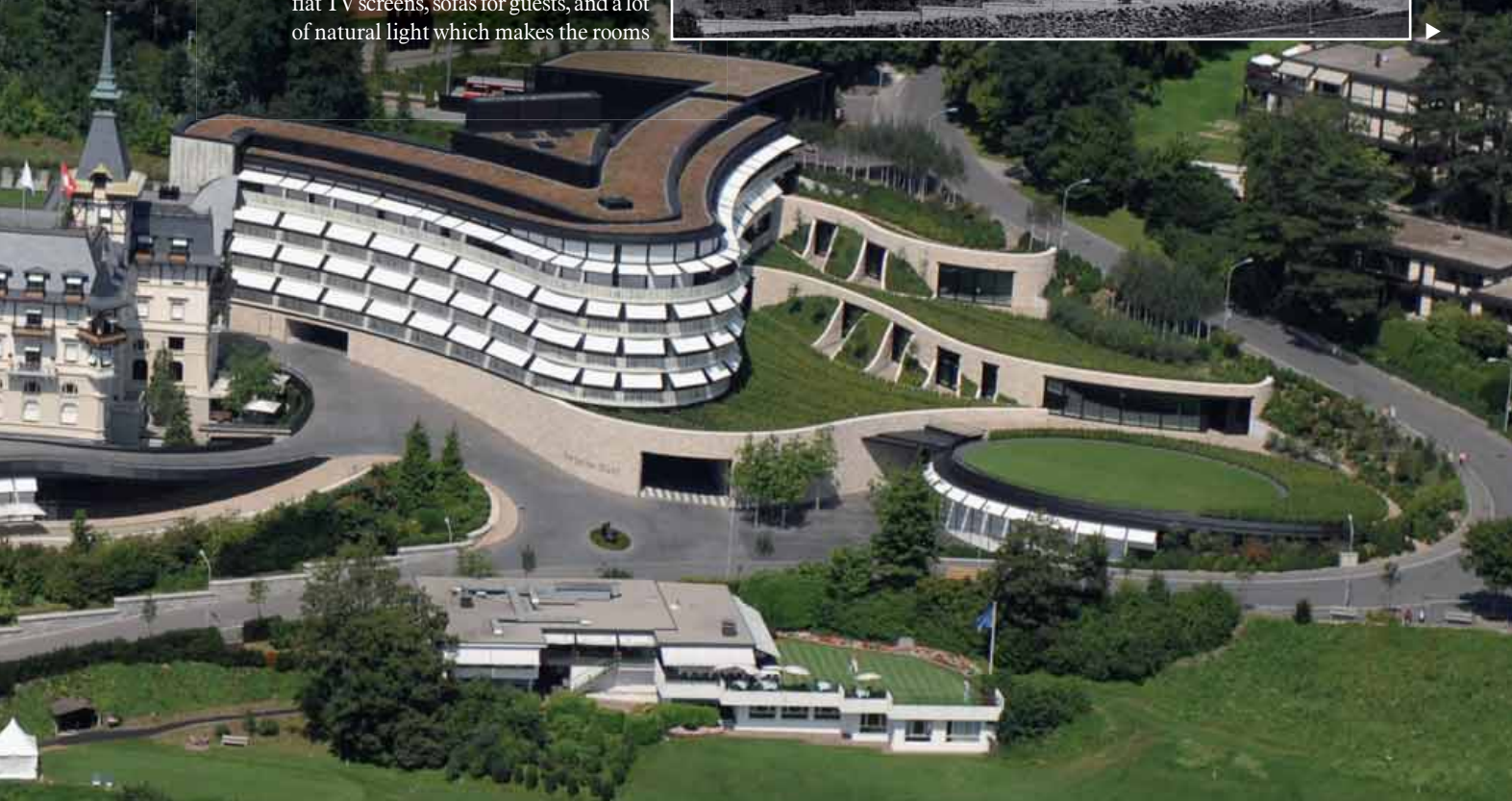
WHERE IS IT? Peaceful neighbourhood on the suburbs of Zurich, where a business person can also find some relaxation.

It doesn't mean, however, that the big city is somewhere far away as it takes about 10 minute's drive to get to the centre of Zurich while the airport is about 20 minutes away. Guests can leave their cars in the car park which accommodates up to 240 vehicles, and get to the city centre by means of a shuttle bus or one of the hotel limousines—hybrid Lexus cars.

ROOM FACILITIES The historical main building of the Dolder Grand hotel and two new wings offer 173 rooms, including 15 single rooms, 99 double rooms, 48 Junior

Suites, 7 Suites, and 4 luxurious Top Suites. Interestingly, each category is further subcategorised.

All the rooms, starting with the single ones, are quite spacious and perfectly-equipped. They are largely minimalist in style and all the details match perfectly. In each of the rooms the guests can find everything they might need for a nice stay. There is a very comfortable bed, a workplace with an ergonomic swivel chair, the Internet access, a mini bar, flat TV screens, sofas for guests, and a lot of natural light which makes the rooms



FACTS

ROOMS The hotel offers 173 rooms: 15 single rooms, 99 double rooms, 48 Junior Suites, 7 Suites, and 4 luxurious Top Suites.

TIPS Quality of service, hotel's location, cuisine.

PRICE A single Superior room costs about 1,400 PLN (€ 349).

CONTACT The Dolder Grand;
Kurhausstrasse 65, 8032 Zürich;
tel +41 44 456 60 00;
thedoldergrand.com



very bright. The bathrooms come with high quality cosmetics and candles in case you feel like having a romantic bath. Most rooms come with spacious balconies which offer fabulous views.

The four Top Suites are a real pride of the hotel. They are extremely large, inspired by particular historical characters, individually furnished and offered at negotiable prices, so you won't find them in the official hotel price list.

Maestro Suite is devoted to a legendary conductor Herbert von Karajan. It is situated on the top floor of the main historical building, and, occupies the space of 400 sq m. It's the biggest double-floor suite in the hotel. The Maestro has two big bedrooms, each covered with marble tiles, and a steam bath as well as a sauna. The lounge may also be used to hold small business meetings or lavish dinners. There is a library, also used as a workplace. On the upper floor there is relaxation room renovated according to the old documentation. The suite's balcony is the highest vantage point of the hotel and an additional attraction is a huge terrace overlooking Zurich – very impressive, especially after sunset.

Carezza Suite was inspired by Alberto Giacometti – a world-renowned Swiss sculptor. It is situated on the top floor of The Spa Wing and its floor area is 230 sq m. The furniture and lighting were designed specifically for these room and, it must be said, are little works of art. The suite also consists of two bedrooms with separate bathrooms, a spacious lounge with floor-to-ceiling windows and a TV room. The terrace spreads almost along the whole suite.

The next one is Masina Suite, which, as the name suggests, was inspired by the Italian cinema star – Giulietta Masina. The apartment named after the wife of Federico Fellini is very Italian in style and occupies the space of 170 sq m. It consists of two bedrooms, a big lounge with huge windows and a terrace overlooking a lake.

The last suite would be a treat for every rock music fan. That's because Suite 100 is devoted to the Rolling Stones band. It's 170 sq m large and resembles a typical club in the style of the 60s, with black and pink decor. There is one bedroom with a huge bathroom with black ornaments and a sauna, a lounge with comfortable sofas and floor-to-ceiling windows. There is also a meeting room which can accommodate up to 10 people and where you can sign not only a record contract.

BUSINESS FACILITIES The guests have access to conference rooms equipped with high quality sound and conference system. The biggest room is Gallery (720 sq m) which is suitable not only for large meetings, but also various presentations and exhibitions. The Ballroom is 400 sq m and can hold more than 300 guests, similarly to three Garden Salons which can be combined together to have one spacious 409 sq m room. For small meetings there are 5 Breakout Rooms and two more rooms located in the library.

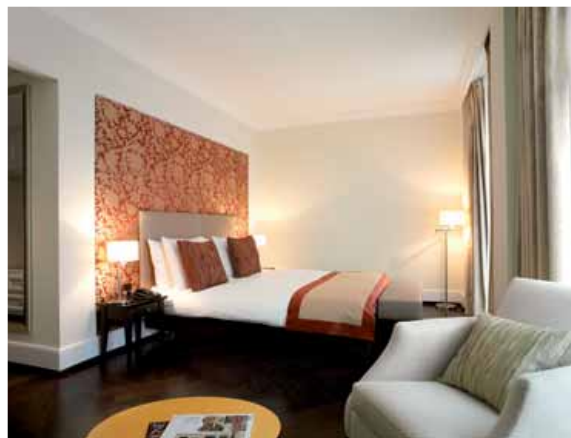
RESTAURANTS AND BARS The culinary heart of Dolder Grand is simply called The Restaurant. It elegant interiors can seats comfortably up to 47 guests and has recently been awarded one star by Michelin Guide. Heiko Nieder, the main chef of the restaurant, offers light but original dishes, like lobster with strawberries or red beetroot with nasturtium. There are also private dining rooms available, and the dinner menu is 297 PLN (98 CHF). Wine gourmets will also be delighted – they are welcome to try over 500 excellent brands, all found in the hotel cellar. The second hotel restaurant, which is open throughout the day, is the modern Garden Restaurant. It seats up to 117 guests and is available not only for the hotel guests. It specializes in European cuisine seasoned with traces of Swiss tradition. Of course, the hotel has also an excellent bar which serves delicious cocktails and fine teas from all over the world.

LEISURE FACILITIES There is a swimming pool, open until mid-September (50X17,5 metre in size), nearby there are table tennis tables, as well as tennis and volleyball court. In summer, you can play mini golf, and in winter you can skate on a rink. There is also a golf course nearby. However, the biggest attraction is the hotel Spa, which is considered one of the best in Europe. The spa offers a wide range of beauty and health treatment facilities including, steam baths, "cooling down showers", aroma pools, relaxation areas with fireplaces, and stand-up solariums.

Norbert Milewski

VERDICT

A fabulous hotel offering its business guests luxurious conditions of stay and leisure.





AMBER ROOM

RESTAURACJA

MENU À LA CARTE

Zapraszamy na nowoczesną kuchnię polską – wiele z tradycyjnych dań oferujemy w nowej, autorskiej formie wykorzystując światowe trendy kulinarne. W karcie między innymi małże św. Jakuba z selerem & nutą wanilii, pierś z kaczki z kremową marchewką i figami oraz sernik z rabarbarem.

BIZNES LUNCH

Codziennie zmieniamy menu w którym jest do wyboru przystawka, główne danie i deser, a także selekcja petit fours, kawa, herbata i woda (88 PLN za osobę).

AFTERNOON TEA

Aby doświadczyć najlepszej tradycji angielskiego podwieczorku, już nie trzeba udać się do jednego ze słynnych londyńskich hoteli – w Amber Room oferujemy szeroki wybór herbat, selekcje mini kanapek oraz ciasteczka i angielskie „scones”, wypiekane na miejscu, serwowane z konfiturą i waniliową śmietaną (59 PLN za osobę).



PAŁAC SOBAŃSKICH

Al. Ujazdowskie 13, Warszawa, tel. (48 22) 523 66 64, www.kprb.pl/amber



HOTEL: MILAN

Maison Moschino

WHAT IS IT LIKE? The railway station on Viale Monte Grappa was open in 1840 and operated on Milan-Monza route. Today it is home to a hotel which some people love at the first sight, while others prefer to avoid, claiming that it's kitschy. This is, however, a place for real connoisseurs, which is not surprising, as it was founded under the auspices of Moschino group. Its founder, Franco Moschino, over half a century ago created a company specializing in fashion, and later on in perfumes and jewellery. Innovative character and eccentric projects became Moschino's distinctive features. Rosella Jardini, the present head manager of the company, was responsible for the hotel's decor. Guests can ad-

mire her work right upon entering the hotel. The scenery is unique — peculiar animals, lamps in the shape of dresses and the ubiquitous surreal feel.

WHERE IS IT? Maison Moschino is about 3 kilometres away from the city centre. It is easy to get there from Garibaldi subway station, which is a few minutes' walk from the hotel. The nearest railway station is 2 kilometres further away. The distance between the Maison Moschino and the airport is 49 kilometres, but to get there you usually drive the motorway, so getting there rarely takes more than an hour.

ROOM FACILITIES The neoclassical building consists of 65 guest rooms — including 2 suites, the remaining rooms were subcategorised into Classic, Deluxe, Deluxe Gallery, Prestige and Prestige Gallery — inspired by dreams and... fairy tales. That's why there are 16 decor themes, each of them is unique and slightly crazy. The rooms described as Gold, indeed have lots of golden ornaments, like a golden flower in a golden flowerpot. In Blue rooms there are steel blue lights in every corner, Clouds rooms have paper clouds of various funny shapes hanging from the ceiling — an ideal thing if you are suffer from insomnia. No wonder that Little Red Riding Hood's Room has a huge wolf sitting on the bed, and Alice's Room (inspired by Alice in Wonderland) comes with a big glass-topped tea cup, which serves as a table.

The rooms are not too big. In each of them, there is manually adjusted air conditioning, a plasma TV, a safe, a mini bar, a telephone line, and paid broadband Internet access. Some rooms come with a small balcony. The equipment is similar in all rooms — they differ only in size.

BUSINESS FACILITIES Maison Moschino hotel offers only one conference room, which can accommodate up to 10 people.

RESTAURANTS AND BARS The hotel's restaurant and bar are situated on the ground floor, and have huge glass door leading to the reception area. Clandestino Milano restaurant has been run for years by an extravagant cuisine master — Moreno Cedroni. The meals here are also little masterpieces. Breakfast is served in a form of «Mos kit» — a box with compartments filled, depending on our order, with 4, 6 or 8 different delicacies. Lunches and dinners are served in an equally imaginative way.

The adjacent bar offers light snacks and the most sophisticated cocktails.

LEISURE FACILITIES There is a well equipped fitness room, a sauna, and a spa salon, where you can enjoy various relaxation treatment.

Karol Masłowski

FACTS

ROOMS Maison Moschino offers 65 room, including two suites.

TIPS Specific design and climate, sophisticated cuisine.

PRICE Internet rate for a stay in a standard Classic Room was €180 (about 721 PLN).

CONTACT Maison Moschino, Viale Monte Grappa 12, 20124 Milano, tel. 02 29 00 98 58, maisonmoschino.com

VERDICT

An inspiring hotel, ideal for enthusiasts of artistry and surrealistic approach to life.

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RESTAURANT: WARSAW

Papu

INFO Papu belongs to the most interesting restaurants in Warsaw. Open by Mariusz Diakowski, the co-owner of the Zielnik restaurant, it attracts guests thanks to its unique bourgeoisie decor, which contributes to the warm, family atmosphere of the place. In its 5-year history, Papu has collected quite a number of awards, granted by prestigious journals. Inside, there are two rooms and a cosy corner by the fireplace. Among the regulars visiting the restaurant, there are many people working in the media, music and film industry.

LOCATION The Mokotów district definitely lacks in original places, and Papu restaurant clearly stands out against the greyness of Niepodległość avenue, on which it is situated. Despite its location on a busy street, the atmosphere inside is peaceful and quiet. What's good about the location is the fact that it's easy to get here — if you travel by the underground, remember to get off at Rakowiecka station.

INTERIOR It's undoubtedly the most beautiful restaurant in Mokotów and one of the most beautiful ones in the whole Warsaw. It's cosy, the interior is full of flowers, soft materials, discreet light contributing to the atmosphere — it's just perfect in every detail. The interior is designed in classic "old bourgeoisie" style. During this year's, some of the unnecessary trinkets were removed to create a lighter feel. The new interior seems to be more elegant, but it hasn't lost anything from its old character.

MENU The menu in Papu frequently changes. You will find here both seasonal dishes (asparagus, chanterelles, forest fruits), as well as traditional Polish

and Italian cuisine — the latter with slight innovations. For instance Carpaccio is served here with lots of greens such as rocket and parsley leaves. Salmon tartare is worth recommendation. Soups are homemade, mainly seasonal. In autumn, it is pumpkin cream soup with freshly grated ginger, roasted pumpkin seeds and cream. You can also choose lemon soup with shrimps and coriander. The most delicious are salads, made from the middle parts of lettuce with tasty ingredients, like goat cheese. Among the main courses you will find the classic pork cutlet with cabbage and potatoes, as well as penne with fresh spinach leaves, sun-dried tomatoes, fried bacon and parmesan. Papu specializes in dishes "straight from hot lava", i. e. prepared on the baking stone — all worth recommendation, especially delicious tuna from the "hot stone" with sauces. Cakes served in Papu are also good, for example light creamy cheesecake with raspberry mousse.

