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We answer all your questions regarding travelling.



Each of us has dreamt at times of travelling fast, comfortably and without any limits. Of course, airlines try to do their best, providing their passengers with all possible comforts, especially in higher cabin classes. However, almost everyone who spends hundreds of hours yearly on board jet airliners, sometimes imagines how nice it would be to fly a business jet – an aircraft which they would have at their own disposal and equipped in line with their own needs. Our feature article will convince you that this dream can easily come true.

A private jet will take you almost everywhere, including Heathrow airport in London. Being one of the world's most important airports, Heathrow is still expanding, although even now it is a city within a city. Some of the destinations we describe in this issue include Santiago, Bangkok, Casablanca, as well as Morocco – especially in the view of organizing there incentive trips. We also invite you to visit impressive golf courses in the Republic of South Africa, charming Parisian bistros, and for a cruise from Istanbul to the Holy Land aboard a remarkable ship the Vision Of The Seas.

We also do not forget about the most important aspect of each issue of Business Traveller – that is about hotels and business trips. This issue features hotels in Łódź, Wrocław, and Frankfurt, while our Tried&Tested section also included a visit

to Warsaw's Izumi Sushi restaurant. We also check the latest news of the major hotel chains.

Finally, we take you for a ride in Suzuki Kizashi – a latest novelty by the renowned Japanese company, and present you with a range of new, attractive smartphones. Our experts will also give you a range of pieces of advice – both in wine making, or regarding legal regulations on flying and passengers rights.

Enjoy your reading.



Robert Grzybowski
Publisher BT Poland



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Port lotniczy Katowice Pyrzowice

From Katowice to Munich and Turin

The summer flight schedule of the Polish air carrier included re-launching of the connections from Katowice International Airport in Pyrzowice to Munich and Turin.

The flights on Katowice – Munich route will depart six times a week – everyday except Saturdays (Monday through Friday at 6.05 am and at 7.30 pm, on Sunday at 7.30 pm; return flights from Munich Mon-Fri at 8.35 am and 9.40 pm, on Sunday at 9.40 pm). The flight time will be about 90 minutes. The connection will be operated by Embraer 170 aircraft, which takes up to 70 passengers on board.

The flights on Katowice – Turin route will depart six times a week – everyday except Saturdays (Monday through Friday at 6.05 am and on Sunday at 1.35 pm; return flights at 4.25 pm). This route will also be operated by Embraer 170 and the flight will take slightly more than 2 hours.

The Airport Honoured

LOT Polish Airlines has received two awards by Polskie Porty Lotnicze (Polish Airports State Enterprise) at the 5th PPL Award Ceremony. LOT was the only airline to be singled out in two categories,

“Passenger Transport Growth at Chopin Airport, Warsaw, in the Traditional Carrier Sector, 2010” and “New Scheduled Connections at Chopin Airport, Warsaw, 2010”.

“We are delighted that our endeavours at LOT have been appreciated. 2010 was a fruitful year for us in terms of both the record number of new

connections we introduced and the increase of over 311,000 in the number of LOT passengers flying out of Chopin Airport. It was also a productive year as regards our cooperation with Polish Airports State Enterprise, which was crowned by our joint opening of the Business Lounge at Warsaw airport”, said Marcin Piróg, LOT Polish Airlines CEO.

Malev Celebrates Its 65th Anniversary



The Hungarians have quite a reason to celebrate as Malev – their national airline – celebrates its 65th anniversary. The celebration take different forms. For example one of the fleet’s Bombardier Q400 aircraft has been painted in the Malév colours of the 1960s. The authentic paintwork, which suits the modern turboprop plane extremely well, was originally the official livery for the airline’s IL-18 aircraft between 1960 and 1974.

MASZOVLET, predecessor in title of MALÉV was founded in 1946. (Magyar-Szovjet Polgári Légitforgalmi Rt. – Hungarian-Soviet Civilian Air Traffic PLC.) with Lisunov Li-2 aircrafts. The

Co. became independent in 1954, and got its name MALÉV (Magyar Légiközlekedési Vállalat). Li-2-s were replaced with IL-14-s, then IL-18 aircrafts were bought.

Today the Hungarian airline, which is a member on oneworld alliance, flies to 50 destinations in 35 countries worldwide. The fleet of Malev consists of 22 aircraft, mostly B737s (various models, 18 altogether), and four turboprop Q400s. One of the turboprops is now carrying Malev’s original livery. With a bit of luck, you may see it at Okęcie airport, as it also operates on Budapest-Warsaw route.



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Connect with Air France and KLM



In February Air France and KLM introduced a new service, called Connect, which allows for active communication with passengers.

The service is available for all passengers worldwide and is used for the most significant operational disruptions that customers may encounter: cancellations, delays, or delayed baggage.

Prior to the flight passengers will receive information about delays, cancellations, gate changes. The customer will be notified from three hours prior to departure up until boarding. After the flight, Connect sends information regarding missing baggage and as soon as KLM or Air France have traced the baggage, the customer is informed. Later, he is also in-

formed of the delivery date and address by SMS and email.

In the event of a flight being cancelled, all passengers receive an email with an apology and, for KLM flights, a direct referral to the Customer Care department. In the event of a delay, all passengers receive an email with an apology and Flying Blue members, depending on their status and the length of the delay can also get compensation in Bonus.

All passengers will be contacted through Air France or KLM Connect once they left an email address and/or a mobile number. The message service is available in 8 languages. Polish passengers will receive their messages in English.

THE PRESIDENTIAL RECEPTION

The head of the state often meets various guests in his palace. However, once a year, the diplomatic corps visit the palace for a big event. This time among those invited were also the Polish PM, ministers, and members of clergy. We are mentioning this event mainly because apart from the official part of the meeting, the guests tested Polish delicacies which were presented in geographical groups – from the Baltic region to the Tatras. Chefs Grzegorz Lelek from Czarny Potok and Marcin Kłyś from Ossa – the hotels belonging to Trip Group, prepared a corner presenting the specialities of Podhale region. Rumours say that their buffet was extremely popular among the guests.



Etap Goes Polish



The etaphotel.com website is now also available in Polish.

The website enables you to book your hotel room in one of 8 Etap hotels in Poland, as well as 400 hotels of the chain worldwide. Those visiting the Polish version of the website will easily find all necessary information on the hotels of the chain – their exact location, standards, additional services, booking, and promotions. An example of the optimal solution aimed at the users is section “Find and book a room” which, apart from the basic criteria such as the country, city, or the date of stay, includes 5 additional search options: “Find on a map”, “On your itinerary”, “Near a point of interest”, “Near and address”, and “Alphabetical list”.

Nioovo In Polish

Nioovo, which is a global standard of electronic business cards exchange, has launched its Polish version.

The tool is a new global standard of exchanging basic contact data which will free you and your friends from the necessity of copying the data from paper business cards to your computer and your mobile. Moreover, it will allow you to store the downloaded business cards in one place and you will be able to open them at any time. You can also send a link to your nioovo so that every person who receives it can download your data onto their e-mail program or mobile.

After registering with the system at www.nioovo.com the user may choose the nioovo type that suits him the most (more or less contact data). The technological partner of the service is the Windows Azure platform.

The data is encrypted in form of a link, without knowing of which, nobody can find a person by entering only partial personal data such as the name. Nioovo guarantees its compatibility with 138 languages, including Indonesian or even Zulu.



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BOEING 747-8 Revealed



Boeing has presented the newest version of its 40-year-old 747 jumbo jet at its headquarters in Everett, Wash. B747-800, sometimes also referred to as 747-8 or 747-8I, is an intercontinental aircraft with the highest parameters and many solutions which have been copied from Dreamliner 787. The aircraft's wingspan is impressive 68.4 metres – which is 6 metres more than its predecessor B747-400, and 1 meter more than Airbus A340-600. This makes B747-800 the world's largest passenger air-

craft. The new plane will accommodate up to 467 passengers on board. Lufthansa is the first airline to receive the new Boeing. It's also known that some of the new Boeings will be available in a luxurious configuration by Boeing Business Jets.

The First Hampton by Hilton in Poland

Hilton Worldwide signed a franchise agreement with PGB Dom to open a Hampton by Hilton Hotel in the Baltic resort.

The Hampton brand, including Hampton Inn, Hampton Inn & Suites, Hampton Inn by Hilton, Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton and Hampton by Hilton, is an award-winning leader in the mid-priced hotel segment. With more than 1,800 properties globally, Hampton Hotels is part of Hilton Worldwide, the leading global hospitality company.

The 104-room hotel will open in winter this year. It will offer services and amenities characteristic of the brand: stylish lobby, free Internet access, fitness room and work zone. Guests may expect multi-functional rooms with exclusive Fresh and Clean beds. Rep-

resentatives of the company say that the hotel will be suitable both for business guests and tourists.

– “Poland is a strategic market for the Hilton network in terms of further growth of the company”, says Patrick Fitzgibbon, Senior Vice President for Development in Europe and Africa. – “We see here a great potential for our diversified offer. We are very happy to open another hotel in Poland – this time in Świnoujście”.



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Omega, a global leader in data protection, has presented the new omega® Personal Cloud technology, the ultimate data protection and remote access solution for small businesses and consumers.

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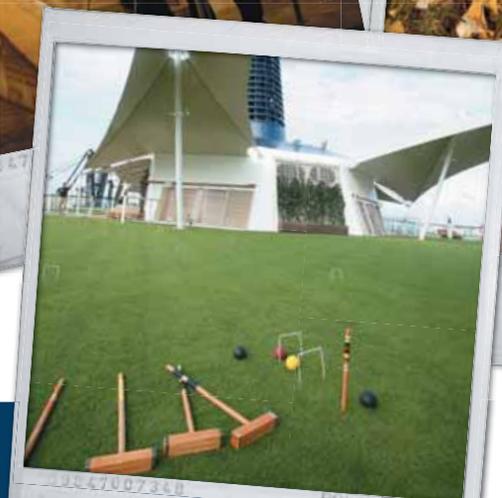
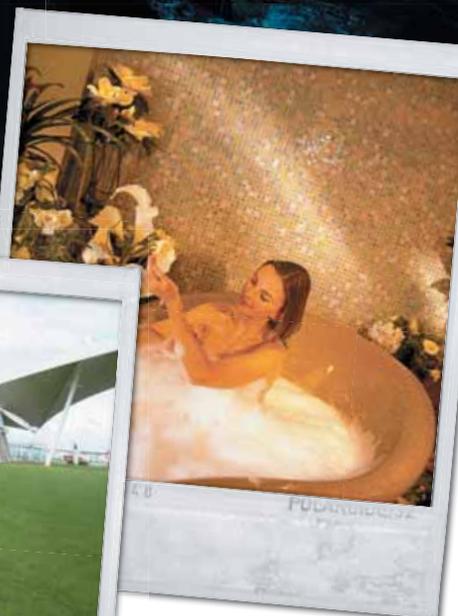
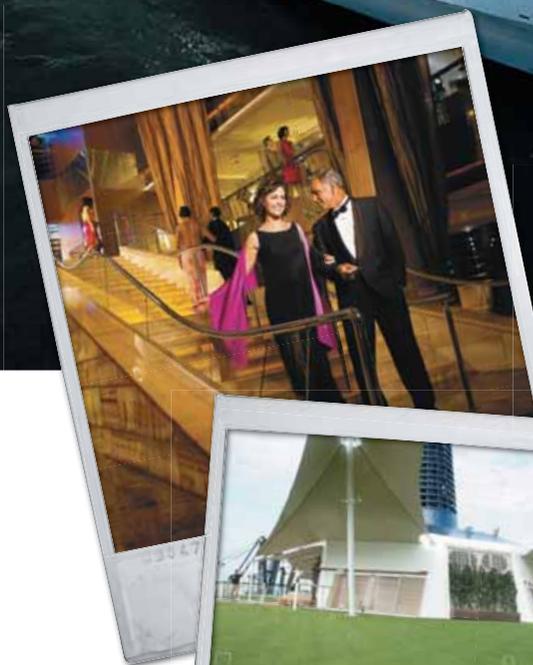
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Kosher Cuisine In Marriott

Warsaw's Marriott is the first hotel in the capital, which has implemented Kosher cuisine. The Kosher certificate was issued by Michael Schudrich, the Chief Rabbi of Poland.

Preparing kosher dishes is time-consuming and requires observing extremely strict principles. Marriott has adapted for this purpose one special room with separate equipment. The requirements of kashrut (set of Jewish dietary laws on what food can be eaten, as well as how it should be prepared) do not permit for kosher dishes to be prepared in the utensils in which non-kosher food was once prepared. Initially, the kosher offer of the hotel will be aimed at organized groups.



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- POLE GOLFOWE
Z NATURALNĄ TRAWĄ
- UCZTY KULINARNE
- WYCIECZKI

Lufthansa: a Record In Poland, Back To Rio

Poland is one of the most rapidly developing markets on which airlines belonging to Lufthansa Group operate. The past year marked another record of the number of passengers served on routes from Poland to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy. The number of Polish passengers who flew with Lufthansa, SWISS, and Austrian Airlines, reached 1.6 million – which is 10% more than in the previous year. On all Polish-German routes Lufthansa carried over 1.2 million passengers. It has been the best result of the German carrier since it started its operation on the Polish market.

Globally, in 2010 the airlines belonging to the Group carried 90.2 million passengers, which is 17% more than in 2009.

This is the result of the continuously expanding flight network of the German carrier. It has recently been announced that in autumn (starting on 30 October) Lufthansa will launch a new Frankfurt-Rio de Janeiro connection.

The flights on this route (LH 500 and LH 501) will be run 5 times a week by Airbus A340 featuring 221 seats in three cabin classes (First, Business, and Economy). The journey will take around 12 hours. Lufthansa is no newcomer to Rio de Janeiro. Germany's largest airline has serviced the metropolis already since 1956 until 2005.

Lufthansa is offering an attractive introductory fare for flights to Rio de Janeiro. A round-trip ticket from Frankfurt to Rio starts at 749 euros and can be booked now.



Fiat Gucci – a Beauty On Wheels

Fiat is getting fancy. The automaker has teamed up with fellow Italian brand powerhouse Gucci to unveil the 500 by Gucci, a special edition of the iconic Fiat 500. The collaboration between two of Italy's top brands marks the celebration of both the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy and Gucci's 90th anniversary. Tricked out with distinctive Gucci elements, the car comes in two colors, glossy pearl (white) and black. Both sport Gucci's signature green and red stripe, which runs along the exterior and also appears inside on the seats, gearshift, carpet and seatbelt. The brand's interlocking GG logo jazzes up the hubcaps, while a cursive Gucci signature is splashed on the hatchback as well as the door post. One version even comes equipped with rear brake calipers in Gucci green.



Turkish Spreads Its Wings

The Europe's fastest growing airline company, Turkish Airlines will add new destinations on its rapidly expanding network this year. The world's eighth-largest carrier by number of destinations, Turkish Airlines is planning to launch flights to 11 new destinations. Turkish Airlines is also planning to start new flights to Malaga (Spain), Salonika (Greece), Valencia (Spain), Toulouse (France), Manila (Philippines), Naples (Italy), Turin (Italy), Genoa (Italy) in the year 2011.

Turkish Airlines began to operate 3 weekly flights to Guangzhou (China) on 30th January 2011, 4 weekly flights to Los Angeles (USA) on 3rd March 2011, 4 weekly flights to Shiraz (Iran) on 14th March 2011.

The connections to China and USA are operated by new B777-300ER, while the flights to Shiraz will be run by B737-800.



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HOTEL: ŁÓDŹ Focus

WHAT'S IT LIKE? An average Pole associates Łódź with three phenomena: Piotrowska Street, the national film school, and the 19th century industry. All of these motifs can be visible in Focus hotel, which belongs to a small hotel chain developed by Immobile company. The industry – because the building of the hotel, which once was a textile mill belonging to an entrepreneur Juliusz Kindermann, was renovated in 2006 and adapted into a hotel. A film – because on entering the hotel, it's hard not to associate its interiors with Andrzej Wajda's famous "The Promise Land". And what about Piotrkowska Street? With its architectural climate Focus ideally blends into the street's architecture and the citywide trend – the renovated buildings truly make Łódź a more and more attractive city. The building of the hotel is especially distinct thanks to its two towers (where once used to be water tanks), and the first thing which draws our attention on entering the hotel is the space. The hall, the bar, and the restaurant are located in one big hall, and the factory nature of the building is further emphasized by large windows. There are various works of art displayed in the hotel, which is a nice addition to the overall feel.

WHERE IS IT? Focus hotel is located close to the city's main artery, as well as the roads heading towards Warsaw and Silesia. It is, however, separated from the busy artery by other buildings. Piotrkowska Street is merely 900 metres away from the hotel. Reaching the city's airport takes only 12 minutes, while getting to the railway station doesn't take more than 5. Also Galeria Łódzka – the city's largest shopping centre is a stone's

throw from the hotel, as is the renowned Wytwórnia club. Focus has a paid car park (PLN 25 per day).

ROOM FACILITIES The rooms in Focus hotel are spacious with distinctively high ceilings. Those who frequently stay at hotels and are used to relatively small rooms where each space is utilized, will need some time to get accustomed to the space available here. The large openable windows in the rooms are an unquestionable advantage, as they provide much daylight during the day. Focus offers 116 air-conditioned single and double rooms for 179 people. The standard equipment to be amenities found in a guest room include a king-size bed (or two separate ones), a desk, coffee and tea making facilities, free mineral water, a TV set, a wardrobe, a bathroom with a shower and a hairdryer. The access to the wireless Internet is free-of-charge, and the access code can be obtained at the reception desk.

BUSINESS FACILITIES There are three conference rooms in the hotel. The largest one is 61 sq m and in the theatre layout it can accommodate up to 70 people - the two other rooms are 30 sq m large and can seat up to 40 people. The rooms feature a multimedia overhead projector (for an extra fee), a screen, a flipchart, audio equipment, an LCD TV, as well as the wireless Internet. The hotel also provides catering services on request.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS The reception, the bar, and the restaurant are located within one space. Its central point is the circle whose one half is occupied by the reception desk, while the other one by the 24-hour Lobby Bar offering snacks, as well as alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. The restaurant is located next to the bar and it's open from midday until 11.00 pm. The menu is changed on a daily basis – during my stay the lunch

set consisted of vegetable soup, boiled beef in vegetables and horseradish sauce with potatoes, and compote – the whole set cost PLN 35. Other interesting dishes included salmon in cucumber sauce with rice (PLN 39), beef steak in boletus sauce with baked potatoes (PLN 52), and pancakes with spinach filling (PLN 21). The dishes, in their last stage, are prepared by the chef in front of the guests, which is a great opportunity to learn some culinary tricks. Breakfasts in a form of buffet are served here from 10.30 am. There is a special stand with wrapped sandwiches to take away and they are very popular among hotel guests.