PERSONNEL Apart from the interior, the personnel is another strong point of the restaurant, thanks to the owner and manager Krzysztof Kamiński. The staff are well trained, good-mannered and ef-

ficient. They can fulfil a client's wish, even if it's beyond their responsibilities.

PRICES The prices of starters in Papu start from 29 PLN (mozzarella with tomatoes and pesto) to 49 PLN (carpaccio of beef fillet). The soups costs from 17 PLN (Lithuanian cold soup) to 23 PLN (lemon soup), prices of salads range from 31-39 PLN, and main courses between 29 PLN (rigatoni with tomatoes) to 59 PLN (duck in a prune sauce and balsamic vinegar). The house specialties "dishes from straight from hot lava" cost between 49 PLN (a fan of white meats and fries) and 79 PLN (fillet steak with grilled vegetables).

CONTACT

Restauracja Papu,
Al. Niepodległości 132/136,
02-554 Warszawa
tel.: +48 (0) 22 856 77 88
restauracjapapu.pl

Tomasz Wilczewski

VERDICT

A pleasant restaurant of family atmosphere, one of the most interesting places of this type in Warsaw. Ideal for business meetings. "Dishes straight from hot lava" are worth recommendation.



Siemens i kawa



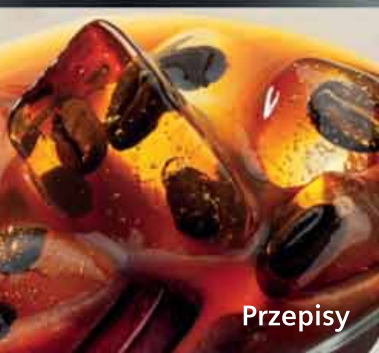
Gatunki



5M baristy



Przepisy



Potęga smaku i aromatu
na www.siemens-kawa.pl



Ekspres ciśnieniowy EQ.7 to mistrz w profesjonalnym parzeniu kawy. Futurystyczna technologia i wysmakowany design dostarczają wyjątkowej przyjemności – zarówno przy obsłudze, jak i degustacji wyśmienitej kawy. Najnowsze rozwiązania techniczne: **system senso flow**, czy **aroma pressure** pozwalają osiągnąć wyjątkowo głęboki smak i aromat, a w **cream center** powstaje idealna pianka o kremowej konsystencji. **Ruchomy dystrybutor** znakomicie ułatwia serwowanie kawy. Wszystko o ekspresach Siemens zawierają strony naszego **serwisu internetowego**. Znajdziesz tam także kompendium wiedzy o kulturze kawy: jej historii, uprawach, gatunkach oraz przepisy na pyszności z kawy – zarówno słodkie, jak i pikantne! Wejdź na www.siemens-kawa.pl i zanurz się w egzotyczny świat kawy przy filiżance gorącego espresso!

The future moving in.

SIEMENS



Through the floor-to-ceiling windows of the Istanbul Modern art gallery there is a shimmering stretch of ultramarine water, the Bosphorus, which joins an inlet known as the Golden Horn before flowing into the Sea of Marmara. The strait is traversed by powerboats and ships, and beyond is the hazy horizon of the city's Asian shores on one side and the mosques of the old European city on the other.

Here, the "New Works, New Horizons" exhibition provides an excellent illustration of the Turkish city's position today. As one of three European Capitals of Culture this year – the others being Pecs in Hungary and Essen in Germany – it is investing heavily in promoting the arts, with a rich tapestry of about 600 events held throughout 2010. You only have to take in a few of the works at the gallery to get a sense of how the city has

INSIDE ISTANBUL

Earning the title of European Capital of Culture 2010 promises lasting change for the Turkish city, says **Jenny Southan**



House Version by Richard Deacon, Istanbul Modern



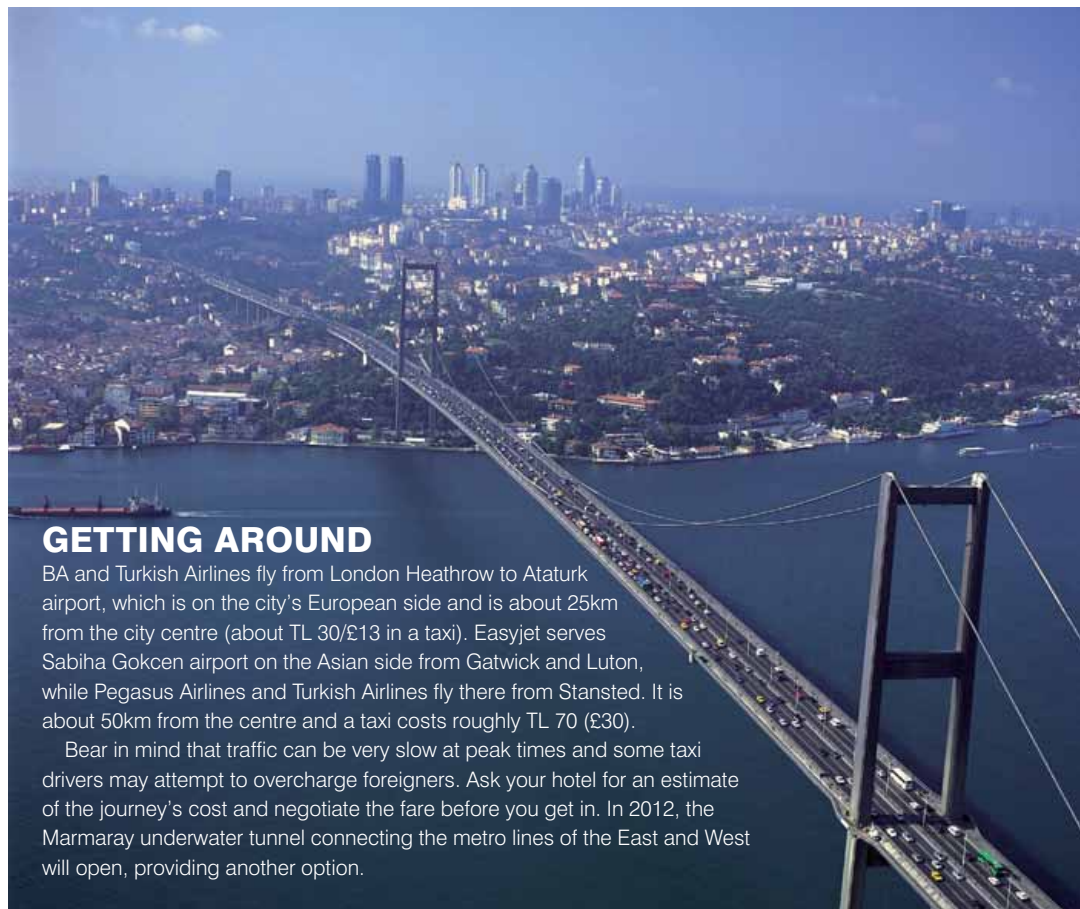
developed, from its Eastern and Western influences and unique cultural identity to the historical evolution documented by the myriad paintings, installations and sculptures.

The choice of Istanbul as a Capital of Culture surprised some, given it is not yet a member of the European Union. So how did it qualify? A representative for the European Commission, the body responsible for making the selections since

the competition's inception 25 years ago, says: "It was chosen under a different legal base, which allowed cities from third [non-EU] countries to hold the title. This year is the last occasion when this is possible. The possibility for third countries to hold the title was stopped as the European Union progressively became much larger".

Those who are familiar with the city won't doubt it is a worthy title-holder, given its illustrious past, cosmopolitan cuisine and diverse architectural styles. Still, these factors don't in fact influence the decision-making process. The EC representative says: "The things that aren't looked at are the city's history and its beauty – they are things that can be used to its advantage but it's more about the programme of cultural activities that it proposes. It's really ambitious because it lasts for the whole year".

Instead, two main criteria are considered – the "European" dimension and the "city and citizens" side. "When we talk about the European dimension there are three aspects – highlighting the richness of cultural diversity in Europe, bringing the common aspects of European culture to the fore, and co-operation between cultural operators and artists from different countries," the EC repre-



GETTING AROUND

BA and Turkish Airlines fly from London Heathrow to Ataturk airport, which is on the city's European side and is about 25km from the city centre (about TL 30/£13 in a taxi). Easyjet serves Sabiha Gokcen airport on the Asian side from Gatwick and Luton, while Pegasus Airlines and Turkish Airlines fly there from Stansted. It is about 50km from the centre and a taxi costs roughly TL 70 (£30).

Bear in mind that traffic can be very slow at peak times and some taxi drivers may attempt to overcharge foreigners. Ask your hotel for an estimate of the journey's cost and negotiate the fare before you get in. In 2012, the Marmaray underwater tunnel connecting the metro lines of the East and West will open, providing another option.

The title may even help the city in its EU bid. A spokesperson for the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency says:

'It will achieve lasting gains in terms of urban renewal and living'



Grand Bazaar



Blue Mosque



Hagia Sophia

sentative explains. "One of the aims is to help Europeans understand each other better through cultural activities.

«The «city and citizens» criterion, meanwhile, looks at programmes that foster the participation of people living in the city, and at ways to make the projects sustainable and integral parts of its cultural and social development. The panel will look for a bid that has long-term effects beyond the year itself.»

«As Turkey moves ahead with the process of its candidacy for the European Union, the projects will demonstrate that Istanbul, the symbol of the country, has been interacting with European culture for hundreds of years. The city's cultural heritage will be managed in a sustainable manner and it will become even more of a magnet. Istanbul will achieve lasting gains in the fields of urban renewal, urban living and environmental and social development».

Take to the streets and you will see examples of this investment well under way. Perched on a hilltop in Sultanahmet, the Hagia Sophia – originally a Byzantine church, then an Ottoman mosque, and now a museum – is being renovated, as are the surrounding old city walls and nearby Topkapi Palace. But efforts are also focused on constructing new venues. «It's not one of the requirements for the title but a lot of cities invest in revamping or rebuilding cultural infrastructure, so that means it can act as a catalyst, leaving behind venues that can be used afterwards,» the EC representative says.

Last year, the 73,000 sqm Sutluce Cultural and Congress Centre opened in a converted slaughterhouse on the Golden Horn, while the Young Art and Design Centre opened in 2008. Forthcoming facilities include the Ayazaga Culture Centre – the largest of its kind in the country, with capacity for almost 4,000 people across two halls (opening this year) – and



the Istanbul Library in the 250-year-old Rami Military Barracks (opening date yet to be announced).

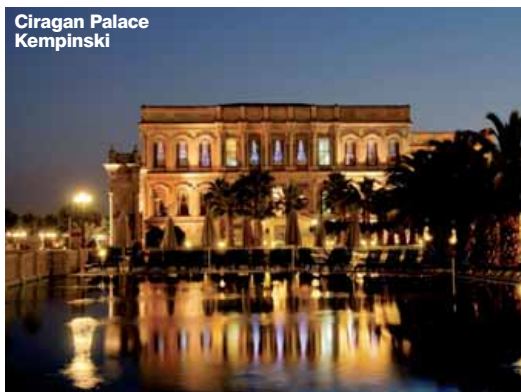
The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, a non-governmental organisation responsible for arranging the Istanbul Biennial and other music and art festivals, moved to the 90-year-old Deniz Palas in Sishane in January following a US\$14 million renovation. It has a top-class restaurant on the roof and a performance hall. The Atatürk Cultural Centre on Taksim Square also offers newly revamped facilities.

Harun Dursun, general manager of the Park Hyatt Istanbul – Macka Palas, which opened in November 2008, has noticed

rents and shops. It can leave [a legacy] in terms of cultural venues and hotel capacity, as well as all sorts of new skills because people suddenly have to work in a much more international way, and that can open up prospects for co-operation in the future. I think a lot of cities use the title to make themselves a more attractive place to work, live and invest in.» New hotels to look out for include the «seven-star» 77-room Marriott Edition, due to open in December, and a 200-room Shangri-La near Dolmabahçe Palace in 2012.

The Ciragan Palace Kempinski hotel, on the waterfront Ciragan Caddesi, has been playing host to a number of

Ciragan Palace Kempinski



Ciragan Palace Kempinski



Topaz



the city has had a spruce-up. «It is much cleaner this year and the roads have been redone,» he says. «[The authorities] have been making the city more beautiful by planting more flowers, introducing more recycling bins and encouraging people to be more environmentally friendly.»

But apart from the cosmetic, does the title really have an impact? The Istanbul 2010 agency spokesperson thinks so: «The improvement to the urban infrastructure and quality of service will help to establish Istanbul as a major destination for culture tourism. We believe everybody coming here gets different tastes, pleasures and experiences from the city.»

According to the EC, the designation leads to tourism growth of 12 to 15 per cent on average, but in some cases much more. Its representative says: «The impact on the local economy can be much broader because tourists are not just going to the cultural events but to restaura-

events. Coming in September is «Tales of Future», a series of multimedia concerts incorporating robots «aimed at establishing a metaphor between the acoustic potential of the Bosphorus and local percussion instruments». Lara Otru, the hotel's marketing manager, says: «The city is like a mosaic – it has so much to offer and discover. This year is a great opportunity for Istanbul to position itself better on the international stage and attract people from overseas. We have seen demand for rooms increase since last year.»

Next door, at the Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at the Bosphorus, PR manager Sibel Benli is similarly positive. «Most of the time business travellers don't have time to enjoy the city but if they do maybe they will discover a new angle to it. And you know what? Most of them fall in love with it and then return for a holiday.»

So how can time-pressed business travellers make the most of a trip? Dur-

‘People suddenly have to work in a much more international way’

'It is not like the World Cup where at the end of the tournament it's finished'

sun at the Park Hyatt says: «It depends on which side you will be based. Most of the five-star hotels are on the European side and during rush hour traffic can get really hectic. If you have some free time the first thing you should see is the old city – the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, Grand Bazaar, Topkapi Palace and Basilica Cistern. About 90 per cent of [the events] can



be booked online but in some cases you need to go and buy the ticket – we offer that service to our guests.»

If you are looking for somewhere to eat you will be spoilt for choice – be it a spread of tasty meze dishes under the Galata Bridge, where you'll see dozens of men passing the day fishing, or at super-trendy alfresco hangouts such as 360 Istanbul (360istanbul.com), a rooftop bar, club and restaurant near Taksim Square. There is also a developing trend for fine dining – Topaz (topazistanbul.com), near Taksim Park, offers Mediterranean and Ottoman dishes made from carefully sourced local ingredients, with Bosphorus views.

For those who might not fit in a trip this year, rest assured that there will be plenty to occupy you next time you go. Selim Ozcan, PR co-ordinator at the Ciragan Palace Kempinski, says: «It is not like the World Cup where at the end of the tournament it's finished. Istanbul as a Capital of Culture will not end on December 31 – it will just be starting.» ■
Visit istanbul2010.com



Topkapi Palace

ISTANBUL 2010: UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY

- 5-10: Second Istanbul International Ballet Competition at the Cemal Resit Rey Concert Hall
- 2-23: First International Istanbul Opera Festival at Yildiz Palace, Topkapi Palace, Rumelian Castle and Cemil Topuzlu Open-Air Theatre
- 25: Adalar Prince Islands Museum opening, Buyukada
- 18-28: "Promethiade" performances at Rumeli Fortress

AUGUST

- 11-21: Royal Spectacle at Sultanahmet Square
- Until Aug 15: "Ab-i Hayat Waters of Istanbul and Aquatic Culture" exhibition at the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum in Sultanahmet
- 24-Sept 24: "Istanbul: The City of Contrasts" exhibition at Istanbul Modern
- 25-28: Istanbul Fashion Week at ITU Taskisla Campus
- 28-Sept 12: FIBA World Basketball Championship, Abdi Ipekci Sports Hall

SEPTEMBER

- 5-Nov 24: "99 Qur'ans" exhibition at the SSM Museum
- 6: U2's 360° tour due to come to Istanbul Ataturk Olympic Stadium
- 15: "Two Ancient Sounds of Istanbul: Ney and Tanbur" concert at Galata Mevlevi Lodge
- 20: "Tales of Future" multimedia concerts at Ciragan Palace Kempinski hotel
- 21: "Music of Istanbul's Architecture" at the Topkapi Palace Babussaade
- Until Nov: "From Byzantium to Istanbul" exhibition at Sabanci University's Sakip Sabanci Museum
- Date TBA: the Museum of Innocence opening, Cukurcuma

OCTOBER

- 1-28: "Istanbul the Centre of Multilingual Communications" exhibition at the Journalists Association of Turkey Press Museum
- 21: Turvak Cinema Museum opening, Tuvak Museum Galatasaray
- 22-25: FISA World

Rowing Coastal Championship, Sea of Marmara
 ■ 26-Dec 26: "Traditional Turkish Book Arts – Modern Masters" exhibition at the Tuyap Fair, Convention and Congress Centre

NOVEMBER

- 20-Dec 19: "History and Destruction in Istanbul/Ghost Building" at Taksim Republican Art Gallery
- 26-Dec 17: Golden Routes World Music Festival

DECEMBER

- 1: Masters of Istanbul Documentaries, Altas Cinema – ten 25-minute films on master craftsmen working in the city
- Throughout the month: "Photography Parade" at the Fototrek Photography Centre
- 19: "Istanbul and Harp" concert at the CRR Concert Hall
- Throughout the month: Portable Art in Taksim
- Completion of restoration of the Royal Carriages collection at Topkapi Palace museum

A LOT of Winter Joy

For the Polish carrier the approaching months will be marked by changes and investments in launching new destinations.

The winter flight schedule has been further adjusted to the needs of LOT's passengers. The airline continues its expansion, launches new connections, adds more departure times for the most popular destinations, and consolidates transatlantic connections from the Polish capital, consistently supporting the idea to create the Warsaw hub.

HEADING TOWARDS HANOI

The main advantages of the new "schedule of flights" are significantly improved profitability of the flight network and better usage of the fleet. This winter

season we will see launching new destinations which have never been offered by the carrier before. The first on the new flights list is the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, with three flights every week beginning 13th November. The winter flight schedule includes the connections to Beirut, Yerevan, Kaliningrad, Tallinn and Bratislava launched this summer. Soon, there will also be flights to Tbilisi, followed by Cairo and Damascus.

Last but not least, the list includes the already operated Warsaw-Katowice connections, whose frequency will reach 14 flights a week – as opposed to last year, when LOT operated on this route only once a week.



Tallin



Kaliningrad



Warsaw

Katowice

Bratislava



Tbilisi

Erewan



Beirut



Damascus

Cairo



MORE BRUSSELS, LESS NICE

The new winter season flight schedule introduces numerous positive changes to the already existing routes. Additional midday flights to Brussels, a morning flight to Geneva and bigger aircraft on the Warsaw-Prague route are but a few examples of the new quality of approach to the flight network that you can see wherever you turn to. This new approach means also that the carrier decided to, based on a thorough market and passenger load factor analysis, abandon certain flights or change the departure hours of others. Accordingly, LOT Polish Airlines resigned from operating flights to Stockholm, Riga, Athens and Madrid, and slightly reduced the number of flights to Paris, Zurich, Nice, Larnaca, Rome, Belgrade, Barcelona, Saint Petersburg, and domestically – to Gdansk. In practice, this usually means one flight less every week, which enables the carrier to use the fleet to operate other flights which are more attractive for passengers.

Having introduced direct flights between Warsaw and Athens and Rome, respectively, LOT Polish Airlines canceled Krakow-Rome and Krakow-Athens flights. Meanwhile, beginning with 1st

October this year, the carrier will offer additional evening flights from Warsaw to Krakow and from Krakow to Warsaw that will serve the citizens of Małopolska region.

CENTRAL WARSAW

The effect of consolidating transatlantic flights in Warsaw is not only better utilisation of the carrier's fleet but also improved cost effectiveness and the consequent significant rise in the profitability of the entire flight network. Because of the numerous changes introduced to the winter flight schedule, the carrier resigned from launching one of the several new flights planned for this year, namely Warsaw-Gothenburg flights. Passengers who have already booked their tickets will have their costs reimbursed. For passengers who do not want to resign from the trip, LOT, in association with other carriers offering flights to Gothenburg, will ensure free of charge rebooking of tickets to alternative stopover flights.

The operating capacities will be used to develop new flights to such destinations, which give a better chance to strengthen the market position of the Polish carrier.

"We are closely monitoring both the situation in the air transport industry

and the level of interest in our services among passengers. The new schedule of flights was developed based on a thorough market research and analysis of the current network and economic rationale," explains Sebastian Mikosz, President of the Management Board of LOT Polish Airlines. He believes that the new winter flight network is a very carefully thought-out and modern concept of improving the comfort of flying for passengers, while at the same time increasing the company profitability and better utilisation of the fleet.

The carrier has not closed the list of changes yet. There may be more debuts in its winter and next year's summer flight network. Moreover, the carrier plans to increase the frequency of selected flights in high traffic seasons, such as Christmas time, for example. ■



Hanoi ●

New destinations, more flights on the most popular routes, consolidation of the transatlantic connections – these are the main goals of PLL LOT for the following months.

Letiste Praha **Ruzyne**



13 million passengers a year, over 40 airlines, and an interesting architecture - this is how Piotr Lewandowski describes the impressive airport in Prague.

The airport, which is managed by Letiste Praha joint stock company (the Czech government is the main shareholder), connects the Czech capital with over a hundred destinations worldwide. It is also becoming an extremely important transit hub. Ruzyne airport has a long and rich history. It was established in 1937, but the history of civil aviation in the Czech Republic dates back to 1919. At that time, however, the aircraft used military airfields. Back in 1937 the Ruzyne had five radial



grass runways. A few years later concrete runways were built, and the greatest development of the port occurred in the 60s, when the Czech government decided it was necessary to expand the port's infrastructure. The new terminal and runway were built to meet the challenges of the growing air traffic. This process was interrupted by the invasion of the armies of the Warsaw Pact in 1968, which resulted in stagnation in the Czech aviation industry. A real revival came at the beginning of the 90s. The most productive era of the development came with the Czech Republic becoming a member of the European Union in 2004. The number of passengers and air operations rises rapidly each year. What is more, the Ruzyně airport is also becoming a very popular venue for organizing large business meetings. For example, in June 2008 Ruzyně held a large conference on investments made by airports. There is also a place for other activities which increase the airport's popularity. In February 2009 Ruzyně was the venue for the finale evening of the "Czech Miss" beauty contest. All of these aspects contribute to the phenomenon of the growing popularity of the Prague airport. It is predicted that in 2012 Ruzyně



ne will serve 15 million passengers, and in 2019 even 20 million.

The airport serves about 250 connections daily which are operated by almost 50 airlines. Today, Ruzyne serves 1,2 million passengers each year – no wonder it is in the top 30 of the most popular European airports.

The airport is located 17 kilometres north-west from the centre of Prague. It takes 25-30 minutes by car, or about 50 minutes by public transport.

You can reach Ruzyne by taxi or buses no. 119 or 254 which will take you from the airport to the closest Dejvická underground station (the fare is 45 CZK). The shuttle buses which run between the terminals, also go to the city centre (the fare – 90 CZK).

There are long and short-term car parks located in front of the terminal buildings. There is also a multi-storey and a bus car park.

The largest of them is House C, with 3 levels. It is located 70 metres away from Terminal 1, close to the exit from Praga – Kladno motorway. The parking fee for one week is 2,000 CZK. Parking up to 15 minutes is free of charge. There are also numerous offices of car rental companies situated within the area of the airport, with the most popular ones like Hertz, Avis, or Europcar.

MORE TRAFFIC

The airport has three terminals, marked with different numbers. Terminals 1 and 2 are used for domestic and international flights, while Terminal 3 is used for general aviation. In terminals 1 and 2 the departures and arrivals halls are located next to each other on the same level. The two terminals are linked by free shuttle buses.

Terminal 2 is used for flights within Schengen area. All the other connections outside Schengen area, also intercontinental ones, operate from Terminal 1. Terminal 2 was launched 4 years ago to meet the demands of the increasing air traffic. It consists of six buildings.

The business lounges are situated in Terminal 1 upstairs. The port also offers three conference rooms, a press lounge, a photo lab, a pharmacy, and a family lounge at both terminals.

The observation deck is located on the first floor of the building which joins Terminals 1 and 2.

The airport has two runways, which turned out to be insufficient for the



Ruzyne has three modern terminals. The newest, T2, was open four years ago. It was built to meet the demands of the increasing air traffic.

increasing air traffic and it was decided that another runway has to be built. This one will be 3,500 meters long.

A PLACE WITH A VIEW

There are quite a lot of restaurants at Ruzyne – they are located in public and transit parts of the terminals. The restaurants offer good international cuisine, not forgetting, however, about good Czech traditions, as in case of Praha or Bohemia restaurants located on the second floor of T1. Obviously, there are also numerous cafeterias and bars like Bar In The Sky which offers fresh snacks, self-service vending machines with sandwiches. Most of the eateries are open 7.00 am to 21.00 pm, but if you feel peckish, you will still find five restaurants which are open 24/7, and from the windows of one of them you will be able to watch the air traffic.

The Ruzyne airport also offers a number of fully equipped conference centres which can accommodate up to 350 people. They are used for various meetings, trainings, or product presentations. The conference facilities are located on the first floor in the building which joins both terminals. The airport provides VIP parking spaces to the participants of such meetings.

VIP lounges are located on the first and second floors of Terminal 1, and on the third floor of Terminal 3. They are available to all Business class passengers, owners of appropriate club cards, and members of loyalty programmes. The lounges are called Harmony, Crystal, and Bohemia.

Ruzyne airport has also a unique VIP programme aimed mainly at frequently travelling business clients. VIP Service Club Continental enables its members

to have private check-in, provides BMW VIP Shuttle with chauffeur (before departure and after arrival), and guarantees individual care by the airport's agent. Other conveniences include free beverages and snacks, separate access road to the VIP terminal, and a free attended car park. There is also a Citibank Lounge located at Ruzyne airport with similar facilities.

Passengers at Prague Airport can connect to the wireless internet network free of charge. An extended, paid version of the wireless internet connection service within Prague Airport premises is the option of a paid HotSpot network running at the speeds of up to 10Mbit/s.

COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE

There are almost 90 shops and stores located within the area of the airport. They are usually open 7.00 am to 9.00 pm. They offer a variety of goods such as shoes, suitcases, toys, jewellery, alcohol, and cosmetics. The duty-free shops are located in the transit areas of the terminals.

The airport has two medical points located opposite Terminal 1, in the conference centre. Passengers will also find a pharmacy there.

As regards hotel facilities, they are also quite impressive. A 4-star Ramada hotel is a modern facility, located just 100 metres from the airport. It is an ideal place to stay for business travellers. The hotel offers comfortable rooms, meeting rooms and other conference facilities. Another hotel located close to the airport is a 4-star Tranzit, which offers 70 double rooms and 5 luxurious apartments. It also has a restaurant with an impressive garden. ■

Piotr Lewandowski



LG Swift

- the Intelligent Phone

LG Electronics introduces into the Polish market LG Swift (LG GT540) mobile phone based on Android operating system.

The new smartphone offers an intuitive menu and easy handling which will definitely appeal to users of touch screen telephones. Thanks to the newest solutions, LG Swift provides simple and convenient access to all the benefits of a constant Internet connection.

THE OPTIMAL EXPERIENCE

SN Manager application offers an integrated access to social networking services within one, easy-to-use platform, which is capable of managing several accounts. A dedicated LG social networking manager allows the users to easily keep track of their Facebook, Twitter, and Bebo accounts.

LG Swift includes high-powered entertainment features that make the phone extra fun to use. The advanced media player allows users to watch DivX and Xvid videos directly without separate encoding. Browsing multimedia files is especially enjoyable with the 3D thumbnail gallery. The phone's 3MP camera supports geo-tagging function, which enables users to publish their photos on the Internet while the application locates on Google Maps the place where they were taken. The phone also features auto face-tagging and face-to-action technology to allow users to create and share multimedia content from the phone.

POLISH APPLICATIONS

Models offered on the Polish market will feature dedicated applications Gazeta.pl and CoJestGrane. Thanks to Gazeta.pl phone users will have instant access to the latest information from Poland and the rest of the world, technical novelties and the hottest sporting events, as well as Biznes and Lifestyle sections. CoJestGrane application provides users with cultural news on the latest exhibitions, and concerts. It also features cinema and theatre schedules.

MADE TO MEASURE

The user interface is customisable for maximum convenience. LG Swift can be customised to show anywhere from three to seven home screens displaying frequently used applications, news and weather, among other information, depending on user preference. Additionally, the main menu can be personalised to include up to 10 editable categories for faster, easier navigation.

The telephone will be available on the Polish market for as little as 660 PLN.



A Maple Leaf in the Sky

Air Canada is presently one of the world's largest airlines. As most of the largest airlines, it was affected by the economic downfall, but now it spreads its wings again.



All started in 1936 when the federal government established Trans Canada Airlines, which soon, as the only airline on the market, obtained a licence to operate intercontinental flights from Canada. The first flight took place on 1 September 1937, when a Lockheed L-10A aircraft carrying 2 passengers and mail took a 50-minute journey from Vancouver to Seattle. One year later, the airline bought 18 new aircraft, employed 500 people, and started intercontinental flights. The first head office of Trans Canada Airlines was situated in central Canada – in Winnipeg. However, due to federal requirements, in 1949 the office moved to Montreal, where the company presently resides. When, in 1965 Trans Canada Airlines became the Canadian national airline, the founders changed its name to something shorter and more catchy – Air Canada.

CHANGES

In the 80s, the economic downfall in Canada contributed to financial problems of many companies. The Canadian national airline was in a particularly difficult position, as it had acquired regional airlines Air BC and Air Nova, thus spending a large share of its capital. In 1987 the civil aviation market saw relaxation of regulations, which encouraged Air Canada's domestic and international competitors to enter the market, and aggravated the company's situation. These circumstances contributed to the decision of the Canadian government to privatize the national carrier which fact took place two years later.

In 1997, together with four other airlines (Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines System, Thai Airways International, and United Airlines), Air Canada founded Star Alliance, which now is the world's biggest airline alliance. In 2001, Air Canada launched Air Canada Tango, designed to offer no-frills

service and lower fares using a dedicated fleet of 13 Airbus 320's. It operated from Toronto to Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax. Apart from the low fares, Air Canada Tango had a different livery than its parent company (whose dominant colour was purple). Although the Tango line functioned only until 2004, Air Canada has been using term "Tango" for its lowest fare class.

Air Canada entered the new century in a much improved financial condition. After the company acquired its greatest rival, Canadian Airlines, it became the world's 12th largest commercial air carrier. In 2002, following the largest global aviation market downturn in history, Air Canada was on the verge of bankruptcy. The company filed for bankruptcy protection and started implementing the restructuring programme to cut operating expenses and stabilize the situation. Complimentary





meals were now to be charged extra, and in economy class on flights lasting up to 5 hours, the meals were completely scrapped. However, the most important change came with the establishment of Air Canada Jazz and the merger of six regional carriers which belonging to Air Canada. The head office of AC Jazz is in Halifax. The subsidiary was equipped with 133 Bombardier aircraft, and its main hubs are now in Toronto, Montreal, and Calgary.

All those changes allowed Air Canada to re-establish itself on the market and successfully face the strong competition.

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED!

The Canadians have always tried to be ahead of its competition. It was Air Canada which first installed the prototype of a flight recorder on their aircraft, in 1961 implemented world's first computer reservation system, and in 1987, as the world's first airline, introduced a fleet-wide non-smoking policy. In 1992 Air Canada became the first airline in the world to offer all its customers telephones at arm's reach on all of its aircraft, and 5 years later the Electronic ticket made its debut in Canada when Air Canada began testing the service on selected Canadian routes.

In 2000, Air Canada became the first commercial airline to enable passengers to send and receive e-mail on their laptops while in flight, as well as surf websites.

2004 was the year of a major fleet modernization for the Canadian air carrier. Old Boeing 747 – the popular Jumbo Jet – was replaced by the fleet of Airbus A340 which

also received a completely new livery. Air Canada is already planning to introduce the super-modern Boeing 777-200LR and 787 Dreamliner which is faster and more economical than similar aircraft of this type. The domestic flights are to be operated by Brazilian Embraers.

AND ON BOARD...