LEISURE FACILITIES The leisure facilities include a small gym, two saunas (a Finnish and infrared one), as well as a relaxation room. The use of the facilities is included in the price of the room, and the sauna is located in one of the two towers of the hotel (the other one will also soon be adapted to the hotel's needs).

VERDICT A solid, 2-star hotel, which is a good choice for business travellers staying in Łódź. The spacious rooms, and the free Internet access, as well as the 24-hour bar, are definitely the hotel's strong points.

Andrzej Czuba

FACTS **CONTACT** Hotel Focus, ul. Łąkowa 23/25, 90-554 Łódź, tel. +48 42 637 12 00, hotelfocus.com.pl
PRICE A single room booked for a weekday costs PLN 299, a double room – PLN 329. At the weekend the prices are PLN 199 and PLN 219 respectively.

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EUROPEUM HOTEL

HOTEL: WROCLAW

Europeum

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The building was erected less than 10 years ago, and at that time the hotel section had only 20 bedrooms, and a considerable part of the area was functioning as office space. In 2008, when the current owners took over, they decided to reorganize the place completely. The already existing rooms were redesigned, the office section disappeared and more hotel rooms of boutique character, were added. The hotel has gained a more boutique character.

You access the hotel from the ever-vibrant Kazimierz Wielki street. The reception area is only a foretaste of what is yet there to see. It is not very big, but it well fits into the contrasting style – the furniture is dark and wooden, while the picture-decorated walls are pastel coloured. It makes you think of Finnish, minimalistic but elegant hotel style.

WHERE IS IT? In the very centre of Wrocław. The Market Square is a short walk from here, as is the Salt Square, so the cultural and business centres are within an easy reach. Bearing in mind the traffic, it takes a 20 minutes' taxi ride to get there from the airport, and slightly more than 10 minutes – to get there from the railway station.

Could have been better, as now the most annoying roadwork is in progress. All this in preparation for the Euro 2012 – it's nice to think that after the event we will be left with something practical and useful.

I got here by taxi, but had I driven here my own car, I might have joined the other drivers, who complain that the underground garage entrance is too narrow, and that it puts to a test the driving skills of bigger car owners.

Business travellers who do not come here by car, are provided by the hotel with transfer from and to the airport or the railway station, which is really convenient. The cost is added to the bill.

ROOM FACILITIES There are 38 rooms in the Europeum, and all are similar in terms of the quality. They only differ in size. The corridor floor is covered with soft grey carpet and the motion detector lights turn on automatically – another solution which works well not only in Scandinavia. The entrance doors are wide and good quality.

I stayed in a spacious 25-sqm room on the second floor. After opening the room with a magnetic card, the first thing you see is an small hallway and a wardrobe. Next to it there is a big and flat laptop safe, and all the hotel necessities.

The central place is occupied by two single beds with a cherry wood headrest, joined together, the remaining furniture in the room is of the same colour. On the bed you will find a terry bathrobe, and a pair of slippers on the floor.

Opposite to beds there is a small round table, where each morning you can expect Polish daily paper, and the Wrocław International – a magazine about the city and

its cultural events. Next to the table there are two armchairs, a cupboard with a hidden minibar (with free water as a welcome gift), above there hangs a flat LCD screen, and by the window there is a workdesk and a small swivel chair. Wide window comes with double curtains which can darken the room completely; Mine overlooked the yard, and I wasn't bothered by any noise.

In the ceiling there are a couple of light points with a possibility to adjust the light intensity – a simple, but thoughtful solution.

The bathroom is spacious and practical. Walls are covered with light stone contrasting with black sink unit. Behind

CONTACT Hotel Europeum; ul. Kazimierza Wielkiego 27A, 50-077 Wrocław; tel. +48 71 371 45 00; europeum.pl
PRICE Internet rate for a stay at the end of February was PLN 300 for a single room, breakfast included.





a sheet of glass, there is a huge and comfortable shower area. The bathroom also comes with a hairdryer.

There is an access to broadband, wireless Internet throughout the hotel. You only have to go to the reception desk to get the password, and register. If you experience any problems with your wifi, you can always get a cable and use the wired connection.

BUSINESS FACILITIES Four air-conditioned conference rooms on the first floor are equipped with all necessary facilities. The smaller is 35 sqm, others are 38 and 44 sqm, while the biggest one – 63 sqm. And additional bonus is access to natural lights through huge floor-to-ceiling windows.

On top of all that, there are another four rooms of 380 sqm altogether at your disposal in another building.



BARS AND RESTAURANTS Open in June 2009 Brasserie 27 restaurant, was named after the hotel address, and was originally named Flavours, but the owner recently has decided to change its name.

The restaurant can also be reached from the street, you do not have to enter the hotel. The decor is of contrasting but calm colours. What catches your attention is a huge glass grating filled with dozens of bottles hanging above the bar. A la carte menu is nicely complemented with a special lunch menu, very popular among the people working in the area.

The chef, Grzegorz Cielecki has travelled professionally quite a lot, and is now a coach of our national cooking junior representation. His charges have recently come back from the World Cooking Cup, where they had

won the third prize. Quite an achievement. After changing the name, the chef also made some radical changes in the menu. Brasserie, as he says, is now going to offer more natural local products like meat, cheese and even some excellent wine. The restaurant will be the only place in the city, with fresh fish delivered twice a week.

LEISURE FACILITIES There is a fitness room featuring equipment by Nautilus and a sauna – accessed exclusively by the hotel guests. Guests can also have a relaxing massage session or get a personal coach supervision when exercising.

VERDICT A nice hotel in the centre of Wrocław, providing a business traveller with comfortable accommodation and excellent cuisine.

Wojciech Chelchowski





HOTEL: FRANKFURT

Sheraton Airport Hotel and Conference Center

WHAT'S IT LIKE? At first, it is difficult to distinguish the hotel in a gigantic complex of buildings joined together at one of the biggest airports in Europe. Frankfurt is a city bustling with business activity, and you can see it everywhere you look. Nowhere is it more visible, that at the airport. After landing and entering the terminal, you can see the first signposts and it turns out that Sheraton is within the reach. Like the airport itself, it is a real conglomerate. To reach it you have to go through a wide passage opening into a huge reception area. In the evening, when tired businessmen from the whole continent come back here to have a rest before the next busy day, even up to ten desks are still open. It looks like some kind of queue outside a bakery, as the staff mechanically repeats the same greetings with a grin on their faces and gives away magnetic cards, which serve as a key to the hotel.

WHERE IS IT? Nothing to go on about. In this respect Sheraton in Frankfurt is second to none. It takes only a few minutes to get there from Terminal 1. Unless you lose your way and miss the signs on the walls, getting there doesn't even require leaving the building. It takes only fifteen minutes to get from there to the city centre, and Hauptbahnhof – the main railway station is a 20 minutes away, if you go by train. The station is right there on the airport.

ROOM FACILITIES As you can expect, a huge hotel like this one, has a lot to surprise its guests with. There are 1,008 rooms altogether, 769 of which are the re-decorated Classic Rooms. Each of them is spacious and comes with light, maple furniture. Most of the rooms have a large, comfortable Sweet Sleeper bed with anti-allergic pillows – the chain's flagship product. A wide workdesk and an ergonomic chair are useful if you need to glance through the papers before a meeting, and a huge TV set will provide you with entertainment. The room is spacious and perfectly lit, but it can also be dimmed completely, which is surely good news for travellers recovering from jet lag.

The rest of the rooms are Standard Superior or Club, with a modern working area and broadband Internet access (19 euro a day). Arranged on dedicated floors, the rooms – apart from the space – offer also other facilities, like free water, and access to the fitness centre. Club members can make use of a separate reception desk and their own Club lounge – where they can have breakfast, work or invite a business partner for a less formal meeting over a drink.

All guests have access to Link@Sheraton offering Internet access 24/7, situated on the lobby level.

BUSINESS FACILITIES Frankfurt's Sheraton offers 60 conference rooms

and ballrooms. The biggest one, Congress Centre, is 1,246 sq m and can sit up to 1,200 people. But the real show-piece is a two-floor Skyloft with conference rooms equipped with the most modern facilities; it can hold between 8 and 280 people. Each room comes with a sound system.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS There are two restaurants, offering completely different types of cuisine. *Taverne* is a typically German eatery, serving local specialties. In the elegant interiors of *Flavors*, guests are treated with delicacies inspired by modern European and Asian cuisine. There are also two spacious bars – *Glass House* – serving breakfasts, and *Lemons and Limes*, with live music and bar stools contributing to a casual atmosphere of the place.

LEISURE FACILITIES The hotel wellness centre is over 400 sq m. There are massage rooms, a steam bath, saunas and a well-equipped fitness room.

VERDICT Five-star hotel in a perfect location for a business traveller, slightly overwhelming because of its enormity.

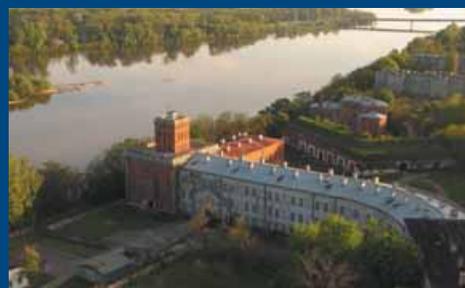
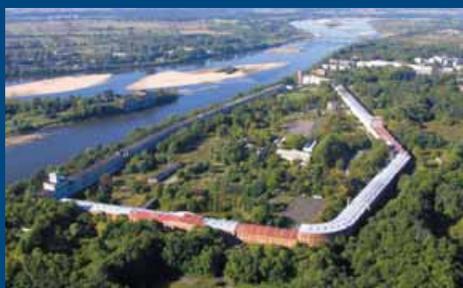
Olga Chelchowska

FACTS	CONTACT Sheraton Frankfurt Airport Hotel and Conference Center; Hugo-Eckener-Ring 15, Frankfurt 60549, Niemcy; tel. (49) 69 69770; starwoodhotels.com
	PRICE Internet rates for a stay at the end of February started at 208 euro (PLN 828) for a standard room.



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Twierdza Modlin – Cytadela

- Powierzchnia gruntu: 55,0233 ha, powierzchnia użytkowa: 58.820 m²
- *Przetarg w dniu: 31.03.2011 r., godz. 11:00*
- Cena wywoławcza: 70 000 000 zł
- **BONIFIKATA 50%**
- Wadium: 7 000 000 zł

Modlin Fortress – Cytadel

- Land area: 55,0233 ha, indoor floor space: 58.820 m²
- *The tendering procedure shall be held on 31.03.2011 r. at 11.00*
- The opening price: 70 000 000 zł
- **DISCOUNT 50%**
- The bond: 7 000 000 zł

Warunkiem przystąpienia do przetargu jest wpłata wadium w nieprzekraczalnym terminie do dnia 25.03.2011 r. / The precondition to participation in the tendering procedure is the payment of the bond no later than the 25.03.2011 r.

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ul. Nowowiejska 26 A, 00-911 Warszawa
tel.: (22) 326 19 00 | fax.: (22) 326 19 09
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www.amw.com.pl



RESTAURANT: WARSAW
Izumi Sushi

INFO A few years ago, sushi was still considered the very epitome of sophistication in Poland, and it certainly had an air of exoticism. However, sushi bars and Japanese restaurants have increased in number over time, and the dish has lost its unique entourage – considering how many cookbooks featuring sushi are now available in stores, we could say that a multitude of Polish people are experimenting with Japanese food at their homes. This is the reason why every restaurateur-to-be, who would venture into opening yet another Japanese eatery, is now facing a real challenge. Nowadays, including sushi in your menu is not enough if you strive for professional success – you also need to decide on a concept for your restaurant, as well as creating a unique ambience. Both these conditions were fulfilled by the owners of the Izumi Sushi Restaurant, Warsaw.

WHERE IS IT? Izumi Sushi is located on Biały Kamień Street in the building of the former Old Orangery, the Mokotów district. Guests will certainly appreciate its excellent central location as it ensures convenient access throughout the city, and yet provides a peaceful retreat for diners in the heart of Warsaw.

WHAT IS IT LIKE? Inside the orangery you will discover a real palm house with centralised air conditioning system, which controls humidity and temperature levels – all this creates the impression of an exotic paradise. The two-level restaurant offers seating for a large number of guests, yet it consists of a numerous discreet dining areas. When it

comes to interior design, Izumi Sushi surely ranks as one of the most unique restaurants in Warsaw, or even Poland. Enjoying your meal while surrounded by date palms and fig trees makes your visit an interesting experience.

THE MENU We can say that Izumi serves sushi, but such generalisation would not do justice to its chefs, since their artfully creative menus include appetisers such as salmon tartare with caviar or tsukemono (Japanese pickles). I highly recommend ordering tuna jalapeño, tortellini, fried oysters, or deep fried king prawns coated in breadcrumbs, which is served with tamarind and coriander sauce. Moreover, you may try traditional soups like miso or ochazuke, which is a green tea with salmon flakes and rice, plus there is also an assortment of Japanese seaweed salads, which certainly make outstanding positions on the menu.

The restaurant has a wide selection of pasta dishes – mild or spicy (the latter available in Korean style); served with seafood or available in vegetarian versions. Duck with mango salsa may be considered the local speciality, but Argentine or kangaroo steaks, unagi (Japanese eel), lamb with ginkgo nuts (Maidenhair Tree), or steamed halibut are also worth considering. The chefs skilfully blend traditional and innovative flavours and aromas, which proves to cater to the most exquisite of epicureans.

Let us not, however, forget what the restaurant specialises in – a truly delicious sushi can be order individually

or as a combination meal for 1-6 people (a special dinner set for children under 5 is also available), in the form of sashimi fusion (with mussels, oysters or a combination of three different kinds of fish), traditional sashimi, nigiri or makizushi. The wide menu choice makes you want to return again and again.

SERVICE The service is efficient and always ready to answer even the most awkward enquiries. Only during the lunchtime they may not be able to serve you as quickly as you wish, but it is hardly surprising since the restaurant is very popular, and it is always full of diners.

PRICES You can order a variety of appetisers from PLN 19 PLN 49 (amberjack tartare with the caviar of the sturgeon), the soup prices range from PLN 12 (miso) – to PLN 25 (tom yum kung – Thai soup with prawns), and the salad prices from PLN 19 – PLN 29. Further, you can enjoy the main course for PLN 39 (teriyaki chicken) – PLN 79 (kangaroo steak). Duck with mango salsa costs PLN 59, and on sushi combination meals you would spend between PLN 42 – PLN 369 (depending on how much you can eat), the latter being 6-people-feast, including 20 nigiri, 20 futomaki, 18 California maki, and 5 gunkan maki. A special dinner set for children is available at the restaurant for only PLN 1.

Ryszard Nieziemski

FACTS **CONTACT** Izumi Sushi, ul. Biały Kamień 4, 02-593 Warszawa tel. + 48 22 424 00 51, izumisushi.eu
VERDICT A restaurant with an interesting theme, tasty food and smooth service. Perfect choice for business meetings.



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Chartered business jets are becoming more and more popular in Poland. Nowadays, such a sky limousine is the fastest means of transport, allowing us to save time and providing us with both comfort and privacy. What's more, you can charter it for almost any desired route – reports **Wojciech Chelchowski**.

A Private Sky



Nowadays, it's not just a crazy whim of somebody with a thick wallet, although only several years ago such was a typical opinion of business aircraft. A small, private jet was merely a pipe dream and a synonym of exaggerated luxury as well as unimaginable fortune.

However, it has changed. Luckily, business aircraft are more and more often used by smaller companies, which need to quickly do some business on the other end of the continent without the feeling of wasting too much time. A private jet seems to be the best solution to such problems.

THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Business aircraft appeared in Poland a few years ago. Initially, the whole idea was surrounded by a delicate veil of mystery, although in other countries – particularly in the USA where the private aviation industry, which charters jets to businesses and individual customers, flourished as early as in the 1950s. There are thousands of charter companies, serving a huge number of clients. Their fleets consists of various aircraft: most of them are quite luxurious, although many are even 30 years old. This, however, shows how widely popular and well-established the business is.

In Poland of the late 1990s there was already a small group of pioneer users of private jets. The recent years have been a period rapid development of this type of aviation. Unfortunately, the recent economic downfall also affected this industry. The past two years were difficult, but now the market is being rebuilt and everything is slowly getting back to normal.

The whole chartering procedure is easy. A client contacts an agent, inquiring him about the route and the date of the flight he is interested in. Then, the agent prepares a few offers (or, if the client is a bit fussy or undecided, even up to a dozen of them) and the client chooses the one which suits his need the most.

The clients are different. Some of them make “blind” inquiries, not knowing much about the service. There are, however, also clients with strictly defined requirements – they want a jet instead of a turboprop, provide an exact number of passengers, and the approximate time of the whole operation. This truly simplifies the whole process because the agent can manage such an order more effectively.

The elite group of clients are those who use this form of transport on regular basis and have become almost experts in this area. They are mostly affluent people who

travel by private jets not only in business, but also for holiday or to do some shopping in Paris or Milan.

– An assistant of the person calls an agent and provides him with the information on the route, model of the aircraft desired by the client. Sometimes the inquiries are about a specific aircraft with characteristic interior design. “A client chooses the desired model and we do our best to find it for him”, says Zbigniew Podermański of Air Charter Professional. His company is a broker specializing in chartering aircrafts in passenger air traffic. They particularly specialize in chartering smaller aircrafts for business and VIP flights as well as commercial airliners to carry larger passenger groups. Several years of experience in the airline industry, many contacts to a number of operators worldwide, and the exception-



THE FACES OF LUXURY

The market of small business or VIP aircraft generates lots of money. Aircraft manufacturers are aware of this fact, so they have a wide selection of such planes on their offer. The market is dominated by Cessna, Hawker Beechcraft, and Bombardier. Jet planes are offered in a few categories.

LIGHT JET These are small aircraft for 4-7 passengers, with the range of up to 3,000 kilometres. The most popular models are: Citation Jet CJ1, Citation Jet CJ2, Citation Mustang, Citation Jet CJ3, Embraer Phenom 100, Beechcraft Premier 1, Citation Jet CJ 2+, Citation Jet Bravo.

SUPERLIGHT JET They have a slightly bigger range. Their main feature is so-called stand up cabin which allows the passengers to move freely around the plane. The most popular models: Citation Excell, Bombardier Learjet 40XR, Citation XLS, Citation XLS+.

MIDSIZE JET These are slightly larger planes, taking about 8 passengers, and offering a large luggage compartment, longer range, and the possibility to serve hot meals on board. The most popular models: Hawker 800XP/900XP, Bombardier Learjet 60XR, Citation Sovereign, Citation X.

HEAVY JET These are luxurious, long-range jets, taking up to 14-16 passengers on board.

The most popular models: Falcon 2000, Challenger 605, Challenger 850, Global Express XRS, Falcon 7X, GulfStream 450/550.

It's also possible to charter large passenger planes, modified to the needs of a private customer. Airbus A318 Elite, which normally takes up to 120 passengers, in the business version has only 19 seats, Boeing 757VIP with a regular configuration of 230 seats, here takes only 49. Not to forget about the BBJ – which is a luxurious Boeing Business Jet taking up to 20 passengers on board. Such jets offer both unique comfort of travel and the top notch cabin equipment.



al attention to details guarantee that their services will satisfy even the most demanding customers. Thanks to the vast contacts with many airline operators, the company has an access to administrate thousands airplanes in Europe and in other places in the world. Air Charter Professional only collaborates with the licensed airline operators that have the required Air Operator's Certificate (issued by the Air Transport Department in their country).

Without such a license an airline operator is not allowed to provide passenger flights.

Air Charter Professional offers a wide choice of services and they have in their offer jet planes or turboprop engine aircrafts from the whole continent. The competition is big, so the quality of service, as well as flexibility are much appreciated. Sometimes there is simply no second chance.

LUXURY AND PRIVACY

A private jet is a chartered air limousine. However, it also provides an opportunity for a client to save a lot of time. With such means of transport it is definitely possible for a board of directors to fly to a Portuguese city to visit a factory there, have a 3-hour meeting, make a preliminary decision, and return to Poland in the late afternoon to share their impressions with other members of the management. Since the offer has been personalized, the jet awaits the clients, they can be served a delicious meal on board, and everything takes exact-

ly as much time as it is necessary – we are not dependant on scheduled airlines or road transport. The aircraft lands on the airfield which is the closest to the point of destination. On the client's request, the broker can arrange a transfer by a luxurious car from the airfield to the venue of the meeting. The return procedure is similar, so the whole journey is flawless. Add to this that the clients are provided with luxuries which are out of reach of an ordinary person.

Another significant factor is the complete discretion. Business trips made when strategic negotiations are in progress, must often be kept in secret, because the competition is "wide awake". Traveling by chartered aircraft provides such a complete discretion. Another advantage is catering which is tailored to the needs of a client who can count on his favourite dish to be served on board, as well as champagne of his choice, and the in-flight entertainment chosen in line with his own preferences. What else can broker provide?

"The offer is practically unlimited", claims Zbigniew Podermanski of Air Charter Professional. "We can fulfil almost any wish of the client regarding the model of the plane, its interior and equipment, as well as many other aspects related to the journey".

The clients can truly feel that they are being treated in a special way. They are served in separate airport areas, and general aviation section, which





deals with private jet traffic, is present at almost all larger airports. In Warsaw there is a nice VIP Terminal, while in many other European countries such terminals are much more spacious and extremely luxurious.

LIFE WITH A TASTE

There are numerous air operators which provide the direct jet chartering services in Europe. The Swiss and the Germans are the leaders here, with operators from Austria, UK, Spain, and even the Czech Republic also taking a considerable portion of the cake. Such companies may be small, with two or three aircraft in their fleet, but there are also numerous large operators which offer a wide selection of aircraft tailored to different need of the clients. Since the costs of management of private jets are considerably high (the crew, technical maintenance, inspections, parking fees), many businesses decide to go for so-called “fleet management” – that is putting an aircraft under the management of one of such operators (many of them specialize in it). They are then chartered for various business flights, but a broker or an operator must inform the client that an aircraft will only be available if its owner doesn't need to use the machine at that time.

In Poland there are several operators with the required licenses to carry passengers. One of them is PLL LOT which, obviously, has several large aircraft in its fleet. The market of typical business

flights operated by small, modern jets, is dominated by three largest operators. One of them is Jet Service – a company belonging to Polsat's owner, Zygmunt Solorz.

If a client wants to order an outbound flight, he may find an operator via Jet Service. It's also possible to find an external operator, but the “empty leg” flight (without passengers) makes such a service more costly. A broker, on the other hand, tries to organize everything in such a way to minimize the costs.

By the way, what money are we talking about? The sums are not small, a flight on a mid-range European route costs at least several thousand euro, but a lot depends on the schedule, the place departure, “empty legs”, the time of the flight, additional services etc. There are so many factors to consider that the cost of each journey is calculated individually.

Zbigniew Podermański of Air Charter Professional says that today's clients are not shocked with the prices, although in the past it was nothing unusual. Presently they mostly want to know more details about the journey.

Not all of them charter planes to do business. There are some businesspeople who having worked for many years can now afford to spend money with pleasure and travel to their exotic holiday destination in luxurious conditions. A private jet seems to be the best option. ■

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The Joys Of Loyalty

The Polish national airline has introduced a new promotion for its passengers, who this time are rewarded threefold.

Each company which seriously treats its business activity, tries to attract the attention of its customers and take care of them in a way which shows how important they are, often by offering them more than they would expect. These are, of course, theoretical assumptions, as today it's not easy to satisfy all the needs of the customers.

The passengers of the Polish national carrier have for many years been able to take advantage of Miles & More loyalty programme, which frequently offers special bonuses. Such a promotional action has just begun.

The promotional offer, which started at the beginning of February in Miles & More loyalty programme, grants triple miles for business-class travel on every LOT Polish Airlines connection. This offer will last until 30 April 2011.

Additional bonus miles will be calculated after the completion of the business class flight on any scheduled connection carried out by LOT Polish Airlines. This promotion cannot be combined with any

other Miles & More promotional offers (also the passengers whose contact address in their Miles & More profile is in Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, and Italy, are not included in the promotion).

– “This our second promotional offer of this kind in the Miles & More program. The previous one took place in the autumn of last year, and many of our passengers took advantage of the opportunity, which is why we have decided to repeat it”, said Dorota Haller, Director of Marketing and Product at LOT Polish Airlines. “But this time the promotion includes all connections offered by LOT”.

Participation in the promotion is conditional upon registration at the address: www.miles-and-more.com/triple-miles Registration will be possible until 30/04/2011.

BONUSES FOR EVERYONE

Miles & More is a loyalty programme which enables frequent travellers to save a lot of money and receive interesting



LOT



prizes. If it were not true, the programme would not have been able to attract so many members worldwide, which as of February 2011 is over 15 million, making Miles & More the largest frequent flyer programme in Europe.

M&M was launched in 1993 by the German airline Lufthansa and LOT Polish Airlines became the programme's fully integrated partner 10 years later. The idea was simple: to honour those frequent, loyal travellers with special prizes – miles – which may, in turn, be used by the passengers to upgrade their cabin class, or, if they collect enough miles, redeem them for a free ticket on a route of their choice.

This turned out to be a great success, especially because more and more airlines decided to join the programme (today there are 13 of them, which are fully integrated in the programme). Gradually, more and more promotional offers were added to the programme, mostly thanks to the companies which collaborate with the airlines. Today, the members of Miles & More can redeem their mile in exchange for special privileges at car rental stations, shopping at duty free store at airports as well as in a luxurious boutique in a city centre. They can also decide to exchange their miles for a visit to a fancy restaurant, a sea cruise, or even for a ticket to a major sporting event. Also many hotel chains decided to join the programme, offering attractive packages for the members of Miles & More in various hotels worldwide. There are thousands of options. The only thing you must do is collect your miles, especially at such promotions as the one recently launched by LOT. ■



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The Roof Of the World



James Balfour is 27. He's young, energetic, and has this little spark in his eye. The son of Mike Balfour – the “king of fitness clubs” who established hundreds of them worldwide, has recently created his own chain. Pure Health and Fitness is developing really rapidly and James is still looking for new challenges, like the recent one – conquering Mt. Everest. Business Traveller visited him in Warsaw's Pure Sky Club which has recently been launched in Skylight skyscraper — one of the most luxurious places located in the very centre of the Polish capital.

Rozmawiał: Wojciech Chetchowski

What is the view like from the “roof of the world”?

I climbed the summit of Mount Everest on 23 May 2008. This was a real dream come true. I was the 5th youngest British person who managed to do it, as at that time I was merely 24. It was also a part of a charity action to raise money to rebuild Liberian schools which had been destroyed in the course of a long civil war in the country. We managed to raise over £50,000. The whole expedition was full of great emotions and adventures. I spent about 20 minutes on the summit. I could see the curvature of the Earth and in the sun the



ISTOCK

boundless land of China. I will never forget this view.

Now, that you've conquered Everest, what's your next challenge?

We have to serious business challenges related to Pure brand. The first one is Pure Health and Fitness chain, which for the past three years of our presence in Poland has been growing rapidly. Presently, we have 20 fitness clubs, but this number will grow twofold by the end of this year. This is the part of our business activities, which we are mainly focused on.

Another challenge is the place we are in now. Pure Sky Club is a novel concept on the Polish market – it's the first private members and business club. It was launched only four months ago, but I can already say that it has been a great success. That's why, our present goal is to find new venues where such clubs as Pure Sky Club could be opened.

In my opinion, there are quite a lot of cities where this kind of business could succeed. Among them are Bucharest, Stockholm, and Istanbul. This idea is worth copying, especially because it would be an additional value for our clients, who would be able to attend those clubs in each of those places.

How important for you is pursuing your passions?

It's very important. I think that if you don't have any passions, dreams you pursue, if you don't believe in what you do, you will never reach a desired level. Our business i. e. Health and Fitness is of extreme importance both to me and my business partner, Tony Cowen. Let me put it like this: medicine can keep you alive, but fitness will make you live happily. This is the most crucial thing. How does it refer to our Pure Sky Club? Our business is also our passion and we devote ourselves fully to it.

So, as it's the case with lots of people worldwide, we also meet and chat in hotel lobbies or small pubs. When you discuss a large contract, you don't start with decisive arguments and don't shout around about it. What you expect is to have a nice, comfortable, and quiet place where you can talk about it, make a decision and, consequently, be happy with its results. This was the foundation of our idea of Pure Sky Club.



Pure Sky Club was launched at the end of October last year and offers, as the promotional materials say, a completely new look at the business culture. Indeed, the place of this type is a novelty. The philosophy behind Pure Sky Club is to combine work with leisure. A business person can work here actively for all day, meet their clients in conference rooms or in a cosy dining room where they can discuss the details of their contract. A laptop is more than enough to organize a virtual office here.

This idea, until recently not known in Poland, is well-established on the British market. Similar



conference rooms which bear the names of various planets, but the whole environment seems truly cosmic. The leisure part consists of a small cinema room for 18 people, a Spa complex with sauna and glass walls with the view of the city. There are also six small relaxation rooms where you can sit in a massage chair, listen to music, read a newspaper or a book, or simply think over your business matters. The club also offers a wide range of additional services such as a hairdresser's salon or even reservation of tickets to a rock concert.



clubs can be found in the United States. It turns out that the idea of merging work with leisure in ideal conditions has been warmly welcomed in Poland. Several months into its launch Pure Sky Club has managed to gather almost 700 club members.

In order to access this exclusive enclave, you need get to the 22nd floor of Skylight tower block. The building is situated in the very centre of Warsaw. To grant access to the club you must be its member or guest and put your name on a special list.

The floor area is 1,850 sq m which has been thoughtfully adapted for the purposes of the club. There is a restaurant, and a bar where the members are served breakfasts and can invite their client for a drink. The complex has nine con-



Who is the offer of Pure Sky Club mostly addressed to? What can you offer to them?

If we compare Pure Sky Club to British private members clubs many of which have had a long political or military tradition, as well as long lasting principles regarding the presence of women or the dress code, we are different. The world is changing and lots of people make a fortune wearing simply jeans. Their needs and expectations are also evolving. We are not a place for elderly gentlemen smoking cigar and talking about the past. We are progressive and warmly welcome ladies—we have a lot of female members. Generally we address our offer to ambitious people, which is, of course, a very broad term. However, everyone can come here to meet with their client, relax, or simply have fun.

It sounds a bit like a deeper philosophy of enjoying life and work.

Because there is something in it. The world is revolving faster and faster, and we need to keep up with the pace the changes are taking place. People work hard, earn lots of money for their companies, and I think that they often want to find a place which feels better and more comfortable than their own office. They also want to have an opportunity to celebrate their success. Thanks to us, they are able to spend a whole day in such conditions. In the morning, a member of the club is served a free breakfast, then they can meet someone in a more formal atmosphere, have talks in a private dining room, or come here in the evening after a hard day of work to relax in our Spa or the cinema room. This is what we call “merging business with leisure”.

Another question is quite obvious. Why did you choose Poland?

Indeed, I’m often asked this question. We came here 3 years ago because we noticed a huge niche on the Polish health & fitness market. Enough to say that at that time only 0.6% of the adult population attended fitness clubs, while in Britain this number reached 13%. Today I can say that this was an excellent decision and I hope that we are actually filling this niche quite well.

In my opinion, the prospects for further development of private business clubs in Poland are bright. Poland has one of the most thriving economies in Europe, and millions of euro go into this market in connection with Euro 2010 Championship, the country boasts a high rate of young people with a university degree— even higher than in Germany, the Poles work longer and more efficiently than people in Western Europe. In other words, in the last 10-15 years Poland underwent incredible transformations, and I think that they will still be taking place. Personally, I prefer to be here than in London.

Would you say that doing business in Poland were in any way more difficult than in Western European countries?

I think that Poland already is a Western European country. Doing business in any country requires certain abilities and sets specific demands for a business person. In Poland those challenges are also a result of other aspects like communication, because although I have spent over 3 years here, my Polish is still quite poor. Sometimes those problems are of a different, more complex nature. However, as I said, everything is changing, we are moving forward, and overcoming all those barriers.

Let me ask you a personal question. Being a son of “the king of fitness

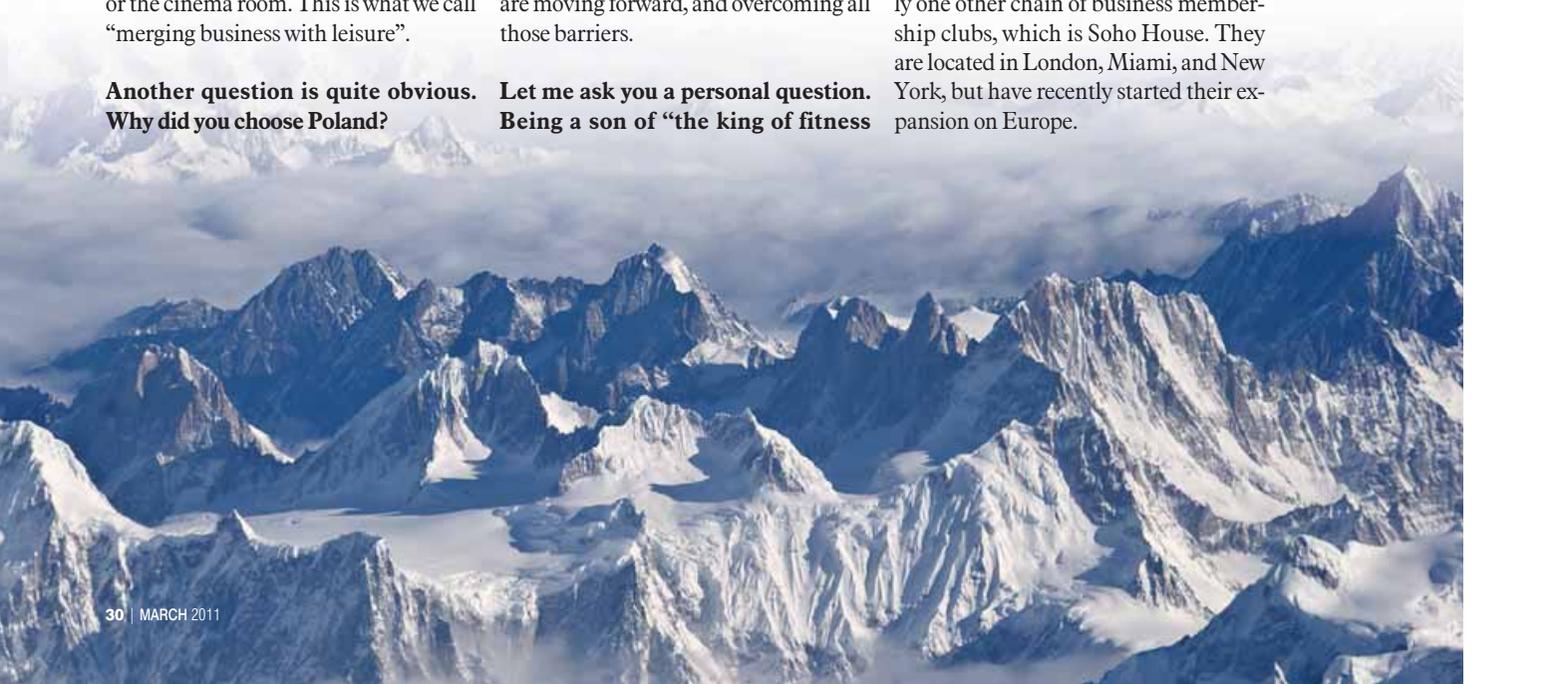
clubs” didn’t you feel any pressure to do better? (Mike Balfour, James’s father is the founder of Fitness First—the world’s largest chain of fitness clubs).

No, I’ve never felt any pressure of this kind. My father established Fitness First 18 years ago. He managed to open 540 clubs in 22 countries worldwide. He has now withdrawn from active business and holds the position of the president of the company. He offers immense help when we need to solve some problems that we encounter, and we are glad we can draw on his experience. He lives abroad, so I meet him quite seldom. However, it’s good to be able to compare what I do to what he used to do.

Could you tell us your plans for the nearest future?

We will still be developing our Pure Health and Fitness brand. This year we are planning to increase the number of the clubs twofold, and we would like to achieve the same result next year. Several months ago, we debuted on Czech, Romanian, and Bulgarian markets. Now we are preparing to enter the Turkish market. However, our greatest hopes and efforts are connected in developing the chain in Poland, as we treat this market as a strategic one.

Pure Sky Club will grow stronger. Only several months into the launch, we have almost 700 members. In the following months we will have to limit the membership access to retain the club’s exclusive nature. We will for sure develop our business activities such as Pure Sky Club outside Poland. However, this is a long process. There’s practically only one other chain of business membership clubs, which is Soho House. They are located in London, Miami, and New York, but have recently started their expansion on Europe.