The majority of Air Canada aircraft are equipped with large main screens and small ceiling-mounted LCD screens located every few rows, which mostly show American films and CBC news. However, Air Canada has recently began launching the new state-of-the-art Thales i4500 in-flight entertainment system. The system, which is being introduced fleet-wide, features 8.9-inch wide digital in-seat monitors and touch-screen controls. Passengers can watch videos on demand, play games and listen to the Air Canada radio channels. The seats are also equipped with USB ports to recharge electronic devices and for game controllers, while music lovers have easy access to XM satellite radio.

The passengers who travel on board Embraer and Airbus A340-500 aircraft have individual access to AVOD (audio and video on demand) system. Air Canada allows small cats and dogs (maximum 10 kg combined weight for the pet and carrier) to travel with their owners in the passenger cabin of Air Canada and Jazz flights. The exception are the flights to Hawaii, Hong Kong, Jamaica, New Zealand, Peru and the United Kingdom. ■

Olga Chelchowska



Wider seats, a large work tray, an electric plug for a laptop, priority check-in, and, most importantly, reasonable prices – these and other amenities are now available for Air France passengers travelling in Premium Voyageur class.

A JOURNEY *with CLASS*



Air France has recently introduced a new class on the airline's long-haul (intercontinental) flights. The class is called Premium Voyageur. It is available on flight from Paris to New York, Tokyo, Singapore, Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, São Paulo, Cairo, and many other destinations. By the end of 2010 all Air France's Boeing 777 aircraft flying on intercontinental routes (except flights to the Caribbean and Indian Ocean Islands) will have had Premium Voyageur class.

The Premium Voyageur cabin has around 20 seats in an area formerly occupied by 40 seats in Voyageur (economy) class. The passengers in Premium Voyageur class are provided with a range of amenities which are not available in the economy class. The most important one is a specially designed fixed-shell seat offering 40% more room than in the Voyageur (economy) cabin. The roomy seat is 48 cm wide and has a special shell structure which is



typical of seats in business class cabin. The seat reclines to 123°, allowing the passenger to relax comfortably, and it is also equipped with a legrest whose height can be adjusted. In order to free up space for the legs, Air France has incorporated the video control box into the seat, rather than beneath it. Presently the seat pitch is 97 centimetres, which makes a long-haul journey much more comfortable than it was before.

Each passenger travelling in Premium Voyageur cabin can also use a number of other amenities which make travelling enjoyable. Each seat features: an electric plug for a laptop, a wide tray that can easily accommodate a laptop, comfortably lit by an individual directional reading light, and a noise-reducing headset for optimum enjoyment of audio and video programmes. On each seat, passengers will also find a toiletries kit containing Clarins skincare for men and women, earphone covers, ear plugs, a toothbrush, a comb, toothpaste, and a sleeping mask. There is also an extensive in-flight entertainment system. Each seat in Premium Voyageur cabin has a large individual video screen which is 26 cm wide. The passengers can choose from the selection of 85 films, some of which are available in 9 languages. popular TV series, French and international newscasts, games, Berlitz language lessons and even a jukebox with 200 CD titles.

Premium Voyageur meal service is a combination of gourmet pleasure and balanced menus. Wines are carefully selected for Air France by Olivier Poussier, named "world's best sommelier" in 2000. On flights lasting more than 10½ hours,

a buffet service offers passengers a selection of snacks to suit all tastes, including mini-sandwiches and Häagen Dazs ice cream bars.

Premium Voyageur also offers services on the ground that make time in the airport much easier. The passengers have now privileges which earlier were available only for those travelling in business class. Premium Voyageur passengers may check in at priority desks in Paris and throughout the world. The checked baggage allowance is the same as in business cabin, i.e.: 2 bags weighing 32 kilos (compared with 23 kilos in Voyageur/economy class). Also, passengers travelling in Premium Voyageur Class who are members of Flying Blue, the frequent flyer programme earn 25% more Miles than a full-fare ticket in Voyageur (economy) class.

It's worth mentioning that Premium Voyageur tickets are only slightly more expensive than those in Voyageur (economy) class. In the most recent promotion the price of a return ticket to the USA or Asia is about 4,000 PLN (€1,000). All the prices include taxes. Passengers can also take advantage of other promotions. In August the companies which participated in Bluebiz – a corporate reward programme – on booking a ticket in the new class, received reimbursement up to 800 PLN (€200). Air France and Sofitel Warsaw Victoria have also prepared a special offer for the passengers who wish to travel in the new Premium Voyageur class. Now, they are able to take advantage of a free one-night stay in a Junior Suite with breakfast and the airport transfer. ■





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Overall, Sofitel owns 126 5-star hotels in 40 countries worldwide. Paris, New York, London, and for the lovers of more exotic atmosphere Bora Bora, Marakesh, or Luxor – these are just a few of many places where you may find the hotels of the luxurious chain. There are also three Sofitel hotels in Poland. All of them belong to Orbis Hotel Group and will definitely live up to expectations of even the most demanding guests – business people and tourists seeking rest and relaxation.

Elegance created by Sofitel derives from a kind of “art de vivre” – which in

French means “the art of living». Each hotel has its own unique character, and the elements of the local tradition are combined with the French spirit. It is clearly visible not only in architectural solutions, tasteful décor, pastel colours, elegant floral decorations, and refined dishes, but also in a right choice of works of art exhibited in the hotels as Sofitel cooperates with the best designers and architects.

The atmosphere of luxury can be already felt on entering the building, and the rooms in Sofitel hotels are an oasis of comfort and quiet. The guests will find there an elegant bathrooms, and spacious bedrooms equipped with MyBed® bedding. The feeling of elegance and luxury is also emphasised by L'Occitane toiletries made from natural ingredients.

The hotel chefs will surprise you with the variety of delicious dishes and the rituals they use are the key element to their culinary excellence. Restaurants in Sofitel hotels are well known for their freshly baked, delicious and crispy French baguette which is served with almost every meal. At breakfast, the guests will enjoy the taste of the traditional croissants, freshly squeezed fruit juices, dairy products with seasonal fruits, exclusively selected blends of tea and coffee, jams, and Lenotre honey. For the dessert, the pastry lovers will definitely be willing to try excellent French cookies. The wine list, which offers carefully selected products of high quality, is also quite impressive. As we know, a perfect match for many types of wine is cheese – in the menu you will find a wide selection of this delicacy both French and local. ■



SOFITEL WARSAW VICTORIA

The interior of this hotel was designed by Marc Hertrich and Nicolas Adnet – widely recognized French architects who specialize in designing and decorating luxurious buildings. The décor utilises natural materials such as the stone and wood. The hotel is renowned for its delicious and beautifully served dishes, which are made by Victoria's chef Olivier Croso and are often a result of his journeys across Europe, to the Caribbean, and South America. That is why, the elegant interior of Canaletto restaurant, which was recommended by Michelin guide in 2009, serves dishes from French, international and Polish cuisine. Sofitel Warsaw Victoria is also a luxurious recreation centre. Those who seek relaxation, will be able to do so in a swimming pool lined with original Egyptian tiles. The pool is heated and has a mirrored ceiling. The guests can also rejuvenate their body and soul in a hamman-type steam bath, unwind with a relaxing massage, or check the benefits of the powerful water jets. There is also a Fitness Centre near the pool. It is equipped with top-quality machines: treadmills, steppers, exercise bikes with touch screens and Active Wellness TV system which allows us to feel as if we were really cycling on a forest path or running along a sandy beach. Sofitel Warsaw Victoria offers 290 top quality rooms, including 52 suites, the Presidential Suite, and Junior Suites equipped with the latest technological solutions. It also offers 15 air-conditioned conference rooms, including a ballroom. The total area of the rooms is 1,500 sq m.



SOFITEL GRAND SOPOT

The renowned place located in Sopot, is the most prestigious hotel in Tricity and its landmark, as is the oldest, wooden pier in Europe, and the Forest Opera. It was built in 1927 and has a very rich history. During the interwar period Grand Sopot was the most luxurious hotel in the town. Among its guests were the French general and president Charles de Gaulle, the Polish president Ignacy Mościcki, the Cuban president Fidel Castro, and many other celebrities like Marlena Dietrich, Greta Garbo, or Karel Gott. Today the hotel offers 127 elegant, air-conditioned rooms with the view over the sea and the park. The Art Deco restaurant offers dishes from Polish and international cuisine. In the Lobby, the guests will find Le Bar, and a luxurious library; those seeking bigger thrills can visit the hotel's casino. Grand Spa by Algothorm offers relaxing and nourishing facial and body treatment, while a fitness club Grand Fitness has a wide range of Kinesis exercise machines. Obviously, the hotel has also a fully-equipped conference centre, consisting of five rooms with audio-video equipment, and free broadband Wi-Fi. Grand Hotel is renowned for its beautiful Ball Room, which is an ideal venue for organizing prestigious events. For the numerous tourists and Sopot residents, Sofitel Grand Sopot organizes various concerts and other events. One of them is a charity concert for Marek Kamiński's Foundation, featuring music of Raul Koczalski, Ignacy Paderewski and Frideric Chopin.



SOFITEL WROCŁAW OLD TOWN

The hotel is situated in the heart of the old town of Wrocław, close to the Market Square and the Centennial Hall where various concerts take place. The interior of the hotel is quite impressive, especially owing to its glass roof atrium. It is an excellent example of the Polish architecture naturally blending into the historic landscape. It is also a short walk from the Oder river with its impressive 127 bridges connecting the banks of the river within the city. Sofitel Wrocław Old Town is one of the most luxurious hotels in the city. It offers 205 rooms, including 15 large de luxe apartments. Those who wish to unwind after a hard day or just immerse themselves in the French luxury, should visit the hotel's SPA which offers a wide range of treatments. Then they can delight in the excellent French cuisine, or sip sophisticated drinks in the bistro or the bar. The conference facilities consist of 10 spacious, air-conditioned rooms with natural light and free Internet access. They can be used to organize various conferences, seminars, trainings, impressive banquets or even wedding receptions, for which the atrium seems to be an ideal venue.





Warszawa



Gdańsk



Szczecin



Five True Stars

Those who frequently organize business meetings know how sometimes difficult it is to find good conference facilities. **Mariusz Antczak** analyses the conference offer of Radisson Blu chain.

The chain of Polish Radisson Blu hotels, which is a part of the international Rezidor Hotel Group, is undoubtedly one of the best on the Polish market regarding the comfort of the rooms, spa centres, and obviously conference facilities.

WARSAW

Radisson Blu Centrum in Warsaw is, in fact, located in the very centre of the city, close to the most important governmental institutions, business centres and transport junctions. This undoubtedly important fact contributes to the hotel's popularity among business guests. The hotel offers 311 comfortable, air conditioned rooms and suites with wireless Internet. Radisson Warsaw is also renowned for its excellent cuisine, served in comfortable Ferdy's restaurant.

The hotel is well prepared to business needs; you can organize here a small meeting as well as a large conference. The total area of the facilities is 588 sq m, and is divided into eight fully equipped meeting rooms, where the guests will find multi-media projectors, screens and flipcharts. Only one room doesn't have direct access to the natural light. The largest one - Polonia Ballroom - can ac-

commodate up to 400 people in the area of 346 sq m. It can also be divided into three smaller rooms. "Ogrodowa" restaurant can be hired for business lunches and receptions. All conference rooms are located on the first floor of the Radisson hotel. The guests have also access to a spacious foyer and a 120 sq m hall.

Radisson Blu Centrum offers several conference packages. For example, the Gold Conference Package includes mineral water, assortment of juices, two coffee breaks with selection of sandwiches and pastries, and hefty lunch. Obviously the rooms feature audio-visual equipment, and the hotel provides technical assistance as well as a host service. The hotel also promotes so-called "green conferences" under the slogan "Think Green" during which the guests use only recyclable bags and equipment which wasn't produced with harm to the environment, use as little paper as possible, and receive ecologically made meals. What is more, the hotel promises that in cooperation with "Nasza Ziemia" Foundation it will plan 1 tree for each "green conference" package sold.

■ Radisson Blu Centrum Warsaw, Grzybowska 24, 00-132 Warszawa, tel. +48 22 321 88 88, radissonblu.com/hotel-warsaw

GDĄŃSK

Radisson Blue in Gdańsk is an example of an unusually creative combination of modern and traditional architecture. The modern body of the hotel was cleverly integrated into the old historic tenement houses, and some parts of the walls inside the building are several hundreds years old. The hotel is situated near Długa street which is the central tourist area of Gdańsk. Radisson Gdańsk offers 134 rooms (and 8 suites) with Internet access, heated floors in the bathrooms, and LCD TV screens. The gourmets will be delighted to visit an elegant French brasserie named Verres en Vers.

The hotel possesses two large conference rooms with wireless Internet connection, large LCD screens and overhead projectors. One of the most popular rooms is Rezydent Ballroom whose total area is 165 sq m. It is often used for private parties and wedding receptions. There is also a smaller Gotycka room, which is 62 sq m. Both rooms can be divided into smaller areas. The participants of conferences are provided with necessary equipment, mineral water, and coffee and tea. During coffee breaks they are offered other beverages, cookies, fresh and dried fruit, and French croissants with honey and jam. The buffet lunch is an assortment of hot and cold dishes, salads, soups and desserts. Obviously, the hotel also offers technical assistance and the service of their personnel before and during conferences.

■ Radisson Blu Gdańsk, Długi Targ 19, Powroźnicza 80-828 Gdańsk, tel. + 48 58 325 44 44, radissonblu.com/hotel-gdansk



SZCZECIN

Radisson Blu in Szczecin is located in the very centre of the city, close to the Old Town, the 12th century Pomeranian Dukes' Castle, the 15th century St. John's Cathedral, and impressive green areas. Radisson Szczecin offers its guests 369 comfortable rooms and suites. Guests of the hotel can also take advantage of Baltica Wellness & Spa - the largest spa in the West Pomerania region. There are as many as 6 restaurants (including an excellent Renaissance), bars, and the city-renowned patisserie.

As regards the hotel's business facilities, there are nine conference rooms covering the area of 1013 sq m, and able to accommodate up to 550 people. Conferences, seminars, banquets, meetings of supervisory boards, and various other events can be held here, as the facilities are considerable in size. All meeting rooms feature top-shelf equipment and have the Internet access. Guests are assisted by specialized personnel, and the menu is arranged according to the wishes of the organizer. The hotel provides catering service as well as creative and technical support of events which take place outside the hotel's premises e.g. in the Pomeranian Dukes' Castle, or on board a ship which cruises the Oder river. The Radisson also offers a special Congress & Spa package, which apart from the stay and conference participation, includes access to the wellness centre. Another offer is a wide choice of team-building events, organized by the hotel e.g. so-called The Feast of Ancient Romans.

■ Radisson Blu Hotel Szczecin,
pl. Rodła 10, 70-419 Szczecin,
tel. +48 91 35 95 595,
radissonblu.com/hotel-szczecin

WROCLAW

Wrocław is Lower Silesia's centre of culture which is always packed with important and interesting cultural events. That is why, the city is worth consideration when organizing a business meeting. The Radisson in Wrocław offers 162 rooms, including 100 Standard rooms, 45 Superior rooms, 10 Business Class rooms and five elegant suites. Aquarell restaurant offers a selection of dishes from local and international cuisine. During warm months, patrons may enjoy outdoor dining in the stylish courtyard shared with the Academy of Arts. The spacious Sqwiggles Bar is an ideal place to hold less formal business meetings. The bars can be found in the lobby of the hotel.

The conference facilities consist of 9 conference rooms spread across 377 sq m. The largest one can accommodate up to 150 participants. All the rooms are air-conditioned, feature high-tech equipment (overhead projectors, audio system, AV equipment, the Internet access) and have access to the natural light. There is also a rare opportunity to hire a 170 sq m lecture hall situated in the building of the Academy of Fine Arts which adjoins Wrocław's Radisson. From spring and throughout summer, conference organizers may hold coffee breaks in the stylish courtyard which is shared with the Academy. Radisson hotel in Wrocław obviously offers assistance of experienced personnel, technical support, and conference menus prepared according to the organizer's wishes.

■ Radisson Blu Hotel Wrocław,
Purkyniego 10, 50-156 Wrocław,
tel. +48 71 375 00 00,
radissonblu.com/hotel-wroclaw

CRACOW

Obviously, Cracow doesn't need any special recommendation as this old and remarkably beautiful city is its own advertisement. The Radisson hotel in Cracow is situated in the very centre of the city, close to the famous Planty Park. It's also a stone's throw from the Main Market Square and Wawel Castle.