Spa in the Mountains

A Spa offer in the harsh mountain climate seems to be especially attractive. If you want to see it for yourself, you should definitely visit Day Spa centre which is located in Czarny Potok hotel in Zakopane.

Thanks to its design and the surroundings, this 3-star establishment resembles excellent Alpine hotels which are often located at the foot of a mountain. The popular Krupówki street is mere 5-minute walk from here. Wielka Krokiew ski jumping hill and the Tatra National Park are also not far away. Nearby quietly hums the Czarny Potok stream – one of many flowing through Zakopane, and the one after which the hotel was named.

Thanks to its impressive aqua-thermal centre, the hotel has always been popular with tourists eager to find interesting ways of spending their free time. The hotel is visited by whole families and individual tourists, seeking opportunities for active leisure combined with an interesting recreational package. There's noth-



ing better than a visit to a sauna after a long, exhausting trekking trip along the mountain trails. The best idea is to start your day in the swimming pool.

The hotel has now decided to expand its offer by offering Spa treatment. For this purpose, a new centre has been built with a comprehensive offer for everyone who doesn't like boredom. The additional advantage of the centre is its unique atmosphere, which can be found nowhere else in Zakopane. The key to such a remarkable atmosphere is the hotel's approach towards the highlander tradition, as well as the cosy nature of the place. The omnipresent silence and tranquillity are ideal for relaxation.

The owners of the hotel wish to repeat the success of their aqua-thermal centre, which has been used not only by tourists and the hotel guests, but also by inhabitants of Zakopane and Podhale. It's still difficult to say whether highland men will like the Spa, but we may guess that the well thought-out offer of Day Spa centre will for sure please their wives and daughters. The managers of Czarny Potok hotel believe that ideally a family could spend the afternoons in the hotel: ladies in Spa, while gentlemen could use the pool and saunas. Separately, but still close to each other.

"This doesn't mean that gentlemen are not welcome here", says Ewelina Drózdź, the manager of Day Spa. The offer includes various treatments for men, and there is even a package prepared especially for them.

It's also worth noticing that Czarny Potok is undergoing some visible alterations. The hotel is working hard to provide the best quality and broaden the range of its services – conference facilities are more and more impressive, and the culinary offer has also been revamped. Day Spa is another step towards meeting the requirements which are set by the demanding hospitality market in the Tatras. It seems that Czarny Potok hotel has now set a benchmark for other businesses of this type. 🌿



Hotels Etap

the Cheapest Part Of the Journey



Etap hotels are ideal places for guests expecting comfortable rooms at reasonable prices. The offer includes: cosy rooms, delicious breakfasts, snacks, and the reception desk available 24 hours a day. Situated in seven largest Polish cities, they enable tourists to visit the most beautiful areas of the country without having to spend a fortune. The hotels are also an excellent choice for a business trip.



Comfort at a good price – that's how you can briefly summarize what you can expect in Etap hotels around the world as well as in Poland. Regardless of their location, they offer the same quality of service and accommodation. In Etap hotels you will find comfortable rooms arranged according to the Cocoon philosophy. It's a unique solution in economy class hotels. In Poland, 5 out of 8 hotels have partly launched this concept, and each newly open one will introduce it fully. Everything according to the international standards proven over 20 years of experience. Moreover, the prices are comparable to private lodgings, which can rarely offer such high quality. That's why Etap hotels are more and more popular not only among the tourists, but also as a destination for business trips, especially among sales representatives of many business fields.

What characterizes Cocoon, are mostly cosy and modern air-conditioned bedrooms with shower-equipped bathrooms. They are suitable for between one and three people. Guests can use a TV set, which may be connected to a camcorder or a games console. Such a solution is being gradually introduced in Poland. Etap Hotel Toruń Centrum has already been equipped with modern TV

sets. Most hotels also feature WiFi Internet in the rooms.

What also encourages to stay in Etap hotels is the decor in relaxing colours, and access to a lot of light and space. Green and white walls as well as the parquet floor contribute to the feeling of homeliness. In most hotels, bedrooms come with an open bathroom area, but the sense of intimacy is still preserved. In others, the two areas are separated with an illuminating wall. Such modern solutions are introduced to provide the guests with as much comfort as possible. Another facility of this sort are LED light shower heads, which illuminate water in different colours according to the temperature.

Etap hotels also offer delicious breakfast in a form of buffet. You can expect a wide range of items to choose at a reasonable price – In Poland it is PLN 20. The reception area is open 14 hours a day, as are snack vending machines in the lobby. Hotels also take care of families with children. One or two children under 12 may stay at their parents' bedroom at no additional charge. All hotels have been also adapted to the needs of the disabled. Guests can also bring their pets with them.

Etap hotels pay especially close attention to saving energy and water. Washbasins and showers are equipped with water

control valves, and the toilets have a water-saving system. Energy-efficient lamps are also used. Etap hotels are designed in cooperation with Priestmangoode agency, specializing in convenient and energy-saving solutions. Their joint efforts were rewarded in November 2008, when the brand was rewarded at European Hotel Design Awards ceremony.

In Poland there are 8 hotels of this brand in 7 cities: Cracow, Toruń, Szczecin, Wrocław, Katowice, Warsaw and Częstochowa. In 2012 another two are to be open in Warsaw and Cracow. The

centre Once a duke's residence, today it holds a title of Pomeranian Dukes» Castle. It is worth staying at **Etap Hotel in Szczecin**, conveniently situated on the South-Western outskirts of the city, in a quiet and green area. It is only 5 kilometres from the centre. There are 120 rooms in the hotel The most convenient way to get there is to take a train, or a plane and fly from the airport in Goleniów or Berlin.

If you look for comfortable accommodation at a reasonable price, don't hesitate to visit Wrocław – a city of bridges, islands and dwarfs. You will marvel at a mediae-

Etap hotels offer modern, brightly-lit, air-conditioned rooms, at remarkably reasonable prices

the airport in Pyrzowice, and only 1.5 kilometres from the railway station.

The Etap chain is also delighted to welcome all the visitors coming to Warsaw. Situated in a green area, by the Vistula river, only 3.5 kilometres away from the historical old town area, **Etap Hotel Warszawa Centrum** is an excellent choice to spend a few days in Warsaw at a reasonable price. You can expect comfortable accommodation here – there are 176 two- and three-bed rooms. It takes about 30 minutes to get here from the airport, and the railway station can



hotels are conveniently situated near the city centres, tourists attractions and main routes of communication.

One of the cities you might visit, when staying at an Etap hotel, is Cracow. The common attractions include the Wawel Castle and the cloth hall Sukiennice. You can sink in the atmosphere of narrow streets in the Old Town, or walk around the newly-renovated Kazimierz district. In the former capital of Poland, visitors can stay at **Etap Hotel Kraków Bronowice**, situated near Kościuszko Mound, only 4 kilometres from the city centre. It's a good choice especially for families, as among all the 120 bedrooms, there are also ones with three beds.

Toruń, the hometown of Nicolaus Copernicus, is also worth visiting. Thanks to a stay at **Etap Hotel Toruń Centrum**, situated in the city centre, guests may pay a visit to a nearby Old Town, a Unesco World Heritage Site. There are 83 rooms in the hotel One of the advantages of the Toruń Etap hotel is its location. It is only 50 kilometres away from the airport in Bydgoszcz, and close to the routes connecting Toruń with Katowice, Łódź and the Tricity. It is the chain's newest hotel in Poland, launched in August 2009.

When visiting the biggest cities in Poland, you shouldn't forget about Szczecin – a city known as a «floating garden», filled with greenery and water in the very

val Ostrów Tumski district, one of the most beautiful complex of sacral architecture and a city hall, one of the most magnificent gothic structures in the Central Europe. If you look carefully, you will see dwarfs hidden in the old town walls. The city has two hotels of Etap brand. One of them is **Etap Hotel Wrocław Południe**, conveniently situated in close proximity to an exit road to Kudowa Zdrój, near A4 highway. The city centre is only 4 kilometres further away, and the international «Copernicus» airport is only within 12 kilometres. There are 108 rooms in the hotel. Football enthusiasts are likely to appreciate the other hotel – **Etap Hotel Wrocław Stadion** situated nearby the Euro 2012 stadium. And again, it's also has the advantage of being only 5 kilometres away from the airport. Guests can stay at one of 122 double rooms.

Those who enjoy going to concerts at the Spodek arena complex, will surely enjoy a stay at the comfortable **Etap Hotel Katowice Centrum**, situated in the very heart of the city, close to a route to Warsaw – a good news for those travelling by car. In the hotel there are 124 bedrooms. You can also get here by train or plane. The hotel is 32 kilometres away from

be reached within a quarter. An unquestionable advantage of the hotel, is its close proximity to the Old Town, attracting tourists with charming tenants, and the Royal Castle, which is not a long way from the Royal Baths Park, which you can reach by going along the Royal Route.

The last place worth visiting is Częstochowa with its basilica and the Jasna Góra Monastery, the most famous shrine to the Virgin Mary in Poland. That's where you will find **Etap Hotel Częstochowa**, the chain's first hotel in Poland, and book one of its 80 rooms. It is situated about a kilometre away from the Old Town, and merely 3 kilometres from the Jasna Góra Monastery. ■

www.etaphotel.com





LONDON HEATHROW AIRPORT



A large infrastructure, plans to build another runway, and an increasing number of served passengers.

Olga Chelchowska takes us for a visit to one of the world's largest airports.

Thanks to the excellent location, it is not only the biggest airport in Great Britain, but also one of the biggest European communication hubs, the fact which earns its owners substantial profits. Heathrow is operated by BAA company, which is in charge of five more airports in the United Kingdom, and is also a member of a large international consortium managed by the Spaniards from the Ferrovial Group.

ALWAYS CLOSE

Historically, the roots of aviation in this place, located 22 kilometres west of London on grass fields of Heath Row village, go as far as to 1930s. At that time,

Richard Fairey, one of the aviation pioneers, tested his aeroplanes there. During World War II the government requisitioned land in and around the ancient agricultural village of Heath Row, to build RAF Heston, a base for long-range troop-carrying aircraft bound for the Far East. However, by the time the war had ended the RAF no longer needed another aerodrome and it was officially handed over to the Air Ministry as London's new civil airport on 1 January 1946. In this way Heathrow replaced Croydon in serving civil traffic, while Croydon took over most of the military aircraft.

Today Heathrow has five terminals and serves over 180,000 passengers each day, with about 30% of them being business travellers. The airport's location on the edge of the continent for many people makes it a premium choice for an intercontinental stopover. Reaching Heathrow from the city centre (from Paddington station) by a special direct rail takes merely 15 minutes. We can also choose a cheaper form of transport like

the underground rail (the journey takes about 1 hour), one of many buses, a taxi cab (costs around £ 40-75 depending on the cab company and reaches the airport in 45 minutes), or a limousine offered by several private companies, and by some airlines for passengers with a premium class ticket (Virgin Atlantic, Etihad, Bmi, Delta, and Emirates).

A NEED OF A CHANGE

However, the price of rapid growth has been a jumble of long-established terminal buildings and, for travellers, a confusing allocation of airlines to five separate facilities. Heathrow is now used by almost 90 airlines which offer 170 connections in various directions, including the transatlantic ones. Luckily, the old buildings have already been pulled down, or they will be in the nearest future—as it happened with the old Terminal 2 and Queens Building. A new terminal T2 is planned to be launched in 3 years» time. To enable its expansion Terminal 1 will also be demolished to reap





pear in a new form by 2019. Terminals 3 and 4 will stay, as they have recently been thoroughly renovated and modernized, including their adaptation to servicing large planes such as Airbus A380, as well as a slightly extravagant drive thru check-in for passengers of Virgin Atlantic's premium classes. The modern Terminal 5, which now serves only for British Airways aircraft, will soon receive further improvements, following which also Iberia airline will be served there.

The shopping experience is not forgotten amidst all these changes. Terminal 3 is due to get a makeover by 2012, including the addition of new mid-market fashion outlets, as well as luxury brands. When T2 opens it will also include a dedicated collection of high-end brands, along with a champagne bar and restaurants with views of the departures area and runways.

STOP&FLY

Each terminal has its own car parks. Those who are in the greatest rush, can take advantage of valet car parks, where the park's personnel will park our vehicle for us. Check-in desks are usually not further than a 5-minute walk from such a car park. A day of parking costs between £42 to £49, while a week £140. Short-stay parks are located further away from the buildings and cost £2,50 for the first 30 minutes. However leaving a car there costs as much as £50, so if we are planning to park for a longer time, it's worth finding a different place, for example the business car park, which should be reserved earlier (check-in desks are located about 15 minutes' walk from there), and with daily and weekly fees amounting to £30 and £80 respectively. The cheapest are long-stay car parks (even as little as £16 per day). There are 3

such car parks within the area of the airport, and many more outside, within 2-3 kilometre radius.

All terminals have a wide selection of stores and restaurants with many more being created. In T1, before security control, we can visit several bars (Caffe Italia, Cafe Rouge), and stores, especially the ones offering quality travel luggage. After the security control we can choose among 40 eateries and cafes. There are snack bars, economy restaurants, but also exclusive ones like Caviar House, or new places such as Harlequin restaurant offering typical British cuisine. There are numerous stores from Harrods to Hugo Bossa and Thomas Pink, where they will iron our shirt on the spot if we feel like putting it on immediately after buying it. Other terminals are also abundant in stores and restaurants (T4 has 34 stores, T5 – 15 restaurants and 44 boutiques).





If we are frequent visitors to Heathrow, we can join the airport's loyalty programme called WorldPoints. Joining the programme is free, and for each £1 spent in airport's stores we receive points which can be redeemed for such awards as vouchers, car park discounts, or extra miles in loyalty programmes such as Miles & More by Lufthansa.

If we are travelling in business, and are unable to take our shopping with us, we can leave it in a store and collect when we return from our trip, or have it sent at a given address.

LOUNGES AND TERMINALS

The airport has as many as 24 lounges spread over the 5 terminals. The lounges for business and first class passengers are run by many airlines: large one like Singapore Airlines, Cathay, or Emirates (F3), as well as smaller one like El Al or

Heathrow is a monster airport which daily serves 180,000 passengers. 30% of them are business travellers.

Malaysia. There are also lounges of various alliances (in the previous issue we wrote about the lounge located in T1). Servisair Executive Lounges located in T1 and T3 are an exception here. We can buy a 3-hour stay there for £20 (£18 when booked online). As opposed to other lounges which offer free Internet access, here the access is paid.

Heathrow also has 180 internet terminals where we can pay for the access by credit card, a special voucher or in cash (10 minutes of surfing costs £1, but the more we pay, the bigger discount we get). We can also buy WiFi access at Boingo Wireless Hotspots which costs £14,95 for one month.

There are a number of hotels located around Heathrow. The passengers using T4 and T5 can choose one of two hotels with a direct access from the terminals. Sofitel London Heathrow (T5) offers 605

rooms located around 5 atriums with restaurants and bars, while Hilton London Heathrow (T4) has 395 rooms and 3 restaurants. Also in T4 we will find Yotel hotel – offering 32 cabins in Japanese style, but this may seem slightly claustrophobic.

Passengers using other terminals can access numerous hotels located along Bath Road. Among them are Ramada, Sheraton, Holiday Inn, Park Inn, Marriott and Radisson Edwardian, or Ibis. Almost all of them possess conference facilities which enable us to organize a business meeting. The airport itself has also its own conference rooms to rent.

The plans of expansion of Heathrow Airport do not only include building or renovating terminals, but also construction of the third runway, and in the future also the introduction of driverless taxis. Indeed, the future of the airport seems to be bright. ■



Meeting In Style

Large, medium, and small conference rooms, high quality audio-visual equipment, special ecologically-friendly packages, dedicated personnel – all of these you will find the offer of Polish Radisson Blu hotels.



WARSAW Radisson Blu Warsaw, located in the very centre of the Polish capital, is a real conference conglomerate. One of the floors of the hotel serves exclusively as a conference facility, which seems to be a very efficient solution, especially with a large number of guests. The facility consists of 8 conference rooms spanning more than 588 square metres – the potential which can be used in many different ways. All of them have access to natural daylight – except Polonia Ballroom.

Polonia Ballroom deserves a more detailed description. It can be divided into three independent modules, and has a conference capacity for up to 400-seated guests. Polonia Ballroom is mostly the venue for large banquets or conferences. It also boasts a professional sound system and high ceilings, making it the ideal venue for private functions and business events. Obviously, each conference room feature overhead projectors, screens, and flipcharts, as well as free high-speed, wireless Internet access for all guests and meeting delegates.

One of the biggest advantages of the conference facility are the spacious halls in front of the conference rooms where coffee breaks can be organized. The hotel also has a business centre with computers, a printer and secretarial support. Radisson Warsaw also provides assistance of an experienced coordinator for the companies which rent the conference rooms. In order to satisfy the culinary needs of the guests “Ogrodowa” res-

taurant can be hired for business lunches and receptions.

Radisson chain 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.

■ **Radisson Blu Centrum**

Grzybowska 24, 00 -132 Warszawa
Tel. + 48 22 321 88 55

GDAŃSK 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 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, and can be divided into two or three smaller sections. It can seat up to 200 people at a conference and up to 10 at a banquet. The 80 sq m foyer located nearby is often used for coffee and lunch breaks. There is also a smaller Gotycka room, which is 62 sq m and can accommodate up to 60 people. Also the spacious atrium of the hotel can be used for business purposes – especially for various exhibitions. Obviously, the hotel also offers technical assistance and the service of their personnel before and during conferences. The award-winning chefs from Verres en Vers are on-hand to create a memorable dining experience for any event.





■ Radisson Blu Gdańsk
Długi Targ 19/Powroźnicza
80-828 Gdańsk
Tel. + 48 58 325 4444

CRACOW Radisson in Cracow offers eight conference rooms on the first floor. The largest one can accommodate up to 130 people and the total floor area of all the rooms is 36 sq m. As all the rooms are located on the first floor, those hotel guests who do not participate in any business event are not bothered at all. All the rooms have access to the natural daylight. All the rooms feature appropriate AV equipment, wired and wireless Internet access, automatic curtains, multi-media overhead projectors, and teleconference equipment. Of course, the hotel also provides assistance of an experienced coordinator and the menu tailored to the organizer's requests.

Also, as the first company in Poland and the first hotel in the world, Radisson Blu Hotel in Cracow was certified with the BS 8901 standard for Meetings & Events organizers. This norm is based on three priorities: 1. Reducing negative

impact on natural environment 2. Positive impact on local community 3. Reduction of production and exploitation costs.

It's also worth mentioning that the hotel is located a stone's throw from the Main Market Square and Wawel Castle.

■ Radisson Blu Hotel Kraków
Straszewskiego 17, 31-101 Kraków
Tel. +48 (12) 618 88 88

WROCLAW The conference facilities of Radisson Wrocław are ideal for organizing any business meeting. The offers various conference rooms spread across 377 sq m. There are several small rooms, ideal for organizing a small event like a board meeting, while the largest rooms can accommodate even up to 140 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 daylight.

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. There is also Aquarell restaurant and Sqwiggles bar.

■ Radisson Blu Hotel Wrocław
Purkyniego 10, 50 -156 Wrocław,
Tel. +48 71 375 00

SZCZECIN Radisson Blu Szczecin has a wide choice of venues ideal for holding a business meeting. There are nine conference rooms in the hotel, which can be adopted to the needs of any conference organizer. Some of the rooms are ideal for board and supervisory board meetings (up to 10 people), but the largest room is able to accommodate up to 550 people. The total floor area is 1013 sq m. The largest room is named Concerto. One of them - the popular 'Mickiewicz' room (80 sq m) has a giant bay window.

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.

■ Radisson Blu Hotel Szczecin
pl. Rodła 10, 70-419 Szczecin
Tel. +48 91 35 95 595

Marek Zaciemski



Discreet charm of the Polish East



POLSKA
ORGANIZACJA
TURYSTYCZNA

It is not a secret to anyone, that Poland is a country of great touristic value. But it is not limited to such obvious destinations like Cracow, Warsaw or Gdańsk. The eastern part of Poland has also a lot to offer – the Polish Tourist Organization has launched a promotional campaign, called “The Beautiful East” to promote this idea.

The promotional campaign “The Beautiful East” is aimed at different groups of tourists – Polish ones and those coming from abroad (mostly from Germany and Ukraine), interested in active leisure, as well as families with children or visitors looking for peace and quiet to have a rest from the bustle of everyday life. That is why, it has a form of a sophisticated presentation giving details about tourist offers of five Eastern voivodeships: Warmian-Masurian, Podlaskie, Świętokrzyskie, Subcarpathian and Lublin Voivodeship. During the presentation you will learn about places of natural beauty, stunning landscapes, traditional cuisine and sports activities available in the area. One of the elements of the presentation is a new website available at address www.pieknywschod.pl. A person visiting the website can find there information on each region, broken down into a few categories: museums and historical sites, nature, entertainment, health & beauty and activities. As the project develops, new information is added; there are plans to launch new functions, like one enabling tourists to add their own photographs. Apart from the site, The Polish Tourist Organization is running other promotional activities, including advertising and radio or commercial spots.

WARMIAN-MASURIAN VOIEVODSHIP

A region full of attractions, inhabited by nearly one and a half million people. Among them, there are members of 15 churches and religious groups and a few national minorities – the most populous are Ukrainians and Germans. The capital of the voivodeship is Olsztyn. There are a couple of thousands lakes and forests, main natural attractions of the region. Masuria is a paradise for anyone wanting to have a rest by the water: both sailors, who will happily visit

the town of Mikotajki, as well as those who are kayak enthusiasts – who can go down the Kutynia river. There are also nature reserves and landscape parks.

Among the monuments, you will see castles of Teutonic knights, Catholic and Evangelical churches, Orthodox churches and numerous museums. In the region, numerous interesting events are organized, including a rock festival in Węgorzewo, or Olsztyn Arts Summer. The local cuisine is a mixture of Polish and German influences. Regional dishes are based on smoked pork fat with pepper, cream, fresh butter and seasonings like marjoram, cumin or cardamom. Local cuisine is also famous from fish, the most common being eels and sea trout. One of the specialties is a fish and crayfish soup with herbs and birch bark

PODLASKIE VOIVODESHIP

It is the Northeasternmost voivodeship in Poland. The capital is Białystok with its 300 thousands of citizens. Other bigger towns of the region include Suwałki and Łomża, with the population of 70 and 64 thousands of citizens respectively. The main attraction of the region is its nature, especially lake districts, the Valley of the Upper Narew River or the Biebrza river. Do not forget about The Białowieża Forest, an ancient woodland of unique value.

As you might expect of this kind of region, Podlasie abounds in various opportunities for active leisure. What is especially worth recommending is rafting down the Rospuda river or Augustów Canal, cycling trips around the Knyszyn Forest, or walking along the Route of Orthodox Churches – it is not possible to list all the possibilities. Among the monuments you will also find a synagogue in Tykocin, the Icon Museum in Supraśl, or Osowiec fortress dating back from 19th century.

The cuisine of Podlasie consists mostly of simple rural cooking with heavy Lithuanian influences. Farmhouse bread, sausages, cheese, or fruit and vegetables are the most precious treasures. Dishes like potato babka, potato kizka, kartaczes, or potato cakes are well known in the whole of Poland. Another specialty worth trying is a cake called Śakotis – its tradition dates back to the times of the Baltic people.

ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE VOIVODESHIP

Świętokrzyskie voivodeship is located in the area of Świętokrzyskie Mountains – the oldest Polish mountains – and of Ponidzie and Sandomierz Territory rich in monuments and natural phenomena. If you are interested in hiking with a rucksack or in taking long relaxing walks there are several dozen hiking paths in Świętokrzyskie voivodeship for you to explore. Their total length is over 1,000 km. The attractiveness of Świętokrzyskie voivodeship is largely determined by picturesque Świętokrzyskie Mountains, the fir tree forest and charming landscapes of Ponidzie. Clean waters and pure air as well as unique caves and rock forms are an additional bonus. What also attracts tourist to this region are the Świętokrzyski National Park, the landscape parks located in its buffer zone and a complex of Ponidzie landscape parks. Other natural attractions include 68 nature reserves, like Jaskinia Raj, Góra Zelejowa or Krzemionki, as well as 701 natural monument, including the 600-year-old Bartek Oak Tree, numerous rock forms, caves and loess gorges.

Świętokrzyska cuisine combines traditional peasant cooking with a noble cuisine with traces of Jewish influences. Dishes prepared by local housekeeper have mysterious names like: pokrzywianka, the Czeremno kugel, pazibroda świętokrzyska or zmioczarz. The most characteristic dish of the Kielecki region is the soup called zalewajka – boiled and chopped potatoes poured over with broth.

LUBLIN VOIVODESHIP

For centuries, the region has been under both Western and Eastern influences, combining Catholic, Protestant, Oriental – like Greek, Armenian and Tartar – traditions. Peoples of all those nations use to inhabit the Renais-

Fot: Marian Sadkowski, Dejan Gospodarek, Fotolia



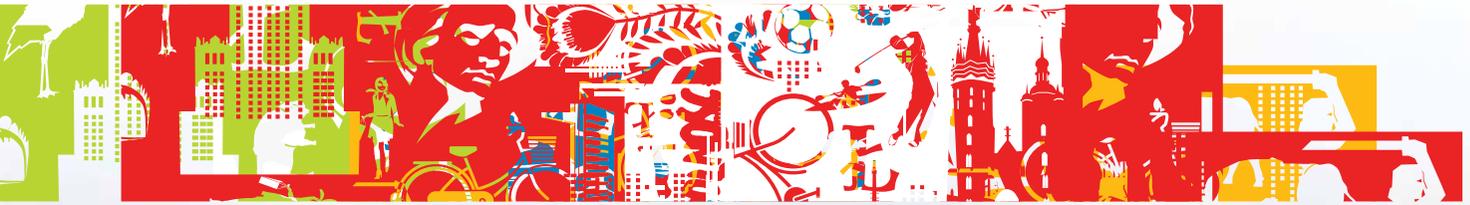
Palace in Kozłówka



Stud farm in Janów Podlaski



Bieszczady



sance city of Zamość – also called “Padua of the North” thanks to its unique architectural style. They also contributed to the Lublin’s power – up to this day it’s the biggest city agglomeration in Eastern Poland and the capital of the region.

The Holy Trinity Chapel in the Lublin castle is a sign of the multicultural past of the region. It’s a monument of the top-world class, which combines Gothic architecture with Ruthenian and Byzantine murals. The 530-year-old Lublin Voivodeship is a region of pure nature (protected by two national and 17 landscape parks), living rural traditions, and craftsmanship, as well as magnificent monuments of the past, impossible to come by anywhere else. These unique treasures are, for instance, chalk mines in Chetm, unusual museum in the palace in Kozłówka, or the oldest sacral monastery band in Jabłeczna. What also catches attention are vast peat bogs of Polesie, forests of Roztocze, or quiet and nostalgic Pobuże.

The regional cuisine of Lublin and Zamość neighbourhood is mostly influenced by Russian and Rellorussian style. You can see both sophisticated dishes, prepared according to the aristocratic traditions, as well as hum-

ble peasant food. The Lublin area is a land of dumplings of all kinds: there are Russian dumplings or ones stuffed with groats, cabbage, fruit or mushrooms. There are also bakery products known in the whole of Poland like onion bread, Koguty Kazimierskie, baked only in Kazimierz Dolny on the right bank of the Vistula river.

SUBCARPATHIAN VOIVODESHIP

Subcarpathian (Subcarpathian) voivodeship is in the South-Eastern part of Poland, bordering with Slovakia and Ukraine. It is an attractive region thanks to its beautiful landscapes and rich culture. Especially charming are Bieszczady mountains, an European oasis of wild nature. In Magurski National Park you can also see numerous unique species of flora and fauna. The most protected species of the region are wolves, bears, wisents and beavers.

Subcarpathian voivodeship has also 10 landscapes parks, 17 natural parks and 71 nature reserves. It is one of the least polluted regions in Poland. Lake Solina, the biggest artificial lake in Poland, is an ideal place to practise water sports or learn sailing. There is a great number

of tourist trails, which are to encourage tourists to go hiking. The most interesting ones can be found in Bieszczady mountains. Horse-riding tourism is getting more and more in Subcarpathian region. You will find here numerous studs, offering riding lessons – both professional and recreational. If you are a fan of horse-riding, you can go on a trip along one of the trails, whose total length is 140 km.

Another attraction are sacred and secular buildings, which architectural style was heavily influenced by Latin, Byzantine and Jewish style, as the region has been populated by Jewish communities for centuries. The tourist trail includes wooden temples, palaces and manor houses, crosses 175 towns and villages and constitutes a typically Polish landscape.

History enthusiasts will be thrilled to see Łańcut Castle (one of the best preserved gentry residence in Poland with a precious park complex), as well as Renaissance palaces in Baranów Sandomierski and Krasiczyn. These valuable architectural monuments of Subcarpathian voivodeship are a sign of the unique religious and cultural diversity of the region. ●



Castle in Baranów Sandomierski

PARISIAN PRIX FIXE

John Brunton finds bistros are enjoying a revival in the French capital, combining the authentic with the creative at great prices.





Chez Cécile



Café Burq

Paris may have a reputation for being the gastronomic capital of the world, but it is not always easy to find places to dine in at night that offer creative cuisine at reasonable prices. Happily, the city is seeing a rebirth of the humble bistro, with young, innovative chefs revitalising classic recipes while retaining the unique décor and ambience of these informal restaurants.

Bistros were always famous for their bargain-priced set lunches, but now diners no longer face an expensive à la carte meal in the evening, as most locales also offer excellent-value three-course menus of high-quality cooking for dinner.

CHEZ CÉCILE

The area around L'Opera and Madeleine is an industrious business hub during the day but hardly brims with choice when it comes to reasonably priced bistros in the evening. An excellent exception is Chez Cécile, hidden away down a narrow side street, and its new chef has created a menu that is more haute cuisine than bistro – tomato gazpacho with a spicy guacamole and ricotta gnocchi, or saddle of lamb stuffed with dried fruits served on a bed of bulgur tabbouleh.

Regis Mongin has come straight from three-starred Michelin chef Eric Fréchon's Le Bristol restaurant. However, the star of the show here is the flamboyant Cécile herself, and for those reserving a table on a Thursday evening, there is a special treat (for an extra €10/US\$14) of her performing live with a jazz trio, singing 1960s swing mixed with chansons of French musettes.

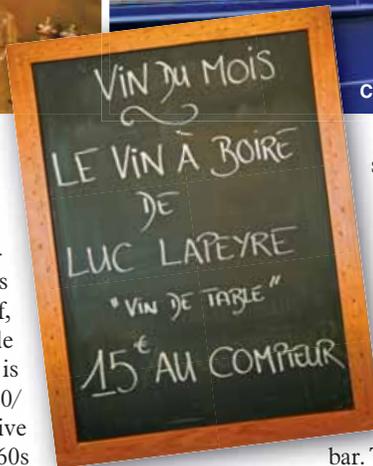
■ **OPENING HOURS:** 12.15pm-2pm and 7.15pm-10pm, closed Sunday

■ **PRICE:** €35 (US\$48) for a three-course set dinner

■ **CONTACT:** 17 Rue Vignon, tel. 33 142 664 639

CAFÉ BURQ

Montmartre may be the quintessential Parisian neighbourhood, but the restaurants that line the streets around Sacré Coeur and Place du Tertre are there for the daily invasion of coach parties and are to be avoided. Surprisingly, hidden away in the back streets are some excellent bistros offering a colourful slice of life in what is still one of the most bohemian parts of Paris. There is no better



spot to book a table than at the cool, retro Café Burq, although to blend in with the fashionable clientele, it is best to leave your suit and tie at the hotel.

The lively owners, Patrick and Yann, double as bartenders, specialising in cocktails and organic wines, and there is always a crowd around the

bar. The young chef, Laurent Cardillac, comes from the gastronomic southwest of France, a region that heavily influences his cooking, especially in dishes such as fresh foie gras sautéed with figs and pine nuts.

■ **OPENING HOURS:** 6pm-2am daily; closed Sunday

■ **PRICE:** €32 (US\$44) for a three-course set dinner

■ **CONTACT:** 6 Rue Burq, tel. 33 142 528 127

LA BOULANGERIE

It can be quite an adventure exploring the colourful Belleville and Ménilmontant areas, once the haunts of Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier. Today, you'll find a vibrant mix of ethnic Chinese and North African communities coupled with artists and musicians, but it is well worth the effort just to discover the brilliant bistro, La Boulangerie.

Once a bakery, it has become a cutting-edge point of reference for the new generation of bistros ever since the Nidhsain brothers took over. Guests are made instantly welcome by the towering Nordin, who theatrically holds court behind an art deco bar, while in the kitchen, Hassan surprises diners with dishes including a slowly braised casserole of ▶



La Boulangerie



Vieux Chêne

veal kidneys, accompanied by a fricassee of wild mushrooms.

The biggest problem is whether to plump for cheese or dessert. Hassan makes a wonderful jasmine ice cream and fondant au chocolat, but Nordin selects the cheeses and his superb plate includes a perfectly aged Cantal, a tangy Roquefort, a ripe Camembert and a tiny Picadon goat's cheese from Ardèche.

■ **OPENING HOURS:** 12pm-2pm, 8pm-11pm, closed Sunday

■ **PRICE:** €30 (US\$41) for a three-course set dinner

■ **CONTACT:** 15 Rue des Panoyaux, tel. 33 143 584 545

LE PLOMB DU CANTAL

The Rue de la Gaîté, in the heart of Montparnasse, teems at night with bars and restaurants. But don't expect to find Le Plomb du Cantal in guide books and, equally, don't expect a chic, gourmet restaurant – it's a down-to-earth neighbourhood locale with a colourful clientele ranging from actors to businessmen from Auvergne, who flock here for the specialities of this region.

Forget about fancy nouvelle cuisine – this is hearty rural cooking, with huge portions of the likes of chou farci (cabbage stuffed with home-made sausages) and steaks of Auvergne beef. Each dish is served with aligot or truffade – the former a creamy potato purée with melted cheese and garlic, the latter, crispy sautéed potatoes with cheese. Auvergne wine from the

village of Saint Pourçain can't compare with an equivalent from Burgundy or Bordeaux, but it makes the perfect accompaniment for this classic country cuisine.

■ **OPENING HOURS:** daily 2pm-12am. Reservations not taken.

■ **PRICE:** no set menu; about €30 (US\$41) for three courses

■ **CONTACT:** 3 Rue de la Gaîté, tel. 33 143 351 692

LE PRÉ VERRE

The Left Bank is one of the most atmospheric parts of the city, but not always one of the best places for eating out, with many eateries targeting tourists. Situated just by the Sorbonne, Le Pré Verre is not just the exception, but one of the hottest addresses in Paris. That's down to the dynamic chef, Philippe Delacourcelle, the outstanding wine list compiled by his brother Marc, and the intelligent pricing.

The cuisine uses traditional French recipes, subtly complemented by Asian spices and cooking methods – Philippe worked in the Far East and has recently opened a branch of Le Pré Verre in Tokyo. The décor is minimalist, with stylised jazz album covers in the main dining room and a series of avant-garde frescoes covering the walls of the funkier downstairs cellar. The menu changes daily, but several specialities are always served, such as suckling pig in a spicy sauce with crunchy cabbage, or delicate fillets of scorpion fish, braised with cin-



Chez Cécile

Luckily, the Parisian are once again in full bloom

namon and served on a bed of smoked potato purée.

■ **OPENING HOURS:** 12pm-2pm and 7.30pm-10.30pm, closed Sunday and Monday. Booking essential

■ **PRICE:** €28.50 (US\$39) for a three-course set menu

■ **CONTACT:** 8 Rue Thénard, tel. 33 143 545 947, www.lepreverre.com

BISTRO AU VIEUX CHÊNE

Walking into this ancient bistro is like stepping into a period Parisian movie, with wonderfully authentic interiors including a zinc counter, art deco lamps and mosaic floor – all that is missing is the music of Edith Piaf.

This used to be a run-down neighbourhood bar serving a rustic plat du jour until Stéphane Chevassus took over, preserving the décor but reinventing the cuisine. Having spent time in the kitchens of renowned Parisian chefs Guy Savoy and Michel Rostang, he puts enormous emphasis on the quality of the products. This is reflected in the dishes, which include thick chunks of monkfish smothered with rich shellfish sauce and lentils, and tender roasted quail served with green asparagus tips and sun-dried tomatoes.

The Vieux Chêne is not far from the Bastille, in a neighbourhood that is a gold mine of atmospheric and innovative bistros – such as l'Ebauchoir, la Cotte Rôtie and le Duc de Richelieu – but here you still have the feeling of being ahead of the crowd.

■ **OPENING HOURS:** 12pm-2pm and 8pm-10.30pm, closed Saturday and Sunday

■ **PRICE:** €33 (US\$45) for a three-course set dinner

■ **CONTACT:** 7 Rue du Dahomey, tel. 33 143 716 769, www.vieuxchene.fr



Le Pré Verre



Le Plomb du Cantal



Marcin Kłyś,
Ossa Congress&Spa

A day in the life...