The hotel has 196 well equipped rooms and comfortable apartments. Guests will definitely be pleased with excellent cuisine offered by Solfeż restaurant which offers buffet breakfasts. Milk&Co. restaurant has a wide selection of fish and seafood, as well as delicious dishes from the international cuisine. Salt&Co, which is the hotel's bar, is also worth visiting.

As regards conference facilities the Radisson in Cracow offers eight conference rooms on the first floor, all of them with access to the natural light. The largest room can accommodate up to 130 people. All the names of the rooms derive from classical music, and the largest room – Carmen – is 123 sq m large. All the rooms feature appropriate AV equipment, wired and wireless Internet access, automatic curtains, multi-media overhead projectors, and teleconference equipment. The hotel also provides assistance of an experienced coordinator and the menu tailored to the organizer's requests. There is also a 62 sq m foyer. The hotel promotes so-called "green conferences" – a special package consists of two coffee breaks, lunch, ecological menu, water in recyclable bottles and recyclable stationery.

■ Radisson Blu Hotel Kraków,
Straszewskiego 17, 31-101 Kraków,
tel. +48 (12) 618 88 88,
radissonblu.com/hotel-krakow



Step out of Amsterdam Central station into the sunshine with trams full of commuters whirring by, and bicycle parks gleaming with their hoard, and it seems there is only one way to go. Walk towards the Park Plaza Victoria hotel and beyond and you'll soon be in the centre of the city in Dam Square, with its street performers and musicians drawing crowds and tourists cramming great balls of Gouda cheese into their bags.

From the square, the canals spread outwards in a ripple effect with small bridges linking the quirky cafés and antique shops on the narrow side streets. The waterways have been nominated for UNESCO World Heritage status, and the city will find out in December this year if it has been successful.

This familiar picture of Amsterdam means most of us will not venture beyond the pretty façades and neighbourhoods of the centre, but this is set to change. Next time, instead of exiting the station at the front, head out through the back to Waterplein West on the banks of the River IJ, where three ferries leave every five to 15 minutes, 24 hours a day, to the fast-developing Amsterdam Noord.

Previously the industrial district used for shipping, most people had little rea-

New Amsterdam

Think you know the Dutch capital? Your perception is about to change as it expands north and south. **Felicity Cousins** reports

son to cross the IJ unless they lived or worked on the north side of the city. Today it is a different story. The ferries go to various parts of the neighbourhood and I take one to the NDSM wharf. Located around the former shipyards are offices for MTV and Red Bull, as well as a huge hangar that houses 250 artists in self-built studios – the digital industries are also blossoming here. The striking Kraanspoor office stands out, and music festivals and theatre productions are held in the dramatic surroundings – the open space offering a blank canvas.

René van Schie, hotel development intermediary for the City of Amsterdam economic development department, says: "For so long no one was interested in that area of the city but now the creative industries are going in, it is suddenly coming up and there are a lot of opportunities. The development is unstoppable. I like to compare it with Kowloon in Hong Kong – it's also the sunny side of Amsterdam."

The quirky Northern Lights Café (noorderlichtcafe.nl) is tucked under a transparent dome with an arty, unruly garden spilling down to the waterfront. The furniture ranges from battered old cushions to wicker chairs and stools. I select a soft old sofa overlooking the water and notice the Shell Tower marking its place further down the riverbank.

Some 11 hectares of Amsterdam Noord used to belong to Shell but the





oil company sold the land and moved its offices from the iconic tower to a low-lying, conservative building a few hundred metres away. The rest of the area has been earmarked for high-end residential properties, restaurants, bars and a film museum.

Apart from the ferries linking Amsterdam Noord to the centre, there are plans to connect it to the south of the city with a metro line. This will be useful because Amsterdam Zuidas (south) is home to

the World Trade Centre (WTC) and the financial district. The North-South line was supposed to be finished by 2013 but it has been delayed until at least 2017 (even the website, northsouthline.com, is still “under construction”). In the meantime the two areas are still easy to get to by bus, tram and road.

Amsterdam Zuidas used mainly to consist of sports grounds and stadiums but the land was sold in 1985 and the WTC built. After that, banks came to

the area and the market opened up. The City of Amsterdam plans to develop the whole district in three stages into a multifunctional neighbourhood to be complete by 2040.

Van Schie explains: “At the moment there are a lot of financial headquarters – lots of people go there to do business but there is not much [else] to do, so the idea is to create a new neighbourhood with restaurants, houses, bars and places to meet. It’s also near the convention centre.”

The developments will be one third business (about 1.2 sq km of office space), one third residential (about 9,000 apartments) and one third commercial, with shops

‘Now the creative industries are going in, the area is coming up’

– there will also be a theatre. Currently the main businesses are law and financial

(the striking 24-storey Ernst and Young HQ was designed by Foster and Partners) but it is also home to Dutch chemical company Akzo Nobel.

Amsterdam Zuidas is in a good location, six minutes by metro from Amsterdam Schiphol airport and about 15 minutes into the centre of town. Amsterdam Zuid station will eventually be connected to the high-speed line that currently operates from Amsterdam Schiphol to Belgium and France with connections to the Eurostar. (See panel, below right.)

Van Schie says: “We need to develop other areas and have new points of interest, which is why the new financial centre in the Zuid is really important.” For detailed plans check out the World Trade Centre Project Zuidas office, which has a scale model of the whole area (visit zuidas.nl).

Amsterdam Zuidas on the horizon



As there are so many building restrictions in the centre, the aim is to encourage hotels to open further out and consequently help to develop new neighbourhoods. Other areas to look out for include Arena Poort, south-east of the city near the football stadium, which has been flagged as the new entertainment and concert district. And back on the water, Westerdok is an island being built from reclaimed land that is set for completion in 2013, with the Palace of Justice, a hotel and 194 residences.

These are big ideas, but Van Schie is keen to point out that the small successes also matter, such as Fashion hotel on the edge of the city and the new Citizen M. He concludes: "We are happy with all the big developments going on but we are also happy with these little pearls. Our policy is to encourage people to come up with new ideas and new brands."

Before heading home I catch the ferry back to Amsterdam Noord, to the restaurant Wilhelmina Dok (wilhelmina-dok.nl). An old ship-repairing site, the bright orange three-storey building has been offering delicious, locally produced fare to Amsterdam's locals for years. The interior has a maritime feel, and as I watch the ships pass and the lights of the city twinkle across the water, I know this is a new side to the Amsterdam I've visited before. And it promises an exciting future. ■



Northern Lights Café

The city aims to introduce 9,000 more hotel rooms by 2015

Services are also being expanded to achieve the city's wider vision. Van Schie says the aim is to introduce 9,000 more hotel rooms by 2015. He has also published a guide aimed at enticing new hotel brands and entrepreneurs into the city. Last year there were 369 hotels in Amsterdam totalling 20,932 rooms and, of those, about 9,000 were in four- and five-star properties.

Van Schie says: "We analysed the hotel market and found Amsterdam had an occupancy rate of about 81 per cent, so if a conference organiser needed to arrange a meeting they would be calling the hotels to book, say, 60 rooms but having trouble getting them. We wanted to bring occupancy down to about 75 per cent, which worked out as about 9,000 more rooms."

There is already a good range of hotels on offer. The top end of the market includes the Pulitzer, Sofitel Grand, Swissotel, Radisson Blu, Crowne Plaza,

Hilton, Marriott and Hotel de L'Europe (currently being refurbished), Japanese brand Okura, and Dutch chain Amrath. "Budget luxury" brand Citizen M opened its second property in Amsterdam Zuidas last year (visit businessstraveller.com/ tried-and-tested for a review), the other being located at Schiphol airport.

Upcoming hotels include the 130-room Conservatorium in the centre, which is due to open at the end of the year, City Inn by Central station in 2011, and the Marcel Wanders-designed Andaz, opening on the same street (Prinsengracht) as the Pulitzer hotel in 2012.

Van Schie says: "We aim to get a lot of lower budget properties as well as top hotels – of course, with [all the extra] rooms there will be quite a few four- and five-star properties. We are trying to get a W here as we want a lifestyle hotel. We are also approaching extended-stay brands such as Staybridge."



GETTING THERE

BY RAIL Take the Eurostar from London King's Cross St Pancras to Brussels and then the Thalys service to Amsterdam. First class passengers get free food and wifi and the journey takes about four hours. Internet rates for a midweek return standard class journey in July started from £175 (£244 for first class). Visit raileurope.co.uk

BY AIR British Airways, Easyjet, KLM and Cityjet operate frequent daily services from London to Amsterdam Schiphol. Visit ba.com, easyjet.com, klm.com, cityjet.com

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The Limited Immortality of Wine

Wino belongs to the group of products, which, as we believe, never turns bad and with time gets better and better. And so, the proud owners of cellars and wallets so fat to enable them buying really old bottles, condescendingly look at the wines produced within the current decade. Why is that? What does that look mean?

The custom of wine aging has been widely accepted in the business thanks to the French following the tradition. They specifically insist on customers not to open a bottle of good wine, but to wait and let it age instead. Not without a reason. In the past, young wine was not only worse than aged wine – it was completely undrinkable – too tannic, too raw, and too rough. It remained so, because the French were reluctant to any changes and kept themselves aloof from new technologies. That's why, grapes used to mature slower than today. The producers didn't know yet how to grow a vine, so that the most of its energy was focused not on the growth of leaves and stems, but fruit instead. And it's not about better chemicals, fertilizers or cultivation techniques. It's the other way round. It was found that the fruits are better when the vine is in bad condition. No fertilizers, no watering, and when the soil is poor. Nobody had heard about green harvest, which refers to the removal of immature grape bunches, to quickly mature and improve the quality of the remaining ones. As a result, the wine is juicy and smoother from the very beginning. But it was the French who made these improvements in the viniculture,



so it would seem they would be the first to campaign for decreasing the time of wine aging. Why isn't this happening? For a couple of reasons. The first one is the intangible added value. Sounds fairly complicated, but everyone will understand, if only they can hold for a moment a 20-year-old, moss and dust covered bottle of wine. There's some charm to it. And, to some extent, it no longer matters whether the wine inside is of any value. What matters, is that the bottle itself is already something unique. Secondly, the profit. It's much harder to sell a product of limited expiry date, so if you can sustain a myth saying that wine is immortal – why not? As the third one comes the prestige, as keeping wine in your cellar is a luxury. It shows your wealth and sophistication. And if this “sophistication” means that half of the home supply may not be fit for consumption? It doesn't really matter, as long as everybody say that “all wines improve with age”. To undermine the value of wines and sophistication of their owners, you need to be not only an expert, but also a brave expert. So how do you choose wine suitable for storing in the cellar, and how can you know when it is ready to open?

IT HAS TO BE COMPLEX AND BRIGHT

For the aging of wine to make sense, you need to realize that over 90% of wines produced nowadays should not be stored for more than a couple of years. These are wines with fruity flavours, which with time transform into more balsamic, candied form, only to eventually give way to the background aromas of minerality and complex barrel overtones. In a number of simpler, yet good wines, these background aromas are so hard to distinguish, that it makes no sense to emphasize it, at the expense of fresh fruity expression. Imagine Valpolicella Classico wine from the Verona area, which, when young, is distinguished by sweet cherry and pelargonium aromas with an overtone of a brick. After five years, half of these aromas are oxidized, faint and too acid, because everything that contributed to the wine's character becomes muddy dregs at the bottom of the bottle. Whereas strong and unusually complex Barolo from Piedmont only after a few years starts to show its greatness to the full, uncovering previously hidden notes of roses, liquorice, tar and dried cranber-

ries. That's why when choosing a wine to be stored in a cellar, you should consider its character. It needs to be sufficiently rich in aromas, but it doesn't necessarily have to be highly concentrated.

IT NEEDS TO HAVE RATHER HIGH ACIDITY

So before you grab a bottle of unusually generous and thick wine from the New World or Spain, you need to know that what conserves wine is not only the alcohol, but also acidity. Without it, even the most concentrated wine produced by the most experienced winemakers will last for no longer than ten years. After this time, wine doesn't get undrinkable straightaway, but its aromas start to stratify and disintegrate. Instead of merging into one another, they become separated and lose background. Acidity is like steel reinforcement in a concrete pillar. It supports the whole construction and makes it stronger and more long-lasting. That's why feeble and delicate Burgund reinforced with stainless acidity will last much longer than strong, stone pillar of Spanish Priorat. Therefore, if you are looking for long-lasting wines, go a bit further north of Europe.

THE YEAR MAKES A HUGE DIFFERENCE

When you happily come home from a shop with a bottle of wine to store in your cellar, you might be wondering when you will be able to bring it back upstairs and open. What helps to estimate the best time for opening, is the year of production. If it comes from a poor year – too wet or cold, or too hot, its longevity significantly decreases. If, however, many experts considered the year good, which you can tell by tasting the young wine – you might jump to this bitter-sweet conclusion, that you will be able to open it after you have retired, or after your grandchild is born. Sometimes the differences between the years are huge – that was the case with the famous 1982 in Bordeaux – wine from that year is in its prime nowadays, whereas a bottle of the same wine from the younger 1984, should have been drunk 15-20 years ago. It's extremely difficult to capture the exact moment. It depends not only on the kind of wine (white wines usually age quicker than red ones, but some, like e.g. German Riesling or white Burgund can outlast them), but also on the produ-

cer and a particular kind of label. That's why it is advisable to buy three bottles of the same wine – you can drink the first one to see if it is better to wait or to start opening them. Keep the remaining two, just in case one of them turns out to be faulty. There could be nothing worse than opening an aged bottle of wine only to conclude it got bad and needs to be disposed of. It is also better to drink it a little bit too early, than too late. The curve of wine aging raises very slowly, and after reaching the peak, it falls down within two years and then the wine dies. The size also matters. Wine ages quicker when stored in small bottles than big ones. For functional reasons the Magnum – a 1.5 litre bottle – is also optimal.

IMMORTAL WINES

However, no wine can be aged forever, even Barolo or Burgund, which are considered “the most indestructible” (and it's not Bordeaux) cannot be stored for more than 30 years, even if these are the best wines from the best years and producers. There is, however, one class of wines, which is able to last longer – the sweet wines. Sugar is an excellent preservative ▶



and so if wine has a sufficiently high level of it (more than 150g/litre), and equally high level of acidity or alcohol, then it is a product, which will be in its prime even after 30 years, when all the dry competitors have already been eliminated. Tokaji Eszencia deserves a separate place here. As for consistency and colour, it resembles buckwheat honey, and it is produced from selected overripe grapes affected by the noble rot through a process that relies on gravitational forces. It is astronomically expensive and immortal. It is fit for consumption not until 50 years from production, because of the unusually high level of sugar amounting over 500g/litre. The alcohol level rises from 2%, when the wine is young, to 6%.

HOW TO STORE WINE?

Those who age wine on the shelves of a home sideboard should know, that it makes sense only when the sideboard is in the cellar.

Today the construction industry doesn't really help us here. Nowadays, cellars are dry and warm, full of heating, vibrating and glimmering machines, boilers and air conditioners. Wine needs more primitive conditions – draughty, cold and damp cellars. Naturally, even in a modern building, you can adapt a wine cellar, so that it meets all the necessary criteria by means of special conditioners and humidifier, but it is not the same.

Most importantly – the humidity. It needs to be very high, the absolute minimum being 75%. There is no upper limit, however, condensed steam may damage the labels, so after 10 years you may not be able to read them.

Secondly – the temperature. Ideally, it should stay the same all year round. The less fluctuation, the better. Without artificial circulation, the air lays in layers according to the temperature. Close to the ground the temperature is the lowest, and that's a place for wines not intended for long aging, like champagnes and quiet white wines. In the middle, put more delicate and docile red wines, and at the top the most noble Barolo, Burgund and Boredeaux, optionally also Amarone or Sfursat.

The wine shelves should be made of metal, which is relatively resistant to humidity and temperature. If you insist on wooden ones, remember to use a proper kind of wood, so that it doesn't swell,

warp or fall apart because of humidity. The most suitable would be oak or larch wood. The legs of the wine shelves should be positioned on dense thick foam padding, and dowels should be semi-flexible to protect the wine against possible vibrations made by home appliances in adjacent rooms.