OF A HOTEL CHEF

8:00 I wake up and prepare to leave. Our hotel is located between Warsaw and Łódź, I live about 12 kilometres away, so it takes me about a quarter an hour to get there by car. I go to the laundry to pick up my stuff and I change to my "official uniform". Serving breakfast starts as early as 7.00 am.

I glance through the arrangements for the day – I have specific information concerning the arriving groups, the number of the guests, and special requests they made on booking their stay. We are a big congress centre, so sometimes there are a lot of such groups here.

Sometimes in the morning I meet the suppliers and order necessary products. Also, around this time a general briefing takes place, where we learn about the events of the day. If I'm available I take part in it, otherwise, I find a replacement.

10:00 My staff arrives. There are 45 people working with me in Ossa altogether, including 3 junior chefs and 2 patisserie chefs.

Naturally we work in a shift system, adjusting the number of people to a situation. I provide them with a detailed plan of the day, telling what is each person responsible for, what things are to be looked for in a store, and what products require heat treatment.

We make sure the staff work on various sections in the kitchen – this helps in critical situations, as they can replace one another, and there are a few restaurants in the hotel.

12:00 We open our first a la carte restaurant, Calvados, which is the most frequently visited by individual hotel guests. An hour earlier there are already two or three cooks there, who start preparing dishes for this restaurant only. It is open until 11.00 pm.

There is also a tavern, called Karczma, which is also used as an a la carte restaurant during the weekends. In the week, it is mostly used

by conference groups and the meals there are served in the form of buffet. That's why on Fridays I prepare instructions for Karczma staff for the following three days.

At the same time, the staff are working at full speed to prepare lunch. It is served for a great number of guests in Starówka – our largest restaurant, which can seat up to a thousand people. There were times, when we had to serve 10 big groups at the same time. I supervise serving meals, which takes about an hour and a half.

During the lunchtime I also supervise live cooking, which is the main attraction of the day.

On top of all that, the hotel offers the so-called coffee breaks, which we also have to prepare in cooperation with the patisserie. Meanwhile, I keep checking our main kitchen (altogether there are five of them), where the staff are working all the time. It's a distance of 400 m, which can be really tiring.

16:00 In the culinary business, some things change really quickly, so in the early afternoon I correct the arrangements for the evening and the following day. I check the e-mails, receive phone calls, so that everything goes well.

In the evening, during dinner, each group – if there are a couple of them – is served separately. Then we hurriedly move from the main kitchen to the secondary ones, where there are convection ovens, and already prepared cold plates and salads. Everybody knows exactly what to do and what they are responsible for.

I often have to work together with regular cooks whenever a need arises, especially when we have to serve dinner for 500 or 1,000 people.

20:00 Duty cooks supervise dinner buffets for about 2 hours. We go to the main kitchen, and start making necessary preparations for the following day and clean everything. Once more I check my e-mail box and any changes in orders. If everything is all right, another day in the kitchen comes to an end. When I supervise huge banquets, it may not finish before 3.00 am. ■



Europcar

Europcar

Europcar

has conducted a European mobility survey

One of the world's largest vehicle rental companies has recently released the findings of its third study on the practices of European drivers. What are the conclusions? Read on.

The survey of the third edition of Europcar Transportation and Mobility Observatory was conducted with partnership with polling institute Ipsos. The survey, whose aim was to find out more about the practices of European drivers, was based on responses of over 6,000 people from seven countries: Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, France, Germany, and the UK. Who knows, perhaps the next edition of the survey will also include Polish drivers?

EXPENSES, EXPENSES...

The analysis of the results brought in the results which in many points resemble the ones from the previous year's study, when the economic downfall was in full effect (and Poland was often referred to as "the green island" on the sea of crisis) and to some degree affected almost all Europeans. This might mean that the aftershocks of the financial tremor are still dangerous and are continually affecting

our lives. To give an example, similarly to the previous year, 9 in 10 European drivers decided to change their driving style due to the growing expenses. Saving fuel has become a forced norm – this was mostly emphasized (as it was the case in the previous survey) by the French (94%) and Portuguese drivers (93%). On the whole, this situation concerned 90% of those surveyed.

Environmental concerns are still important, although slightly less responsible for changes in attitudes among Europeans (8 out of 10 Europeans have changed their driving behaviour, no change c.f. 2009). Once again the nations which most frequently admitted to such a change of style were the French (89%), and the Portuguese (87%), with the British scoring the lowest result here (76%).

A CAR FOR SALE

As was the case last year, almost 40% of Europeans have considered or are considering giving up at least one of their

Fewer and fewer European drivers think that having their own car is a synonym of independence

household's vehicles. Beyond behavioural changes and claimed intentions, European drivers are apparently starting to rethink their relationship with car ownership. Italians lead here with this resolution (54%), with the Spanish and the French following suit (48% and 38% respectively). The nations which would be the most reluctant to give up on one of their cars were the Germans and the Belgians (28%) The most frequently chosen reason for selling one car (pointed out by 81% of the respondents) was a high maintenance cost of the vehicle. The need to protect the natural environ-





ment and lowering emissions appealed to 48% of the respondents.

Even more radical results brought by this question were marked in large European cities with over 200,000 inhabitants. This shows how great are the expenses incurred by people living in such large urban centres. Suffice to say, that the as many as 45% of them stated they were ready to get rid of at least car in their household. Traditionally, the most desperate are the Italians (56%), with the French, the Spanish, and the British not far behind. Interestingly enough, the Belgian city-dwellers were the least convinced to this idea, with only 29% ready to do so.

A NEW TYPE OF FREEDOM

It turns out that the car-driver relationship is changing. The survey shows a drop to 58% in the number of respondents who are convinced that the car provides them with the feeling of freedom and independence. In the previous survey this number

was larger by 4%. The British were the leaders in this category, with the Germans slightly behind. A similar tendency can be observed in the answer to relatively simple question: "Do you like to have your own car?" In the previous survey 60% of the respondents replied positively to this question, but presently this number has dropped by 3%.

What are then the alternatives since more and more European drivers don't see the need to own their own car and don't feel very much attached to their vehicles? As many as 82% of those surveyed are considering a shift to the public transport, thinking that travelling by tram, the underground, or bus, would be more beneficial for them. As many as 48% of the European drivers point out that they would choose to rent a car (in Spain this number reaches 54%, while in France 52%), while 45% of those surveyed stated that they would be quite willing to participate in so-called car pooling i.e. the sharing of car journeys so that more than one person travels in a car.

People living in more urbanized parts of Europe much more often decide to take advantage of the offer of car rental companies, as opposed to average Europeans (40% and 31% respectively), and the survey shows that new, practical solutions implemented by rental companies (booking and finding the nearest available car by telephone, by-the-hour or even

EUROPCAR

Europcar is a European leader in providing passenger car and light utility vehicle rentals. Outside Europe, the company offers its services to tourists and business travellers in Africa, the Middle East, the South America, and the countries of Asia-Pacific region. In 2009 Europcar signed 9.5 million rental contracts, with 7,000 employees and a fleet exceeding 190,000 vehicles. In September 2008, Europcar and U.S. market leader Enterprise Holdings joined



forces in a strategic commercial alliance to form the world's largest car rental network, with more than 1.2 million vehicles and 13,000 locations around the world. Europcar is owned by the French investment company Eurazeo.

Europcar is the European market leader and is also leading in its environmental approach to car rental. It opened its first "environmental agency" in Paris in 1999, and in 2008 it is the first company in Europe to have its "Environmental Charter" – which formalizes its commitments in favour of sustainable development – certified by Bureau Veritas.

Europcar has been present on the Polish market since 1991 and is represented here by Inter Best-97 company. The rental stations are located in the largest Polish cities, and at all airports providing international connections. Europcar Polska pays much attention to ecology and promotes modern forms of car use such as short-term and medium-term rental.

by-the-minute rates) may convince as many as 57% of Europeans (and 63% of city inhabitants) to use rented cars.

– "In 2008, when we first decided to conduct such a survey, we wanted to gain a better knowledge of the trends and significant changes in European transportation and mobility, and to confirm our predictions in this area. We learnt more about the drivers, their habits, customs, and their attitude towards owning a car. The results of this survey have once again become a valuable source of information, which will enable us to reach our potential customers more effectively," said Philippe Guillemot, the chief executive officer of Europcar Group. ■

Jakub Olgiewicz



Europe Business Class – Your Personal Space

The new KLM's business class provides more comfort and personal space on board an aircraft, as well as excellent meals.

The other privileges available so far for business passengers, such as a premium check-in desk, priority security check and boarding, free access to business lounges, extra luggage, and more legroom, will also be retained.



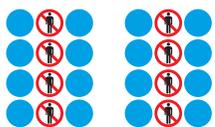


Europe Business Class will be introduced at the end of March 2011, but the tickets for flights with the new class have been available since February.

The new KLM's offer is an ideal solution for passengers who would like to have more comfort and space on their flight, as well as full attention of the cabin crew. The travellers, apart from more legroom, will also enjoy more space obtained thanks to blocking the middle seat in each row to remain unoccupied. In this way, those who travel in Europe Business Class will never occupy the middle seat, which will now provide much more personal space* for those sitting at a window or on the aisle.



Fokker 70/Fokker 100



Boeing 737



Embraer 190

Seat configuration on various types of aircraft

Europe Business Class passengers can also benefit from a number of other privileges which are not found in the economy class, and which up to recently were available only in KLM Europe Select class. One of them is the special section at the front of the cabin which provides the passengers with more comfortable conditions, especially when they wish to work during their flight, or just relax.

The benefits of the travel in Europe Business class are not only limited to the flight. The passengers travelling in this cabin class may

check in at priority desks, and have priority when boarding the aircraft. In order to provide a faster transfer, the passengers may now check in whenever and however suits them best: online, with their mobile phone, at a self-service machine or at the desk.

The premium service applies also to luggage allowances: now a Europe Business class passenger can take 3 pieces of checked luggage (each up to 23 kg). Also, the passengers travelling in Europe Business Class who are members of Flying Blue, the frequent flyer programme, earn 250% more miles.

The passengers will also definitely appreciate other additional benefits such as the freedom to **change your booking free of charge** and a full refund if you cancel the flight. One of the biggest advantages is **the free-of-charge access to airport business lounges, where a traveller can have a rest or work in peace and quiet, use the Internet access, or have a snack.**

The new Europe Business class will also offer **a completely new menu** of dishes prepared in cooperation with famous brands and elegantly served. From luxurious breakfasts to delicious dinners, only fresh ingredients are used and the choice is wider than ever. On flights less than 100 minutes and on all KLM Cityhopper flights: a cold selection of fresh sandwiches and/or a meal salad or tapas plate, accompanied by fresh fruit yoghurt, dessert and/or appetizer. On flights of over 100 minutes: the passengers will have a choice between two hot meals, and on flights of more than 170 minutes there will be a choice between two delicious main courses, plus a starter and/or dessert served separately.

Meals will now be served on tableware designed by Dutch designer Marcel Wanders, as they are in World Business Class. The collection is created in Wanders' unique style and matches the quality standards of a top restaurant.

KLM offers 3 direct daily flights from Warsaw to Amsterdam at 6.50 am, 1.35 pm, and 5.00 pm. The return flights from the Dutch capital also depart 3 times daily, at 10.15 am, 1.40 pm, and 8.25 pm. ●

*with the exception of Embraer 190 aircraft

The Andean Jewel

Chile's capital is dodging the economic crisis and drawing visitors from across the globe to its cosmopolitan streets, finds **Felicity Cousins**.



White-tipped mountain peaks play with the clouds on the approach into Santiago. The Chilean capital is nestled in the foothills of the Andes, 520m above sea level, and looks like a secret city basking in the late afternoon sun.

Its geography, like that of the country itself, has shaped its character. Patricio Ihnen Klammer, director of public relations for Starwood Hotels and Resorts in Chile, says: “Chile is like an island because of the mountains on the east, the Pacific Ocean on the west, and its desert in the north. It’s quite cut off from the rest of the continent, so has a different world attitude”.

Paula Roempler, European manager for Turismo Chile, agrees. “Because of its geography and, historically, its island mentality, Chileans are not as outgoing as people in some other countries. But one thing you can always do is rely on them.” She adds: “The economic and political stability of Chile is good for do- ▶



ing business and the government is very open to new investment”.

For corporate travellers new to the city, its European feel may come as a surprise. Catalina Huidobro Tornvall, Turismo Chile’s press representative for Europe, says: “Santiago is very cosmopolitan so it is easy to do business here”.

Although Chile will celebrate 200 years of independence from Spain this September, the old influences are still all around.

Downtown is where you’ll find most of the colonial buildings, some dating back to 1572, as well as grand offerings such as the presidential palace on Constitution Square, but a lot of the older structures have been destroyed by earthquakes over the years (Chile lies on both the Nazca and South American plates).

The city is also well connected. The airport is about 30 minutes’ drive from the centre, traffic permitting, and Chilean airline Lan flies daily from Madrid. It completed the roll-out of its new Business and Economy product on long-haul flights in May 2009, and has good connections from Santiago for onward travel in South America.

Chile has the highest internet usage in South America, and in Santiago you’ll find free Wi-Fi in metro stations and many cafés. This is in keeping with the city’s modern infrastructure – the metro has five lines, more than 100 stations, transporting upwards of two million people a day. There are huge, glossy shopping malls and top restaurants, as

well as chains such as Starbucks and McDonald’s.

From the top of Cerro Santa Lucia, where Pedro de Valdivia founded Chile in 1541, you can get a good idea of the size of the city. Take the winding road through the parkland with its native monkey puzzle trees and snoozing dogs, or jump on the funicular train to the top. The city’s main street, Providencia, runs from east to west, and while much of the business is focused around here, most of Santiago’s seven million residents live far out in the hazy distance. “Chileans like to live in houses (as opposed to tower blocks), so the city is expanding outwards rather than upwards”, Tornvall explains.

To the east, away from downtown, things are changing. The El Golf neighbourhood and the expanding financial area, known as Sanhattan, is where a lot of construction is under way. The Costanera Centre is a development of four skyscrapers, one of which will be the tallest building in South America when it’s completed (standing at 300m), although work came to a standstill when the recession hit. Nearby, another high-rise – the Titanium La Portada – is due to be finished by the end of this year.

Although work on the Costanera is slow, Chile has largely dodged the worldwide recession. Before the coup of 1973, when Pinochet snatched control, the government had nationalised the copper industry, putting a percentage of profits into stable bonds. Since Pinochet’s demise, the country has been stable, and

WHERE TO STAY IN SANHATTAN

W

Santiago’s 196-room W hotel opened in summer 2009. The five-star new-build is part of a larger complex of exclusive shops and residences, and has striking interior design by New York designer Tony Chi and Chilean Sergio Echeverría. There’s an assortment of bars and restaurants, and all guestrooms have flatscreen LCD TVs, Wi-Fi (US\$16 for 24 hours) and iPod docks. There is a business centre and free Wi-Fi in the public areas, plus eight event spaces totalling 1,700sqm.

PRICE: Rooms from US\$329

CONTACT: 3 000 Isidora Goyenechea, Las Condes, tel. 56 2770 0000; starwoodhotels.com/whotels

InterContinental

The InterContinental was renovated in 2008 and has 296 rooms, including eight suites. It offers an Executive Floor with a business centre, butler service, a lounge with free lunch, dinner, snacks and cocktail hour, a separate check-in area and turn-down service. All rooms have high-spe-

ed Wi-Fi access for US\$20 per 24 hours. The hotel has two restaurants open for lunch and dinner – La Terraza’s, where breakfast is also served, and Bice La Trattoria offering Italian fare with a Chilean touch. There’s a health club (US\$8) and sauna, a business centre and 12 meeting rooms – the ballroom can hold 800 delegates theatre-style.

PRICE: Rooms from US\$153

CONTACT: 2 885 Avenida Vitacura, Las Condes, tel. 56 2394 2000; ichotelsgroup.com

Radisson Plaza

The Radisson Plaza has 159 rooms including 19 suites. All rooms offer king-size beds, tea and coffee-making facilities, free breakfast, Wi-Fi access (US\$10 for 24 hours), a safe and minibar. At check in, guests are offered a welcome drink. There’s a health club with an indoor pool and several types of in-room massages are available – one to help with jet lag. The business centre is open 24 hours and there are five meeting rooms, the largest of



WEEKEND IN VALPARAISO

in 2006 saw the election of its first female president, Michelle Bachelet.

Starwood's Klammer says: "Chile has been okay with the recession because of its reserves of copper and nitrate". But what will happen in 100 years, when they run out? Roempler says: "Historically, Chile has been geared towards primary products (such as copper and nitrate), so when we run out of copper we could turn more towards the service industries. We are certainly getting more tourists to spend money here".

Sanhattan is where a lot of hotels are located (see "Where to stay in Sanhattan") and the area recently saw the opening of the first W hotel in South America. Big names such as Hyatt, Hilton and Crowne Plaza are also here.

Chile has 4,200km of coastline but the country is on average only 150km wide, so a lot of business travellers head to the coast or to one of the many vineyards if they have a spare day. The city itself has a vibrant café culture, numerous museums and the British-built central market with its fresh fish restaurants. There's also the exclusive tree-lined shopping street of Alonso de Cordova, chock full of designer stores.

Tornvall of Turismo Chile concludes: "People used to come here only for business but the new Santiago is becoming a more and more attractive city – I've lived here all my life and I have noticed the difference in the past few years". ■

Visit www.chile.travel and www.turismochile.travel

Valparaiso is about two hours drive from Santiago and is a Unesco World Heritage Site. In many ways it has been Chile's window to the world, being the main port since 1583, and the town sprawls from the bay up the surrounding hills like a giant coloured shell rising from the ocean.

There has been little town planning here and brightly painted houses snake over the 45 hills – they are so steep that the locals boast of having the best legs in Chile. If you struggle with the ascents, jump on one of the rickety funicular trains, which have been around since 1883 (there are only 15 remaining, so plan your route wisely).

Alegre and Concepcion hills are good places to get a feel for the bohemian town as they are right above the old centre, and inspired graffiti art is splashed across many of the buildings. Winding roads reveal cafés and restaurants set on overhanging rocks with hazy views of the bay below.

East of these hills is what I considered to be the heart of the town – the house of Chilean writer and Nobel prize-winner Pablo Neruda, on Florida Hill. (Make sure you get the audio guide as it brings his stunningly designed abode to life.) When I was there, the sun was beating through the huge windows on to the many strange artefacts Neruda had collected over the years – a wooden horse, his personal bar decorated with glasses used by Russian tzars, Japanese friezes, and his favourite armchair.

At the top of the house you'll find a sim-

ple desk and typewriter, and a vista so beautiful it's not too hard to see how inspiration must have flowed. Neruda said of his "crazy port" town: "If we walk through all of Valparaiso's stairways, we will have travelled around the world".

If the house is the heart, then in the evening the soul of the city has to be in one of the many bars. Live, intense jazz was playing at La Piedra Feliz (<http://lapiedrafeliz.cl>) off Avenue Errazuriz, and somehow I found myself having an impromptu salsa lesson at the bar with local couples, old and young joining in.

With few chain hotels to speak of, accommodation is in casas. I tried Casa Higuera (www.hotel-casahiguera.cl) on Alegre Hill. The 1920s building was transformed into a hotel five years ago, and its owners have created a carefully decorated boutique property with 20 rooms, some with stunning port views. The restaurant is worth a visit – sit out on the terrace if you can. Guests can take a dip in the infinity pool before sinking into the outdoor spa bath – undoubtedly the best way to relax after a day trekking up and down the hills.



Radisson



Four Points by Sheraton



The Ritz-Carlton

which holds 250 people. Brick restaurant serves international and Chilean fare for lunch and dinner, as well as breakfast, and Trader's bar offers cocktails in a relaxed environment.

PRICE: Rooms from US\$175

CONTACT: 2 610 Ave Vitacura, Las Condes, tel. 56 2433 9000; radisson.com

Four Points by Sheraton

This hotel has 128 rooms, including 16 suites, which have views of the Andes or the city. All have tea- and conf-

fee-making facilities, high-speed internet (US\$10 for 24 hours), a minibar and safe. There's a business centre and three meeting rooms – the largest with a capacity for 100 people. The hotel has the 24-hour Bar Buganvilla, which has live music Monday to Friday from 7pm, and the Buganvilla restaurant, open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. There's also 24-hour room service, a rooftop pool and a small gym.

PRICE: Rooms from US\$150

CONTACT: 111 Santa Magdalena, tel 56 2750 0300; starwoodhotels.com/fourpoints

The Ritz-Carlton

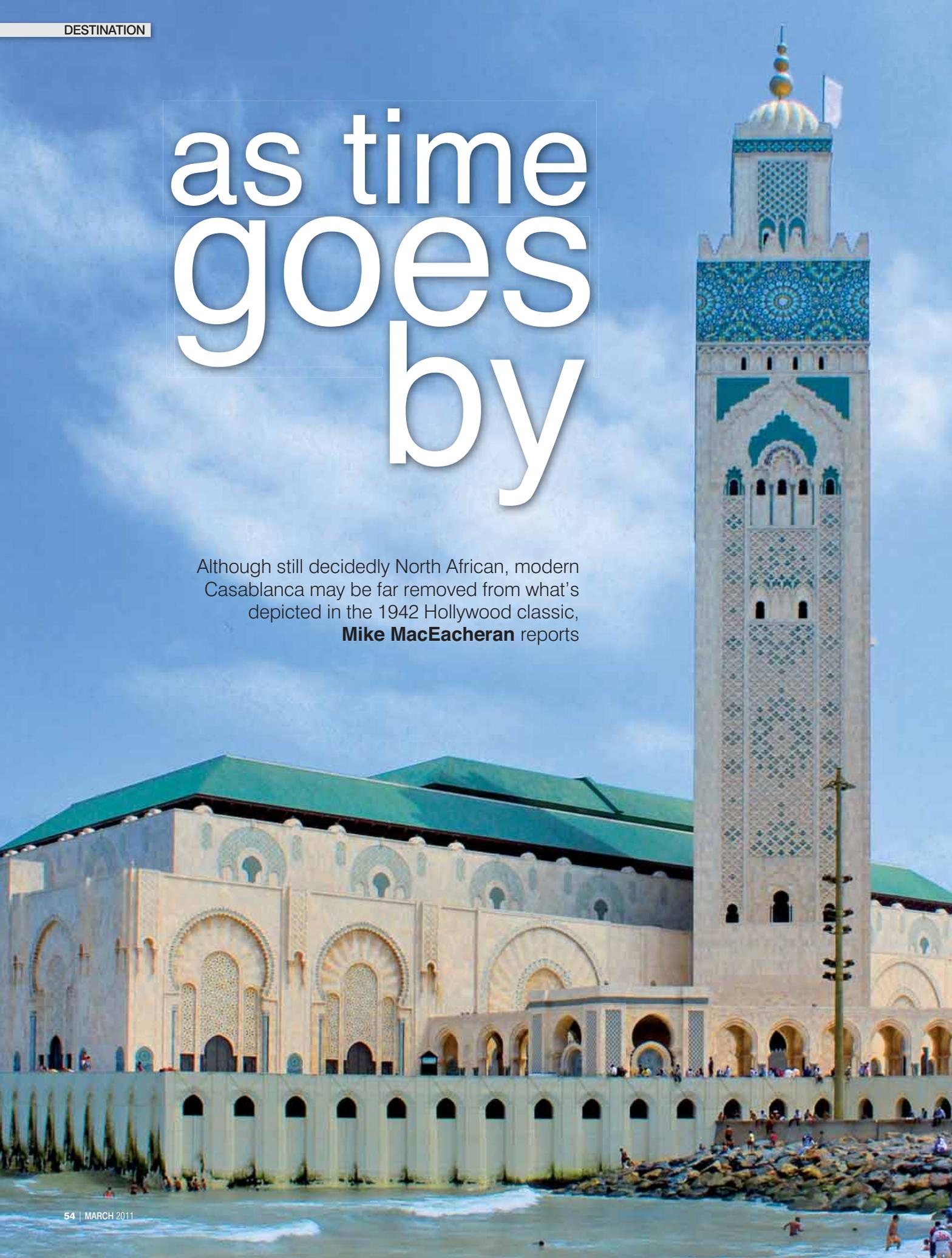
Open since 2003, The Ritz-Carlton is a well-established five-star property. It has 205 rooms including 49 Club Level ones. Internet is charged at US\$15 for 24 hours. For events, there's the grand ballroom with a capacity of 400, eight conference spaces and a business centre. For dining, there's Adra restaurant and Wine 365. The spa and pool on the 15th floor are stunning.

PRICE: Rooms from US\$390

CONTACT: 15 Calle El Alcalde, Las Condes, tel. 56 2470 8500; ritzcarlton.com

as time goes by

Although still decidedly North African, modern Casablanca may be far removed from what's depicted in the 1942 Hollywood classic, **Mike MacEacheran** reports



Hassan II Mosque,
a Casablanca landmark

Morocco is high on many travellers' to-do lists, and some of them might still have the country's biggest city, Casablanca, in mind due to the eponymous Oscar winner that's become a legend since its release 68 years ago. But despite having a shimmering coastline and whitewashed Corniche, Casablanca is motivated by commerce and commodity rather than the tourist dollar. No longer lured by the rolling credits of Humphrey Bogart's celluloid masterpiece, the movie stars and fans have long since taken the express train to Marrakesh. But Casablanca still thrives in calling the shots from the director's chair: and nowhere is this more apparent than on the coast of this bleached white city. The Moroccans understand that it's time for the country to change – and it is Casablanca that is in the spotlight.

"Welcome to the world's most high-tech mosque", announces Sadaq flourishing his arm like a director's clacker board. Above us stands a 200-metre earthquake-proof minaret – the highest in the world. Straining my neck, he directs my attention to the prayer hall's colossal retractable roof and numerous digital boom speakers. Then he points out the elevator, the escalator, under-floor heating, intricately carved cedar cupolas and exquisite *mashrabiyyas* (wooden lattice screen balconies). Somewhere beneath my feet lies an ablutions hall, decorated with *Alice in Wonderland* mushroom fountains, marble hamams and a bathing pool more suited to a five-star hotel or Grand Vizier's palace.

Partly erected on water, in reference to the Quranic verse "the throne of God was on water", at a cost of US\$800 million, the Hassan II Mosque is the compass to which all of modern Casablanca points. "It was built by more than 10,000 craftsmen", the tour guide proudly tells me. "Casablanca is the only place in Morocco or Northern Africa that could pull this off". Its iconic minaret, adorned with scalloped keystone arches and ziggurat crenulations, thrusts directly towards the sun – as though the city was the centre of the universe.

Outside, from the mosque's searing hot courtyard, a microcosm of modern Casablanca is at work, rest and play along the chalk-marked coast. Local fishermen cast lines like yoyos from the curved Corniche, wetsuit adorned teenagers body-board in the surf in the shadows of the mosque's Moorish architecture and two of Northern Africa's most ambitious retail and real estate projects develop at pace.

For the faithful and devout, the considerable beauty of Casablanca's French colonial heritage pales in comparison to its wonders wrought for the glory of Islam. Yet dutifully bound to its heritage, Casablanca is equally focused on the promise of a prosperous economic future.

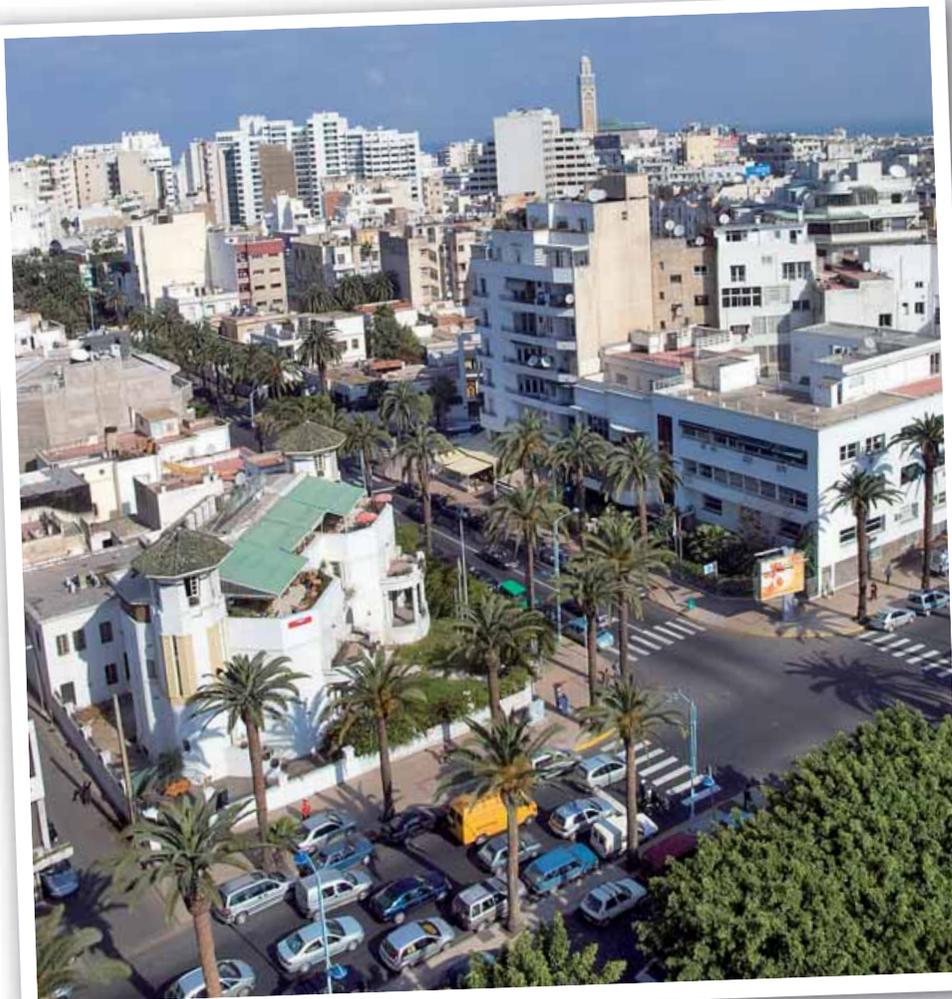
Settled by Berbers in the 7th century, Casablanca has long had a history of attracting migrants and



Street scene near Place
des Nations Unies



inside Rick's Cafe



Spanish do lunch with Malians and Moroccans share their city with an increasing number of incoming brand names. Changed days indeed: Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman and the Marx Brothers – stars of the 1946 *A Night in Casablanca* spoof – have been firmly usurped by Louis Vuitton and Coco Chanel on the white city's Boulevard Mohammed V.

Considered the engine behind the development of the flourishing Moroccan economy as well as home to the Casablanca Stock Exchange, the Royal Moroccan Navy and nearly 60 percent of the country's industrial labour force, the port city is an assembly line of developments. "There are numerous projects under way in Casa just now because the King is focused on developing the country to make it more attractive for investors and for tourists", adds Baha. "The city is also becoming more dynamic: we have security here and diversity because it is a Muslim city in Africa but next door to Europe – it's a very cosmopolitan mix".

Casablanca knows how to keep good company too: perhaps coincidentally, it is twinned with fellow boomtowns (and cinematic backdrops) Chicago and Shanghai.

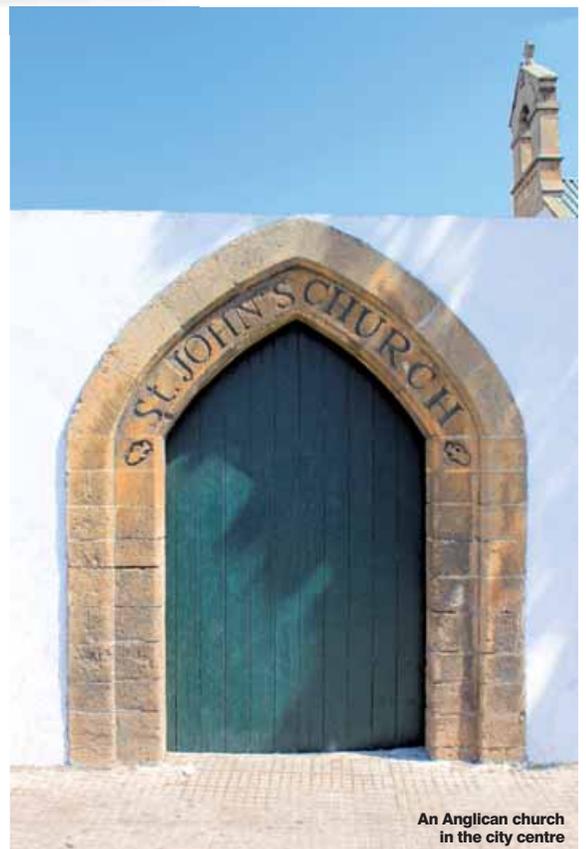
"Casablanca is a Muslim city in Africa but next door to Europe – it's a very cosmopolitan mix".

foreign entrepreneurs. Portuguese influence and textile trade with the British during the early 19th century left its mark before the French sailed in to administer the south of the country as a protectorate. Today, its port, one of the largest artificial harbours in the world, is still a hive of activity. Be it from agriculture, tourism, fisheries or phosphates – the vein of the Moroccan economy as it controls two-thirds of the world's reserves – Casablanca contributes more than 93 billion Moroccan dirhams to the kingdom's GDP and represents the key economic trading node for the African-European region. With a population of 3.4 million, compared to the country's total of 32 million, the city has half Morocco's economy in its deluxe attaché case. Back in 1971, Moroccan women had an average of 7.4 children: today that number has dwindled to less than three as education and careers have taken priority.

"Casablanca is the first economic city of Morocco", explains Bouchra Baha,

director of communications and marketing at the Hyatt Regency, the city's leading luxury brand hotel chain. "It's not the same as Marrakesh, which draws the tourist element, or Tangiers, which has its historical ties to Spain. Here, the focus is on banking, consultancy, telecommunications and offshoring. The textile industry is still prevalent here, as it always has been, but that market is being slowly eaten away by the rise of China".

Whilst gambling, black marketeering and occasional WWII gunfire are definitely off the menu, the cinematic landscape of Casablanca in 2010 boasts headline-billing from foreign investment, multi-billion dirham coastal real estate projects and star-studded designer handbags. Walking through the city's historic Place des Nations Unies and through Parc de La Ligue Arabe, I feel like I could be in any modern southern European city. Like Marseilles or Naples, it is an ethnic mix of Europeans, Arabs and West Africans: French mingle with Senegalese,



An Anglican church in the city centre

Of these touted projects and economic blueprints, the most highly anticipated are the Casablanca Marina, Foster + Partners-designed AnfaPlace Living Resort and the two billion-dirham Morocco Mall – the largest shopping complex in North Africa. Add to this the construction of an extensive US\$5.8 billion tram system, and it seems as though from Gare de Casa-Port to the affluent Eastern Anfa suburbs the entire Casablanca coast is under project. Reinforcing its commercial intentions, Casablanca is Morocco's hub as the first country in North Africa to install a 3G network.

The tourism sector, thanks in part to the Hassan II Mosque, is also reacting to the change. From the Sky Bar on the Corniche, La Bodega and Al Mounia restaurants in the Liberté district to the fashionable new Medina in the Habbous quarter and the new luxury hotel developments – including rumoured ventures from the Four Seasons and Ritz-Carlton – travellers are on the rise. Anecdotaly, around 80 percent of visitors to the city are businessmen from Europe, especially France, Spain, Belgium, England and Italy. There is an emerging market from the Middle East too and, helped by a strong dollar, American executives are again coming back to African shores to do business.

“This is our first office on the African continent, and it represents our commitment to the many business opportunities that are arising from this rapidly developing region”, explains Patrick Dupoux, partner and managing director of the Boston Consulting Group's Casablanca bureau, which opened in April. “While the great recession shrank most economies, Africa has been able to grow. Casablanca in particular is a vibrant city and up-and-coming business centre”. This consultancy firm, one of the world's most respected, will not be alone for long.

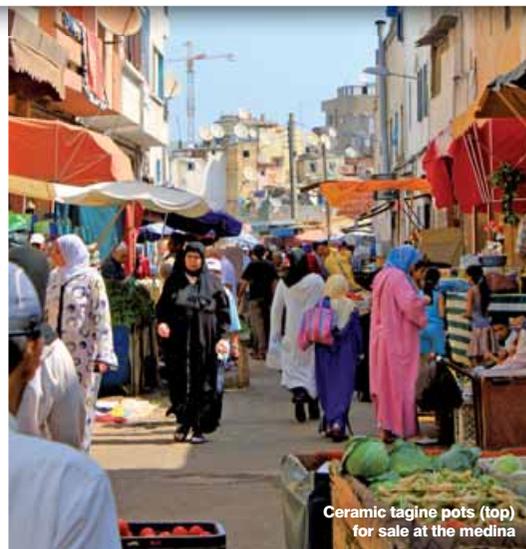
CasaNearshore, the largest IT and business park in North Africa, with its state-of-the-art technologies and tax incentives, has grabbed the attention of many global multinationals. Setting up offshore service centres has become tempting – Hewlett-Packard has moved in and Airbus and Boeing are rumoured to be following suit. Such is the rate of growth, that off-shoring and IT activities are already estimated to contribute US\$500 million to the country's GDP and the sector is expected to employ 30,000 people by 2015.