The bottles on the shelves shouldn't touch the wall. If you don't plan to sell your collection, remove the silver foil to uncover the corks. It is easier to notice if the cork is leaky. If you spot a leakage, you can open the bottle and drink the wine before it oxidizes and gets spoilt. It should be rather dim inside, as especially old wine is very sensitive to light.

If you don't have a cellar, but would like to age wine, you can get hold of a special cooler. However, most of them are not really suitable for wine aging. They are all about keeping the right temperature and setting for wines intended for current consumption. Real wine coolers for aging wine are much more expensive and difficult to find, but they guarantee proper conditions, regarding protection from light and humidity. In case of the thermostat failure, there is a security system preventing the temperature from falling below zero. Otherwise, all the wine would be damaged.

All right, so you have the right wine and a proper cellar, but the fundamental issue is how to keep yourself from drinking the wine and wait patiently. It's a reasonable concern, but there are ways to deal with it. It's advisable to get hold of a properly aged wine and compare it to the young one, to convince yourself that it pays to be patient. You can also fill your cellar with wines from different years and of various quality, and always have something ready at hand for consumption. Firstly try Riesling. Then, in a month you might check on one of the 1999 Domaine de Chevalier bottles, and so on. Only make sure that you bring the same number of new bottles as you take. Moreover, remember to keep wines for consumption and wine for aging in different places. All this combined should bring desirable effects. On a daily basis, it's worth drinking young, blood-red and vivid wine. There are a couple of exceptions, however, for which it is definitely better to wait... and just in case – keep them under lock and key. ■

Michał Poddany, Robert Mielżyński



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In the Shadow of the caravan

The pyramids, unusual culture, The Nile, the desert and thousands of years of history – Egypt is not only a Mecca for tourists. The country is also a great place to organize fantastic incentive travel programme there.



It is usually said that Egypt is the most trite destination for all tourists craving for sun and sensation. It ranks the highest on the list of the most popular exotic trips „to do”. Indeed, the country thrives on tourism, and thanks to this, it is constantly expanding its offer and quality of service. That’s why this cradle of civilisation can also be the place of an unforgettable incentive travel as the organizational possibilities are almost unlimited.

Getting to Egypt, contrary to what you may think, is cheap, easy and takes little time. In the summer season, between the biggest Polish cities and Cairo and other Egyptian resorts – Hurghada, Taba and Sharm El Shaikh - there are many charter flights operated by trustworthy carriers, guaranteeing high level of service and a comfortable journey. It takes less than 4 hours to get from Warsaw to the Egyptian capital. You can also travel with traditional carriers, and fly with a stopover in Frankfurt - thus you can reach the destination at any time during the year.

A NIGHT IN A MUSEUM

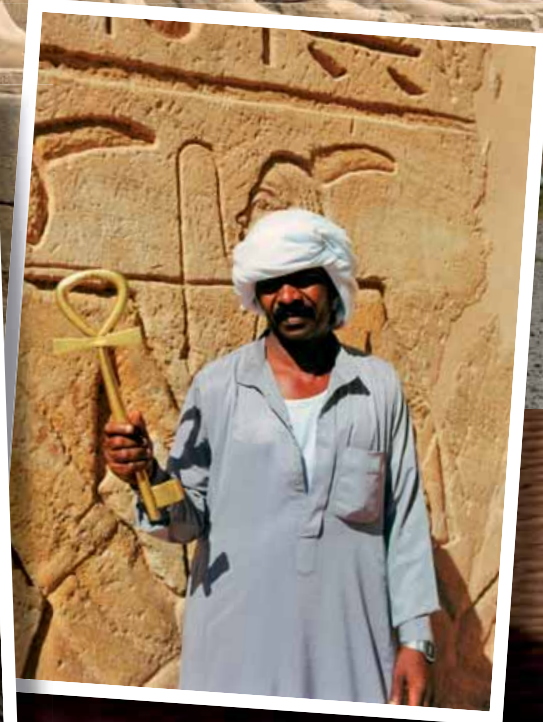
Cairo is a huge metropolis. That’s why, it’s good to take time exploring it, and start your corporate trip in Egypt from there. Naturally, it would be a sin not to visit one of the most famous museums in the world. It has a remarkably rich collection of exhibits which is the envy of other museums all over the world. To see the objects with a thousands-year-old history is an extraordinary experience. What makes a real impression on the visitors is



the sight of pharaohs’ mummies and fabulous treasures gathered in the tomb of Tutankhamun.

Thousands of guests visit the museum - during the day there’s lot of commotion and noise, as voices of visitors and guides from various countries mix with each other until the very closing time. Therefore, you can forget about any comfort – unless you can visit the museum after everybody have left. Participants in an incentive travel programme have this opportunity – and it does not happen very often.





THE SECRETS OF SPHINX

Arriving at Giza to see the Pyramids and the Sphinx - which is a life's dream for many - is another must see in Cairo. These monumental buildings will make you realize how advanced the ancient Egyptian civilization was at that time. In fact, the building technique used by ancient Egyptians is not very clear - although there are many theories about it.

In front of the Pyramids, there is always time for a photographic session. The participants can pose for the photograph with a specially-designed logo of the company. You can also have a camel ride there. The participants can also see a traditional display of dervish's dance - a several-minute session, where a dancer, dressed in characteristic robe, revolves on his own axis with remarkable speed. How the dancers manage not to lose consciousness remains the secret of the dancing instructors.

The return to the heart of Cairo is connected with a visit to the Old Market. It's a mixture of tradition and the modern glitter - it always evokes curiosity.

Another unusual experience is the dinner. The participants are transferred to a ship docked on the Nile. This big vessel (with three decks) is already an attraction by itself. But, what's especially worth remembering is the view from the deck on the shimmering city. Cairo is a city full of secrets, which are beyond regular tourists' imagination. For instance its nightlife -

contrary to popular belief, there are plenty of good night clubs with excellent music. The participants will have a chance to see it for themselves. And not only this - also the hotels, especially of the well-known brands, like Marriott in Cairo - are of the highest quality.

AIDA NIGHT

Another stop is a flight southwards to Luxor. This city - often referred to as the world's biggest museum, offers lots of attractions. There is, for example, a possibility to visit the famous Valley of the Kings - the place of burial of pharaohs, The Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut or Colossi of Memnon. During the first dinner you will get familiar with Aida. This famous opera's libretto is about Egypt, that's why during the meal served by the waiters dressed in traditional costumes from the pharaohs' time, you can also hear the songs from the performance.

On the following day, you will again visit the Nile river. Feluccas are small sailing boats - propelled by human oarsmen - they have been known and used for hundreds of years in the waters of the Mediterranean, but especially along the Nile. The members of the trip get on the



Felucca, where they receive a welcoming drink.

The culmination of the daily attractions will be the 'sound and light' show in the nearby Karnak - if the group is big enough, this could be also done in Polish.

Participants in incentive travel programme will also enjoy a number of other similar attractions besides the ones mentioned above. It's just a matter of good organization, and, naturally the company's expectations. As you can see, Egypt is not only a popular holiday destination - it's a place where you will take part in unforgettable events - the ones that you will remember for years. ■

CRUISE: MONTE CARLO – ROME

Silver Spirit

TRIED & TESTED



INFO The vessel named Silver Spirit belongs to Silversea cruise line with the headquarters in Monaco. The company specializes mainly in organizing high quality sea voyages. It doesn't aim at mass tourism, nor does it compete with other companies to build bigger and bigger ships. Its offer is directed to people who expect high quality service and want to feel unique. The company was founded in 1990, and its first ship – Silver Cloud – was launched 4 years later. Today there are 4 other ships: Silver Wind, Silver Shadow, Silver Whisper and Silver Spirit – launched last year. They are not very big (Silver Spirit holds 540 people), but luxurious vessels, designed in such a way to give passengers as much space as possible. Silversea's fleet is also complemented by Prince Albert II "expedition ship", on which passengers have a chance to visit the most inaccessible places, including

polar areas – and therefore these voyages have a parascientific character, in a way.

BOARDING Guests arriving at Silver Spirit are treated with special attention from the very beginning of the

cruise, which obviously starts with embarkment. It takes place in the port of Monte Carlo (which is always full of ships, yachts and boats) and is done remarkably quickly – checking documents



FACTS

SHIP: M/V Silver Spirit

THE MAIDEN CRUISE:

23th December 2009

NUMBER OF

PASSENGERS: 540

WEIGHT: 36,000 tonnes

LENGTH: 198.5 m

WIDTH: 26.2 m

THE DRAFT

OF THE VESSEL: 6.2 m

NUMBER OF DECKS: 11

SPEED: 20.3 knots

NUMBER OF CABINS: 270 su-
its occupying the space of 29-150
sq m each.

goes smoothly, the staff takes and delivers luggage to the cabin, and the passengers receive a magnetic card which will be useful everywhere on the ship. That's all. Now you can feel you are a member of the "sea community".

WHAT IS IT LIKE? Elegant. That's the word that comes to your mind, when you see the slim figure of Silver Spirit. Looking at the interior you come to exactly the same conclusion. Eight of all eleven decks are available for guests, and most travellers usually visit all of them the first thing after boarding (loyal Silver Spirit travellers are the exception here). This elegance is emphasized by soft and calm interiors – there are no flamboyant colours, and the decor makes you think of the best Italian design models. No wonder why – the interiors were designed by Italian companies. As regards the space, the ship is unusually roomy as for the class,





Monte Carlo

with unbelievable 189 cubic metres per one person.

According to the assertions of the cruise line, life on the deck is “a philosophy of balance”. For a cruise to be a successful one, you need to strike a balance between leisure time and strong emotions, sweet idleness and situations requiring good manners, as well as between relaxation and active leisure. The public space consists of fine restaurants and relaxed bars, the Spa complex, where you can pamper yourself in peace and quiet, and a fitness club – an ideal place if you are keen on vigorous workout. You will find here both quiet corners, if you are a solitude-seeker, and night clubs, where you will be anything but alone. Anybody feels like shopping? Fine – you can visit the boutiques on the deck 8, where you will find high quality jewellery, clothes or cosmetics. Do you need to check your mailbox? There is an internet cafe on the deck 7. Or perhaps you feel like enjoying some charming views of the sea horizon? That’s not a problem either – go and visit The Panorama Lounge and The Observation Lounge (each seats up to 70 people). You can also take part in numerous events organized by the cruise line, such as viniculture lectures. You can also learn about the ports visited along the way, and you will understand that a cruise is the art of choice, but you get to choose only pleasant things.

CABINS Silver Spirit offers 270 suites, all of them overlooking the sea. Most of them (95 per cent) come with a balcony. The smallest room is 29 sq m, the biggest – 150 sq m. Each one has a separate lounge section and a marble bathroom with a dressing table for two and a bathtub. Even in the smallest Vista suite there is a spacio-

A cruise on board Silver Spirit is a great and unforgettable experience for everyone

us dressing room, a safe, an LCD TV set and a DVD player. The Veranda cabin is slightly bigger, and it has a 6 sq m balcony. The Silver Suite is 69 sq m, has a 11 sq m balcony, a separate lounge and a dining room, and the bathroom comes both with a bathtub and a shower. The Grand Suite comes in two versions – with one or two bedrooms. The first one is 92 sq m, the second one is 25 sq m bigger. The guests will find here a dining room, a lounge, two separate balconies and a Jacuzzi in the bathroom. The Owner’s Suite, which is the largest, comes with one or two bedrooms, and the two-bedroom version is 150 sq m. I stayed in Veranda room, which turned out to be a comfortable and spacious place. A large wardrobe and comfortable bathroom were a huge advantage. What was especially original were two TV screens hidden behind the mirrors.

CRUISE The option to learn about the cities visited along the way is an unquestionable advantage. Silver Spirit sails into

each port in the morning, and leaves it in the afternoon. The voyage starts in Monte Carlo, Monaco. The city is situated on the French Riviera and is famous for its beaches, elegant hotels and its nightlife. For the last 700 years it has been owned by the Grimaldi family. The biggest local attractions are Grand Casino and the Opera, but The Hotel de Paris is also worth visiting. Inside you will see the famous Cafe de Paris, or exotic gardens and oceanarium, which was co-designed by Jacques Cousteau. On the second day the ship sails into a charming Italian village of Portofino, surrounded by rocky coastline, where you can visit a church and the San Diego fortress. The next stop is one of the biggest Italian port – Livorno, which is called “the gate of Tuscany”. It’s not far away from Florence, Lucca, Siena or Pisa – it’s worth visiting one of these places, you can also make use of the line’s trip offer. On the fourth day, the ship visits Calvi on the island of Corsica. If you want to



Rzym

FOTOLIA



know the turbulent history of the city, visit the citadel. Spectacular views would be an additional bonus. It's also worth visiting the John the Baptist's Cathedral from 13th century and a house where Christopher Columbus was supposedly born. You might also do some shopping – Corsican wines are excellent. The next day is spent at sea, and on the following, the ship sails into Palermo, Sicily. The city is situated on the border of cultures and civilisations, so you will experience a mixture of European, Arabic, Byzantine and Jewish influences. It is especially visible in the architecture – in the 12th-century La Martorana church you will find Byzantine mosaics. Next, the ship sails to Capri, an island popular already among “celebrities” in the Roman times. No wonder why – it's an unusually charming place, full of not only celebrities' houses, but also fine restaurants and cafes. It's a good idea to take a boat trip to Blue Grotto, a rock cave, available only from the sea. The last port on the route of Silver Spirit is Civitavecchia, near Rome. You need no introduction to this place, however. There are plenty of places worth visiting – with the end of the journey, you might start exploring Rome.

RESTAURANTS AND BARS Undoubtedly, the cuisine is one of the most important things during the cruise. Silver Spirit offers here plenty of possibilities. The Restaurant is the main eatery on the ship, offering splendid food for breakfasts, lunches and dinners. At breakfast and lunch you choose a dish from a buffet, and then a waiter brings it to your table. The cuisine is mainly international, and a special menu was prepared in cooperation with a prestigious Relais&Chateaux organization. La Terazza restaurant is an interesting option – it's situated at the stern, and you can taste here Italian cuisine and enjoy the panoramas at the same time. The place boasts the best food and atmosphere. Star Supper Club serves late suppers, and it has also live music on its offer. Le Champagne restaurant pleases its customers with six-course meals, and menu is inspired by cuisines of the regions visited along the way. The Seishin restaurant is a treat for Asian cuisine lovers (sushi and seafood), whereas Pool Grill is situated next to the swimming pool and offers grilled meat and pizza. On the ship you will also find The Connoisseur's Corner, where you indulge yourself by smoking high quality cigars and drinking cognac. There is also The Bar – seating 112

people – which serves drinks and cocktails, and another bar next to the pool. Silver Spirit offers you a wide selection of wines and cocktails – my favourite one comprised Plymouth gin, St. Germain liqueur and Sauvignon Blanc. Restaurant seats are not assigned to the guests, as it often happens with other cruise lines – they are free to sit wherever they want.

ENTERTAINMENT You will definitely not be deprived of it here. There are performances at The Show Lounge, classical music concerts, folk events – and these are only some of the suggestions. You can also meet experts lecturing on cuisine, wine, visited places, etc. If you are an adventure-seeker, a casino with roulette and poker tables and gaming machines would be a good choice. In the evenings, you can enjoy a crazy dance at The Panorama Lounge. In the evenings there are films playing on the pool deck, and the library has also a huge DVD collection, which you can rent and watch in the cabin.

LEISURE FACILITIES Deck 9, where you will find a swimming pool and a several Jacuzzis, is not the only place for relaxation. The 770 sq m Spa Centre has 9 massage rooms, it also offers various treatments, there is a sauna, a jacuzzi and a steam bath. If you are a fan of active leisure, you will most probably drop in to the fitness centre, where you will find two aerobics rooms, a gym, and a whole exercise packet to choose from.

SERVICE The quality of customer care is really high. The staff comprises 376 people who provide high quality service and are responsible for customers' well-being. The Silver Spirit cruise is an all in inclusive package, including not only meals, but also alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages served on board, but also the service charge – so no need to worry about the tips. In each cabin, the guests will find a package with a bottle of champagne, fresh fruits and flowers, favourite drinks, cosmetics, previously selected pillows (9 patterns) and newspapers. The cabins are cleaned two times a day, as well as in the evening. The passengers in more expensive suites can expect a butler, who will take care of all their errands connected with the stay, things like renting a car in the port, packing their luggage or organizing a cocktail party in the suite.

VERDICT Comfortable voyage on an elegant ship – a treat not only for travel enthusiasts, but also for good life connoisseurs in general. ■

Piotr Lewandowski

In the Shadow of the Palms

The perfect weather, comfortable accommodation, beautiful beaches, and as usually with Club Med – lots of attractions included in the price. **Dariusz Stawski** describes The Punta Cana resort in the Dominican Republic.





Punta Cana is a Spanish word which means “a place where palms grow”. It’s difficult to find a better description of the area where the 4-trident Club Med’s village is situated. The palm is the symbol of the Caribbean and in the Dominican Republic, which is one of the most beautiful spots in this part of the world, palms are a common sight. Just as other symbols of tropical relaxation: golden beaches, the blue sea, and the sunny weather. All these in a nice package with “all inclusive” tag, as this is Club Med’s specialty. The packages include comfortable rooms, full board, cold drinks, and numerous sports attractions.

The Dominican Republic covers 2/3 of the Hispaniola island, the other third is occupied by Haiti. The history of the Dominican Republic is turbulent, but the times of dictatorship (including that of Rafael Trujillo) are gone – today the

country is democratic, very tourist-oriented, and stunningly beautiful – the islands of Haiti and Cuba are the most magnificent places of the Caribbean. So it’s no wonder that Club Med decided to place its resort in the eastern part of the country.

Punta Cana has recently been modernized, which made it look extremely modern, but at the same time it still fits well into the tropical surrounding. The resort stretches along the turquoise lagoon, between its private 600x50 metre beach, and a coconut grove. Thanks to the location, the guests have unlimited access to the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea.

The village parks and gardens are full of colourful flowers and palms, and its beauty is emphasized by the omnipresent illumination system. All this contributes to the comfort of your holiday stay.

According to Club Med’s classification, Punta Cana is a 4-trident village, but there is also a higher level, a 5-trident section. There are 553 rooms on the offer, spread across three one-storey buildings designed in a colonial style, and painted

in pastel hues. The bungalows are scattered across the whole resorts, and separated by gardens.

Standard rooms, some of them overlooking the sea, are called Club Rooms. All of them come with air conditioning, coffee expressos, LCD TV sets, hair driers, ironing sets, a mini bar, a safe and – of course – a bathroom with a shower. Similar equipment can be found in a higher class Deluxe rooms, where there is a separate bedroom section and a lounge (separated by sliding doors) and a balcony.

Tiara, a separate part of the village – is a 5-trident suggestion for guests expecting the highest level of service. It offers its guests 32 family suites of 20 sq m with terraces and sea views, separate beach with an open bar and a private swimming pool. But the reason for which Tiara’s guests can feel exceptional, is the quality of service they get. All Punta Cana guests are provided with the all inclusive package, comprising full board, cooling drinks and an unlimited access to all the attractions in the village. 5-trident guests, however, can also expect free champagne ▶



served by the side of the swimming pool, a bedroom served breakfast, transfer from the airport, a welcoming gift, a bathrobe, priority system when booking at the local spa and room service.

No matter which room you live in, you can look forward to lots of attractions in Punta Cana. That's because what made Club Med popular all over the world, was the fact that they do their best to prevent the guests from getting bored. Indeed, you can't be bored – either by taking part in activities organized by the G.O. (Gentle Organizers) staff, or exploring all the facilities on your own. Everyone can schedule your time in such a way, to have the achieve the desired mixture of sport, leisure, social events, sightseeing or just plain idleness.

You can do archery, sailing, snorkeling, windsurfing, aquafitness, play volleyball, basketball, football and water polo, go kayaking or pump your muscles in a well-equipped fitness salon, and it's all included in the price. Fitness Academy is an interesting option, as they have sessions for participants of all levels, held by qualified instructors. Trapeze sessions, where you can learn various circus acts, are not a little bit less interesting. Guests can also take tennis (there are 14 courts and a tennis wall in Punta Cana) or golf

Club Med's main goal is to prevent the guests from boredom. This is successfully done in Punta Cana

lessons – the resort is equipped with a golf course, for these activities, however, you have to pay extra. The same goes with scuba-diving courses – Club Med provides professional equipment, instructors and a very interesting schedule.

Don't forget that holidays at the Caribbean is an excellent occasion to regenerate your whole body, so visiting The Wellness Centre in Punta Cana would be a nice idea. It's situated close to the beach and has 9 individual and 1 duo treatment room, a so called Zen room (for meditation and tea drinking) and the Infinity pool. The Centre offer so called theme treatments, which has been arranged into a few days packages. There are plenty of them, so everyone can find something for themselves.

Club Med is known for taking care of children. There are special programmes to enable parents to "free themselves" from children of all age. In designated areas the G.Os offer various activities (including sports classes) adapted to children's needs and abilities. Baby Club Med is a place for children between 4 months and 2 years old, Petit Club Med – for children aged 2 to 4, Mini Club Med – from 3 to 11 years old, and Club Med Passworld – between the age of 11 and 18. In the latter one, teenagers will

find dancing lessons, video games, mini cinema, soundtrack-mixing classes and a skatepark.

Apart from all the attractions, Punta Cana offers excellent cuisine in a few restaurants. The main one is Samana, where you can eat breakfast, lunch and dinner in the form of buffet. The menu is based on international cuisine and all of it is included in the price. Another similar restaurant – L'Hispaniola – is situated at the very seaside. Le Celeste is both a restaurant and a bar, where you can order snacks, and many fabulous drinks, like the perfectly prepared mojito.

Club Med villages are arranged so that guests – if they don't feel like going anywhere further – can feel comfortable. However, if you'd like to satisfy your wanderlust, you can make use of the extensive trip offer. Among them there is a trip to the sugar plantation, connected with a ship cruise down the river. There is also a visit the Manati park, where you can swim with the dolphins, which itself is an unforgettable experience. Or you might take a catamaran trip to the island of Saona, where many films have been shot. And there are plenty more trips to choose from. You simply can't be bored in the Caribbean. ■

Club Med

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Tomasz Telejko, the president of BENEFIA Towarzystwo Ubezpieczeń na Życie SA, Vienna Insurance Group.

I Still Want to



I usually travel to...

When I'm on business trip I go to Vienna, a charming city, where time passes more slowly. For holiday, I usually choose South-Eastern Asia, where wild nature intertwines with the chaos of large cities, which never sleep. These contrasts are way beyond imagination.

On the plane I like...

Comfortable conditions – that's why I prefer Airbus to Boeing – the seats are more comfortable and there's more leg space.

My favourite hotel...

A boutique hotel in the heart of Paris. Opposite, there's a small shop, where you can taste several hundreds varieties of cheese and further away – a winery and a fruit market. There are only 16 bedrooms, so I can't reveal the name, because it's already difficult to book a room there, but if you manage to find it thanks to my description, you'll be delighted.

My remedy for a long journey...

I like long journeys at night for several reasons. Mostly because, after a whole day's work, it's easier to fall asleep on a plane, and wake up 2 or 3 hours before landing.

That's why, I sleep through most of the journey in the natural rhythm. I don't like flying in the morning, because I can't sleep and the flight drags on. Then I usually read a book or watch a couple of films.

I always take with me...

A laptop with the internet connection – for both business trips and private holiday. In a new place, it gives me a sense of independence when I want to check or find something quickly.

During a flight...

I rest a lot, but sometimes, out of boredom, I start thinking about something, and sometimes I come up with pretty nice ideas.

I regret that...

There are no flights connecting Poland with faraway countries, because we could enjoy their beauty cheaper than nowadays.

My favourite airport...

Schiphol, Amsterdam. Mostly because it's comfortable – it's a huge airport, where you just can't be bored. While I was waiting for the transfer, in the local bookshops, I was able to find good English books or guidebooks about exotic faraway countries. Unfortunately, these are unavailable in Poland. Another advantage are very comfortable sofas, instead of plastic benches, so often found at other airports.

What attracts my attention in hotels...

I like when the staff are unassuming and don't draw your attention. I remember my stay in Atlantis, Dubai – several times a day I received calls asking me "Is

Explore Cambodia



everything all right, would you like anything?" As they say, there were killing me with their kindness.

When I have a break, I usually...

On business trips I have little time, but whenever there is a break, I try to meet my friends, and go with them to some cafeteria. When I'm in Vienna, I go to DO- & CO overlooking St. Stephen's Cathedral, to drink a cafe melange.

The greatest holiday so far...

They are yet to come, because so far each holiday has been slightly better than the previous one – I experience new things, get the chance to meet new people...

A trip adventure

I'd be willing to forget about ...

It happened in Panama City.

Thinking of it now, it seems funny, but back then I was really scared. I arrived in Panama late at night, and got into a ta-

xi with a steaming engine and a broken windscreen. I chose this one, because its driver was the only one to say, "Ok, ok", when I showed him a card with the name of my hotel and asked him, in English, if he would drive me there.

A couple of minutes later we drove off the motorway, then the asphalt road ended, and we drove towards the slum. We went through a gate, and through the yard, full of rusty scrap metal, we drove to a neglected, empty hall. The driver stopped the car and soon disappeared. Soon he came back, accompanied by a few well-built men.

I was trying to comfort myself, that they only want my money, baggage and passport. I was hoping they won't take my shoes, as it would have been difficult to get to the city on foot.

The driver comes up to me, and asks me to give him the name of my hotel one more time. It turned out, he'd had no idea where it was, but was desperate not to lose a client, so he drove me to his ho-

use, to ask friends how to get to the hotel, where I'd been planning to stay. When we got to the place, and as I slowly recovered, I paid him the agreed fare of 25 dollars for the ride, and he smiled to me and gave me a card with his name a telephone number on it. He said, I could call him anytime I wanted, and he would drive me anywhere in Panama City or further away.

I didn't need his service any more, but I still have this card. If anyone going to Panama needed a trustworthy taxi driver, I can give them his number...

I know I'm going to visit...

When travelling to Thailand I always wanted to visit Cambodia as well. Unfortunately, usually there was no time. I never crossed the border. And because of the location and long-lasting isolation, Cambodia hasn't been open to tourists, until now. I hope to manage to get there before the mass tourism discovers Cambodia.

TOP LAPTOPS

Portable computers, laptops, notebooks, or whatever they are called, will always be associated with business. Independently of the place: on a plane, on a train or simply on a desk, they are frequently used by business people as their command post. Business Traveller has decided to once again have a closer look at laptops and what they offer. After all, without a notebook computer no business person would be able to travel round the world as freely as they can now. Darek Zawadzki, our electronics specialist, has examined thoroughly the computer novelties of this season, and found six of them which are especially interesting.

ASUS NX90

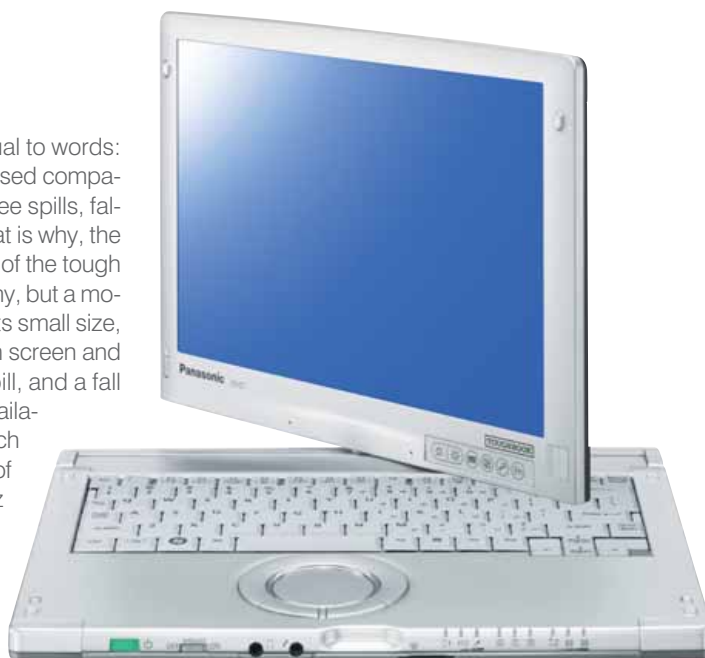
From the very first sight you see NX90, you know that Asus has put a lot of effort in building this remarkably charming laptop. It was designed by David Lewis – the world's renowned designer, while the speakers were created by Bang & Olufsen. The body of the NX90 is made of polished aluminium, which, in combination with the innovative design of the speakers, looks very impressive. The computer is not only nice, but also efficient. The strongest configuration has Intel Core i7-820QM, 1.73 GHz processor with Turbo Boost up to 3.06 GHz, NVIDIA GeForce GT 335M graphics card with 1GB GDDR3 memory, Blu-ray/DVD combo drive, and 1.5 TB hard disk. Not enough? The Asus has a 18.4 inch LCD LED backlit screen with Full HD resolution. There is also a full size keyboard with two touch pads positioned at either side which serve as an intuitive and enjoyable way to manage and play your multimedia content. Of course, I must mention also the highest quality of sound produced by the speakers of the Asus. It's a real rarity, even among the top-shelf notebook computers, and the overall effect was achieved thanks to Asus's cooperation with Golden Ear and Bang & Olufsen. The system installed in the computer is Windows 7 Ultimate 64. Dimensions: 525 x 280 x 43.8, weight 4.4 kg with 6 cell battery.

Prices start with 7999 PLN (€2000).



PANASONIC CF-C1

The name "Panasonic" on the body of a laptop is generally equal to words: "Warning! A tough machine!". The engineers from the Osaka-based company assumed that too many portable computers "die" due to coffee spills, falling off a desk, or inappropriate handling while being carried. That is why, the Toughbook series was created. CF-C1 is the youngest member of the tough family. It's not a typical military computer used e.g. by the US Army, but a more civil version aimed at business people who would appreciate its small size, light weight and durability. The computer, which has only 12 inch screen and weighs mere 1.69 kg, will definitely survive a small keyboard spill, and a fall from the height of up to 76 cm. Depending on the version, it is available with Multi-touch screen and a digitizer or a resistance Multi-touch display, which can be operated even with the gloves on. The heart of the laptop is Intel Core i5-520M vPro processor clocked at 2.4 GHz (with Turbo Boost to 2.93 GHz), the data is stored on 250 GB hard drive, and the operating system is Windows 7 Professional 32. The dimensions: 299.2 x 226.5 x 30.6/44.3 mm. **Prices starts with 9000 PLN (€2250).**



HP ELITEBOOK 8740W

There is a reason why Hewlett Packard in its official promotional materials describes this model as "the workstation". The laptop has a considerable processing capacity, solid construction, and a long lasting battery which is one of the most important aspects for a business person. The computer we tested had WD942EA symbol with Intel Core i7-740QM processor (1.73 GHz, 6 MB L3 cache memory), NVIDIA Quadro FX3800M 1GB GDDR3 graphics card, Blu-ray ROM DVD +/-RW SuperMulti DL LightScribe drive, 500 GB hard drive and 17 inch WUXGA LED display (1920x1200 resolution) with anti-glare layer and DreamColor panel. The spill-resistant keyboard has a drain system that funnels fluid through a hole in the bottom of the notebook. This minimizes the risk of damage to sensitive components underneath. The dimensions of the computer are 397.5 x 285.5 x 36.5 mm. The weight is 3.57 kg (without battery). The EliteBook's operating system is Windows 7 Professional 64. **Price: 16 800 PLN (€4200).**

SAMSUNG Q530

Q is the newest notebook line from the Korea, aimed at the users who seek durable, but also elegant computers. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to see the Q530 model on our market – as the date of its Polish premiere was set for the day after this article was printed. However, taking into consideration the high quality of Q530's predecessors, the newest laptop is going to offer good quality at a reasonable price. According to Samsung's promotional leaflet, the Q530 has a remarkably light 15.6 inch LCD display with LED backlight, Intel Core i5 520M processor clocked at 2.40 GHz with 3 MB cache (the fastest configuration), NVIDIA GeForce GT 330M graphics card, ODD optical drive and a 640 GB hard drive. The dimensions are 381 x 256 x 27/32.75 mm. Weight: 2.39 kg. The price is a mystery.





APPLE MACBOOK PRO

Reviewing portable computers, it's impossible not to mention the laptops produced by Apple. Solid, efficient, but at the same time remarkably elegant – these are all the features of MacBook Pro computers. And they come in different sizes! (13, 15 or 17 inch). The version which appealed to us

the most was the one with 17-inch LED backlit LCD display. The elegant body of this computer hides Intel Core i5 2.53 GHz processor with 3 MB L3 cache memory, an integrated Intel HD graphics processor and NVIDIA GeForce GT 330M with 512 MB shared RAM, 500 GB hard drive and 8x slot-loading SuperDrive reading double-layer disks (DVD±R DL/ DVD±RW/CD-RW). The computer runs on Mac OS X Snow Leopard operating system. The dimensions are 391 x 267 x 27 mm. Weight: 2.99 kg.

Price: around 10000 PLN (€2.500).

TOSHIBA PORTÉGÉ R700

Toshiba is one of the major players on the world's computer market. The company's portfolio looks extremely impressive. In other words – there is a lot to choose from. Model R700 appeared in Poland this summer. Depending on the configuration, it may be equipped with Intel Core i5, i3 or i7 processor, and a 500 GB hard drive. The 13 inch Portégé weighs mere 1.3 kg and is only 20mm thin, which makes it one of the lightest and the thinnest business notebook computers available on the European market. The secret lies in the newest cooling system which allowed for packing very efficient electronics in such a small body. The laptop has an optical drive and runs on Windows 7 Professional operating system. The price hasn't been announced yet.



FREEDOM and fun

The name of this car suggests freedom. Land Rover Freelander is a car for active people. Good for asphalt and surprisingly skilful off the beaten track.

SUV. This three letter abbreviation defines the character of a car. Sport Utility Vehicle means that a car should be comfortable, functional, and also versatile. I must admit that Freelander is an ideal SUV. Why? Not only does it have a distinct and modern body, but it also doesn't look too "offroady" on the street. It's also very spacious (the boot capacity is 755 litres), with lifted ride height, and construction which is strong

enough to cope with traditional roads as well as rough natural terrain away from any asphalt or paved roads. Freelander handles well in such conditions, drives fine on gravel, wades quite deep pools, and performs incredibly well on forest paths full of deep ruts. It can be used for towing a caravan, a motorboat, sailing boat, but is "trendy" enough to serve as a business vehicle or a family van.

CHOOSE THE ICON

The above words aren't just smooth words taken straight from Land Rover's marketing department. It's just enough to mention a few further details. First of all, the Freelander is equipped with 4WD with Terrain Response system switch which thinks for the driver and steers the engine, the transmission and the differential in such a way to ideally adjust the vehicle to the surface being traversed. You choose an appropriate icon with a rotary knob on the centre console (asphalt, gravel-snow, mud and ruts, or sand), and then set off on a new (off-road) adventure – while the elec-

tronics is doing all the dirty work. Add to this the HDC system which allows a smooth and control hill descent in rough terrain without the driver needing to touch the brake pedal.

Engines? Petrol (3.2 litres, V6, 233 BHP), or Diesel (2.2 litres, turbocharged with common rail, 160 BHP). The former is powerful, while the other quite economical (consumes less than 7 litres/ 100 km in the combined mode). What about the environment? Not only are Land Rover's constructors very keen on lowering exhaust emission in their vehicles, but they have also equipped it with the Stop&Start system which reduces fuel consumption by up to 10 per cent! For the sake of accuracy, Freelander successfully passed safety crash tests and received 5 stars granted by EuroNCAP. To sum up, it's good off the beaten track, economical, tough, safe... Just pure freedom. ■

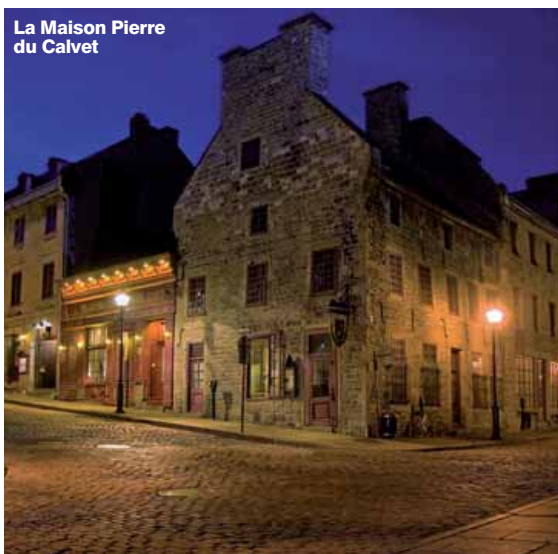
Rafat Jemielita

The author is a journalist for Playboy magazine and a co-presenter of TVN Turbo's "Automaniak" – a motor magazine programme.





Notre-Dame Basilica



La Maison Pierre du Calvet



Old Montréal

Canada's island city has creative flare and stunning heritage. **Felicity Cousins** picks out some treats from the past and present

01 NOTRE-DAME BASILICA

Montréal is an easy city to navigate by foot or subway. It has many different neighbourhoods, each with its own atmosphere and focus, but the city as a whole is relaxed and enjoyable to stroll around – you won't see many people rushing here. Many business travellers will be based in the International Quarter near the convention centre, and your first stop, in Old Montréal, is a few minutes' walk from here.

It's said that if you don't venture inside Notre-Dame Basilica then you have not seen the city. Inaugurated in 1829, the architecture is gothic revival, one of the first structures of its kind in Canada. The space is huge – it can seat up to 3,500 people – but the wooden ceiling, carvings, pillars and furnishings, and the 24-carat gold details shining in the dimmed light make it feel warm and cosy. Take a look at the beautiful stained-glass windows, which depict the religious and working lives of the inhabitants of Montréal rather than biblical stories.

If you're lucky you will be there while Canada's largest Casavant organ is being played, or during Sunday mass at 11am, when the choir sings. At the back of the main nave is the Sacré-Coeur Chapel, popular for high-profile weddings – singer Céline Dion tied the knot here. A fire destroyed half of the chapel in 1978 but it was restored to the original

design, adding a unique altarpiece – Canada's largest bronze frieze, measuring five metres wide and eight metres high. It is breathtaking. Entry with a 20-minute tour is C\$5 (£3); free for prayer. Open daily from 7.30am; tours half-hourly 9am-4pm Mon-Fri; 9am-3.30pm Sat; 12.30pm-3.30pm Sun. 110 Rue Notre-Dame Ouest; basiliquenddm.org

02 LA MAISON PIERRE DU CALVET

From the Basilica, head right down Rue Notre-Dame and walk for five minutes before turning right on to Rue Bonsecours. On the corner of this small cobbled street is La Maison Pierre du Calvet. Calvet was a merchant and justice of the peace, and his home, built in 1725, is the oldest private house in the city. It also offers public accommodation, with ten stunning guestrooms to choose from – check the website to see which one you like the look of.

The house is owned by Ronald Drevigne and Gaëtan Trottier, who also has a museum of his bronze sculpture work in the same building. It is a magical place with original dark wood panelling, stone walls and floors, large open fires and a garden terrace. The reception is in a greenhouse with trees and plants, and parrots chattering from their perches. There is also a library and a popular restaurant that serves local produce. 405 Rue Bonsecours; tel +1 514 282 1725; pierreducalvet.ca

03 OLD MONTREAL

In the 1960s there was a plan to destroy much of the then-uninhabited Old Town and build a highway along the

banks of St Lawrence River, but protesters stopped this from happening and the city's heritage was saved. Today, unlike many «old towns», Old Montréal is a residential area. The result is a busy, happy atmosphere and it's a lovely place to explore during the day or night.

From La Maison Pierre du Calvet, step on to Rue Saint-Paul and turn right. This is the main street and on the left, at number 350, you'll find Bonsecours Market (marchebonsecours.qc.ca), the oldest market in the city and one of Canada's top ten heritage buildings. It started life as the Parliament of United Canada in 1849 and was the City Hall from 1852 until 1878. It now houses restaurants, cafés and 15 boutique shops selling Canadian arts and crafts – it's a good place to browse for gifts. Open daily from 10am; closing time seasonal.

Continue down Rue Saint-Paul for more shops and plenty of well-established and popular restaurants.

04 MOUNT ROYAL PARK

Montréal is named after Mount Royal, the large hill overlooking the city. The «mountain», as the locals call it, stands at 233 metres and nothing in Montréal can be built taller, to make sure there is always space and light. To get to Mount Royal from Rue Saint-Paul, turn right when you hit Rue Saint-Sulpice (the Basilica is at the top of this street) and head to Place D'Armes metro station. It's four stops to Mount Royal.

The metro has been around since 1966 and the wooden brake blocks are lubricated with peanut oil (if the train breaks suddenly, you may think you can smell peanut butter). From Mount



Mount Royal Park



Canadian Centre for Architecture



Bagels

Royal station, walk down Mount Royal Avenue to the park. It's huge and you can easily walk to the top of the mountain, past curious and friendly red squirrels, for fantastic views of the island city.

05 SHOPPING AND SNACKING

Walk back into the centre of town via the shops of Boulevard Saint-Laurent and Rue Saint-Denis, which run parallel to one another. Both have a good

mix of high-end clothes boutiques mixed with more quirky designer shops and cafés. It's a pleasant stroll into the city and as the roads are on a grid system, if you wander off down a side street you can easily find your way back.

For a snack, head into one of the many cafés and grab a bagel (made with eggs and baked in a wood oven, rather than with water in gas ovens in New York and Toronto). Or try some poutine

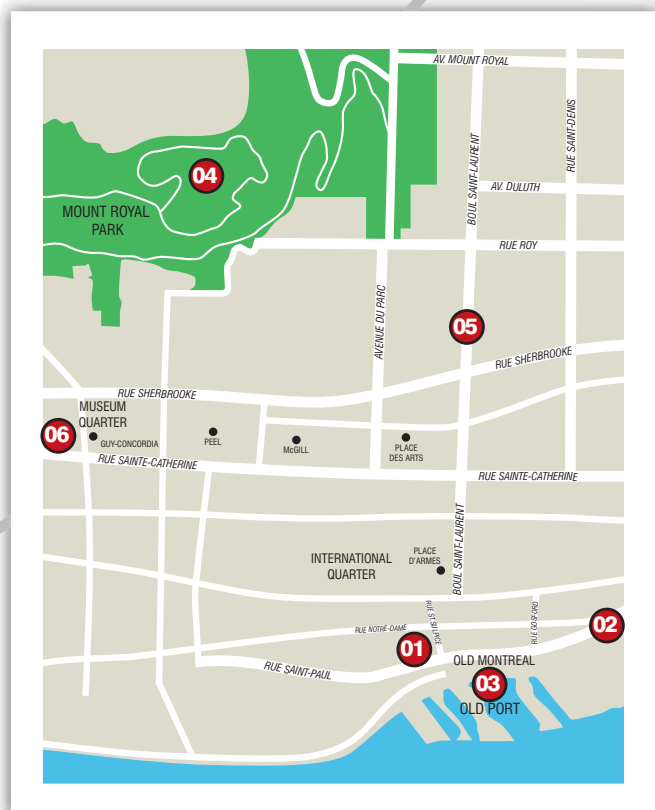
– French fries cooked in goose fat with gravy and cheese curd. It's a delicious, if filling, local speciality. Eventually you'll hit Rue Sainte-Catherine, the city's main shopping street (similar to London's Oxford Street) with shops such as Ogi-ly's (like Harrods) and all the big fashion brands. It runs past Place des Arts, a pleasant pedestrian area where festivals are held in summer.

06 CANADIAN CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE

Catch a metro at Place des Arts or McGill stations and get off a couple of stops later at Guy-Concordia. Otherwise you could walk through the weatherproof underground city, which has 32km of walkways, shopping and restaurants. A couple of blocks down from Guy-Concordia, at 1,920 Rue Baile, is the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA). This huge research facility was founded in 1979 and has thousands of building drawings and photographs on display explaining the history and development of architecture and design in society.

The CCA works on the premise that architecture is a public concern, so many of the exhibitions are aimed at inspiring debate. For example, the «Other Space Odysseys» exhibition, which runs until September 6, looks at the links between space travel and architecture. It's easy to spend an hour or so here. Open 11am-6pm Wed-Sun (9pm Thurs); closed Mon-Tue. Entry C\$10 (£6.50); visit cca.qc.ca ■

For more information on Montréal visit: tourisme-montreal.org, montrealstweetdeals.com



? ask Peter

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BABY ON BOARD

At present I'm taking care of my several months old daughter. Earlier, I used to travel a lot alone. Now I'd like to visit my sister in London with my little daughter. Until now, I have never paid any particular attention to people travelling with little babies, unless their babies were crying. Is there any special procedure to book a ticket for a baby?

Beata

Pani Beato

These days, the sight of a baby travelling on a plane is nothing unusual. Which is good, as they should learn about the world from the cradle. Usually children under 12 receive discounts from most airline tariffs. Discounts are usually between 25% to 33%. Some child discounts come to even 50% of the price of an adult ticket. There are no discounts on airport taxes. A child has a right to take its seat on a plane and is entitled to the full luggage allowance. It can also collect points in most of the loyalty programmes.

Booking a ticket is a standard procedure, but in order to get a discount you need to provide your child's date of birth.

Children under 2 are treated differently. They can get even 90% discount, but they are not entitled to a separate seat on a plane. Throughout the flight they have to sit on the parents' laps. On some planes, there is an option to install a special bassinets for babies. It is fixed to the wall in the first row. On smaller planes there are no such facilities. As regards the airport tax, it is charged only partially. Such a child (in airline terminology referred to as an infant) doesn't have the right to full luggage allowance either. In your case, as your daughter is under 2, you can choose a more expensive ticket with a separate seat, or a cheaper ticket without the seat. You can take a collapsible pram free of charge.

What is crucial for every airline, is the security. In each row there is an additional oxygen mask prepared for an infant. An infant should also have its seatbelt fastened. Flight attendants have special belts, which can be attached to the parent's seatbelt.

Remember, that airlines often offer special meals for children. You can order such a meal when booking the ticket. Younger children are often given special packages with toys and books, to make the flight more pleasant.

When the plane takes off and lands, young children often cry because of the changes of air pressure in the inner ear. Older children can chew gum, younger passengers can have a sip of something to drink.

STARS AND THE LEVELS OF QUALITY

I'm away on a business trip at least twice a month. My company usually books rooms in 4- and 5-star hotels, as we often use the conference facilities and meet business partners there. Hotels I stay in, differ when it comes to equipment and decor. Are there any standards for 5-star hotels?

Paweł

Dear Paweł,

Hotels, especially the best ones, constantly surprise us with their facilities and equipment. The interior is usually designed by the best architects – masters of the global design. Apart from original decor, there are other requirements that have to be met, to receive the "5-star" label.

The hotel categories are granted by different offices in different countries. In Poland, it is the duty of the office of Voivodeship Marshal, and the regulations are governed by the Tourist Services Bill.

Technical requirements require for all passages (like the one leading to the pool) to be enclosed. There are exceptions regarding typically recreational sites – in such cases the passages leading to other pavilions can be located outside. An appropriate size of the reception hall, a roofed driveway, two main entrances, separate entrances for guests and luggage, and a hotel car park – these are some other examples of requirements for 5-star hotels. Also, buildings of more than one level, must be fitted with a lift.

There is also a set of requirements regarding hotel rooms, which have to be at least 14 sq m large. A suite, in turn, must cover the area of at least 25 sq m. Much attention is also drawn to the size of the beds – a double one has to be at least 140x200 cm. Furnishing standards determine the number and arrangement of mirrors, lamps, pictures, and how well the blackout curtains should eliminate the natural light. A room has to be equipped with a safe, a mini bar, a TV set, a telephone, a radio, shoe and clothes cleaning kit, an information bulletin and a stationery set. Additionally, the rooms need to be air-conditioned and properly sound-proofed.

It is not only what we can see, that makes a hotel a 5-star one. A hotel must also meet the requirements regarding the intangible services. For example, there needs to be a 24-hour room service (offering hot drinks and meals), left luggage and laundry service. The guests should be able to buy cosmetics and newspapers on the spot, and bedlinen as well as towels should be replaced every day.

Many guests place much value on recreational and biological regeneration centres. There must be a swimming pool and at least two other facilities, like a sauna, a steam bath, a solarium or a massage salon. Other necessary features of a 5-star hotel include a hairdresser's and a flower shop (or flower delivery option).

The staff should wear identical uniforms in line with their responsibilities. The reception staff should speak at least two foreign languages, and auxiliary staff – need to have a communicative command of at least one language.

Bear in mind that these regulation refer to hotels in Poland. Other countries may have different requirements for star rating systems.

Poczuj historię



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