But what of the legacy left behind by Hollywood and *Casablanca* itself? Of all the gin joints, in all the towns, in all the world, I stumble into the very one in Casablanca on my last day in the city. Before me is Rick's Café, secreted between twin palms on Boulevard Sour Jdid. Although only established in 2004, the restaurant faithfully recreates the fictional saloon made famous in 1942, as though Humphrey Bogart and his entourage had never left town. The film was, in fact, shot on location in Flagstaff, Arizona, and at Warner Bros Burbank Studios in Los Angeles, but in Casablanca the spirit of Bogie and Bergman manages to live on in the wood, glass and plaster interior that was born from the imagination and determination of owner Kathy Kriger, an American woman formerly working as a commercial counsellor for the US Embassy.

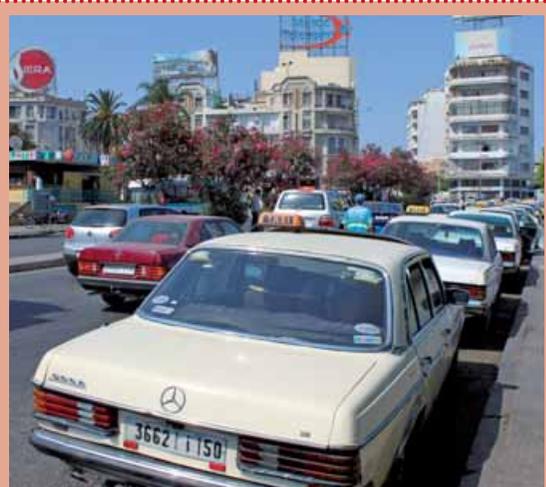
“Bonjour, as-salam'leykum, merhaba and good afternoon!” greets the doorman. Through Rick's Café's curved white-washed arches, sculpted balconies and balustrades – I see red-fez capped waiters perform for star-struck tourists, serving up a pan-Mediterranean mix of Moroccan salads, French grills and Italian ice creams. There is even the presence of the odd dramatic beaded-curtain and enough champagne flutes stocked behind the antique bar to help the most dedicated of Hollywood pilgrims slur out Bogie's best movie quotes. As a muted piano tinkles the film's signature tune *As Time Goes By* for no doubt the zillionth time, the piano stool remains conspicuously empty. With no piano player in sight, the best guess would be that he has fled to Portugal to escape the never-ending misquoted requests to “Play it again, Sam”.

The cosmopolitan set in the city, however, is probably more likely to be seen at Dar Biad restaurant and Six PM bar of the Hyatt Regency, which is very much part of the daily fabric of the city. Around 11pm, the time when most Moroccans congregate with friends and family for a late night dinner, Ingrid Bergman wouldn't even get a look in.

Back on the streets of the Medina, the alleys are abuzz with life and business reverberates on every corner. For the time being, Casablanca and its cast of movielike characters can be proud of what tomorrow has in store. As time goes by, it really could be the beginning of a beautiful new friendship. ■



Ceramic tagine pots (top) for sale at the medina



As Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport is located only 30 kilometres from the city centre, access is easy and inexpensive. Connected by an inter-city train to the Casa Voyageurs train station – the station itself is adorned with an art deco clock steeple, white washed walls and chandeliers – train journeys take approximately 35 minutes. Airport shuttles and taxis are also readily available and refreshingly cost effective.

From Asia-Pacific, the easiest way to reach Casablanca may be via Middle Eastern hubs such as Doha, or Europe.

Maroko

The film legend of Casablanca, discreet charm of Marrakech and the Agadir holiday offer – do you need any more reasons to choose Morocco as a group journey destination? The ones mentioned above should already convince you, but as Tomasz Wysoczyński argues – there are thousands of others as well.

The saying “one eye to Morocco” would be just another slang expression, had it not been for Ian Gillan, the vocalist of the famous Deep Purple, who gave it a place in the world’s culture. When visiting Poland, he got familiar with the saying, and made it a title of his album “One Eye To Morocco”. It’s worth directing your attention to Morocco, as not only it is a highly fascinating country, but also not very distant and peaceful – which is of high importance today, when considering a trip to one of the Arabic countries (however, the term “Arabic country” is an exaggeration, as 75% of the Moroccan population are the Berbers, the Arabs are minority).

The Kingdom of Morocco is situated in the North-Western Africa, separated from Spain with the Strait of Gibraltar. It also borders with Ceuta and Melilla – autonomous cities of Spain. The journey from European capitals takes only 3 hours – the biggest airport in Morocco is Mohammed V International Airport, and there are 60 smaller ones. The temperature here in January is between 10-12 degrees, while in summer it can be up to 40 degrees. Across the country there the Atlas mountains. The capital of Morocco is Rabat, and the biggest city is Casablanca with the population of 3 million people. The conference and accommodation offer is huge. There are of course chain hotels like Hyatt, Ramada or Sheraton, but an interesting option are the so called riads – small, family hotels.

Morocco is a big country of incredibly rich culture, full of unforgettable places – a real must for all the visitors. There are hundreds of mosques, palaces and other historical sites, which says a lot about the country’s past. The most interesting sights are the ancient city of Asilah, the Friouato Caves or El Bahia Palace. You can learn about the country’s history in many museums, the most fa-

mous of which is the Archaeological Museum in Tetouan. It is also worth paying a visit to the Moroccan Art Museum, to see a unique collection of glass artefacts, manuscripts and carpets. In Morocco you can also admire wonderful theatres (especially dance theatres), or, if an opportunity arises, you can take part in one of the colourful street festivals.

There are also other natural attractions like national parks (Souss Massa Park), the Sahara desert, the picturesque

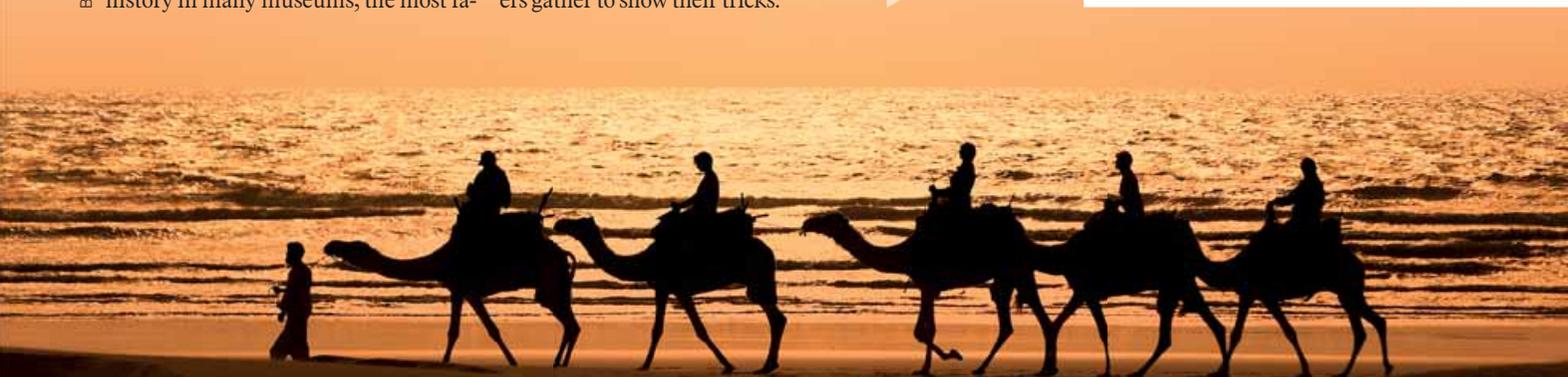


Atlas mountains, or Oregano, where you can take long walks, do some skiing, or rock-climbing. Don’t forget about the possibility to relax on beautiful and vast beaches – Morocco has a very long coastline. Naturally, it also provides you with an opportunity to do water sports, practised mostly in Agadir and Essaouira. Undoubtedly, the souk is an attractive local attraction for any European visitor, It is a bazaar, where you can master the difficult skill or bargaining.

One of the most important cultural centres of Morocco is the famous city of Marrakech. This uniquely charming city is situated at the foot of the snow-covered Atlas mountains. It offers all sorts of attractions, narrow streets of unforgettable atmosphere, palaces, museums and gardens. The city’s central place is the Djemaa el-Fna square, where local street performers, magicians and snake charmers gather to show their tricks.



Morocco is a country, which is relatively close to Europe, so visiting it has never been a big problem. Such a trip can be ideal to integrate your team





In a big and diverse country like Morocco, the list of possible attractions for group trip participants seems to have no end. Take Ouarzazat, a city well-known city, where films like “the Gladiator”, “The Mummy” or “Lawrence of Arabia” were shot. No wonder why – the city, as well as its surroundings can really please the eye. Ouarzazate is situated over 1000 metres above the sea level, in the middle of a plateau surrounded by the mountains and the desert. The views are fabulous, and the city comes by the name of “the Desert gate”. You can have an unforgettable evening here, along with a dinner, dancing and a reception in a Arabic fashion.

Those in need of an adrenaline rush, could take part in a quad and jeep expedition to the desert. Driving up and down the dunes is a lesson of skill and creativity. In the desert you will stumble upon oasis. One of them, Zagora, is an ideal base, from which you can set off for a camel trip across the desert to later on set up the tents. The trip ends with a dinner, during which a local storyteller tells the participants the Arabian Nights stories. Speaking of evening events, another excellent idea is organizing something called “drum night” – a drumming show, an engaging attraction for all the participants. Male participants will be pleased to see sensual exotic dancers, dressed in traditional costumes.

Obviously, you can't have a nice incentive trip without any team-building events. How about “donkey polo”? That's right, this noble game with long aristocratic traditions can be also played while riding a donkey, which requires not only a great sense of humour, but it also evokes a sense of cooperation, as donkey are not always ready to follow orders. Another highly effective team-building event is a task to build a whole

village made of tents, as whole the group has to cooperate to achieve the goal.

Among other options there is also something absolutely unique – dancing and drums. The group learns how to perform traditional dances and how to play African drums under the supervision of a leader. An interesting part of this event is creating a piece of music together – every participant plays an active role by contributing, thus creating a unique drum tune. You can also organize a “tribal” dancing night. It's an exciting experience – the dancers fall into a trance to the accompaniment of drums, didgeridoo and vocals. What's important is that during such parties there is no alcohol – all the sensations has to be natural and come right from the participants' hearts. Another way to strengthen the spirit of cooperation is learning how to make fire. It seems obvious and easy – it's enough to rub one stick against another. But in fact, it requires a great deal of patience and cooperation with other people from the group.

The Morocco trip organizers have also other field games on their offer. It can be anything from picking healing plants, which can be really interesting and stimulating, playing hare and hounds, or other games and competitions invented while sitting by a bonfire – all this to strengthen the spirit of cooperation. There are also other ideas for organizing interesting evening events, like henna dyeing or preparing traditional Moroccan dishes. You can learn to cook genuine lamb or vegetarian couscous, or pastilla (meat – originally pigeon, nowadays usually chicken – baked in pastry). You will also get to know what herbs and seasonings to use when preparing the traditional harira soup, and the number of herbs is indefinite, as Morocco is a real fusion of different flavours and colours. ■

MOROCCO'S ATTRACTIONS

Asilah

A city and a fortification, situated in the North-Western part of Morocco. It was founded by the Phoenicians around 1500 BC. It is uniquely charming, the white walls of the city sharply contrast with the blue sky.



Bab Rouah



Situated in the city of Rabat, this monumental “gate of winds” dates back to 1197 and is one of the biggest attractions in Morocco. It is originally and beautifully decorated, both from

the inside and outside. Inside there are two big rooms as well as several smaller ones, all full of works of art.

El Bahia

A palace in Marrakech, dating back from 19th century. Inside, there are 160 rooms, and each one is decorated in a different fashion.



Boulaouane Kasbah

It's a fortress and a castle, situated in the Southern part of Casablanca. It was erected in 1710. The view from the tower is unforgettable, and inside, you will see beautiful mosaics.

Chellah

These are Rabat gardens, full of thousands of flowers and other plants. In spring, when everything blossoms, all the visitors are surrounded by an extravaganza of colours. It is an unforgettable experience.

Saadian Tombs

Tombs from 16th century near Marrakech. About 200 members of the Saadian dynasty were buried there.

Gouffre Friouato

The biggest system of caves in North Africa. It is situated near the city of Taza. Inside, you will see impressive rock forms.



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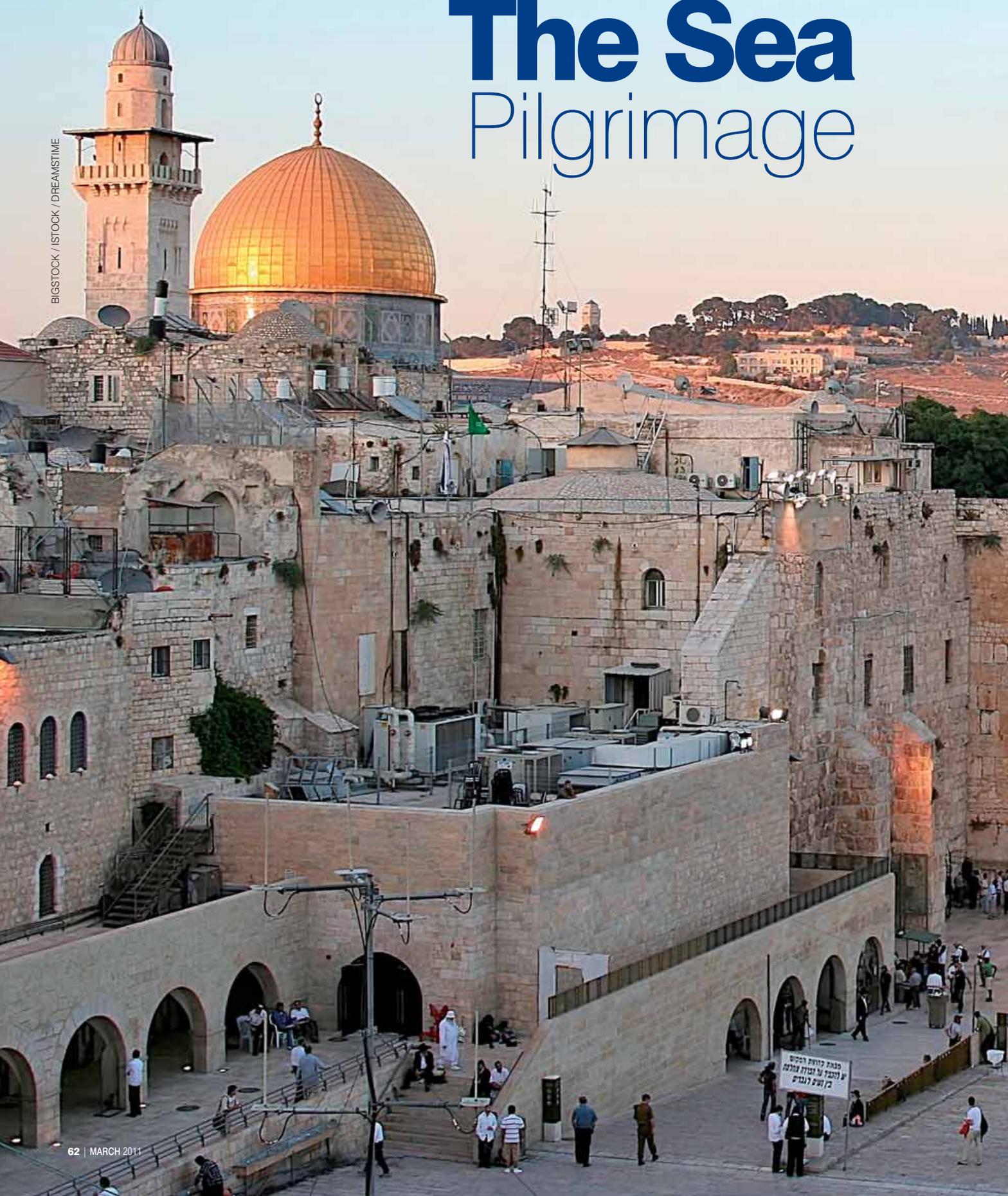
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The Sea Pilgrimage

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In the past, people made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land on foot, which was a long, dangerous, but also a noble expedition. Today, you can take the same journey but by air. Still, we recommend another means of transport – a cruise ship. The goal is the same, but the way you travel is likely to turn your pilgrimage into a trip of a lifetime.

A trip aboard a cruise liner has numerous advantages, especially one which can't be beaten by any other means of transport. It enables us to visit several countries in only a few days which, in turn, allows us to thoroughly explore different cultures and experience unforgettable adventures. This is exactly what awaits us during our trip from Istanbul to the Holy Land. The journey

takes 10 days, and the cruise liner Vision Of The Seas calls at ports in Turkey, Israel, and Egypt. When the ship is in the port, we can visit the area around it, or take part in various optional trips organized by Royal Caribbean cruise line.

TURKEY: ISTANBUL

The passengers embark the ship in the city of Istanbul which by itself is packed with various attractions. Having em- ▶





barked the liner and settling down in our cabin (and an obligatory walk around the ship), we will have a lot of time to visit the city, as the ship's departure is scheduled for the next day.

Istanbul offers a great variety of opportunities to spend our free time. It's worth taking part in an excursion to the most interesting spots of this city with its incredibly rich heritage. The excursion starts with a visit to the Hippodrome, which for over 1,000 years was the centre of the city once known as Byzantium. The Hippodrome witnessed numerous political, military, as well as sports dramas. The place was a venue for famous chariot races. One of more distinctive elements of the place is a granite obelisk, which was carved in Egypt around 1,500 BC, and brought to Constantinople 20 centuries later.

The next point of the excursion is a visit to Hagia Sophia. This church, built around AD 390, was turned into a mosque in 1453 when the Turks took control of the city. Nowadays, a museum is situated there. Another remarkable place is the Blue Mosque — one of the world's most unique monuments.

Topkapi palace is a former residence of Turkish sultans. This building, which resembles a castle, was built in the 15th century for Mehmed II, as his summer residence. Later it was expanded and became a complex of several buildings with a few courtyards and beautiful gardens. We can admire here exquisite china, jewellery, military items, and other treasures. Talking of palaces, there is one more interesting place to visit. It's called the Underground Palace and was built in 6th century with 336 Corinthian columns. The "palace" was constructed to serve as a water tank.

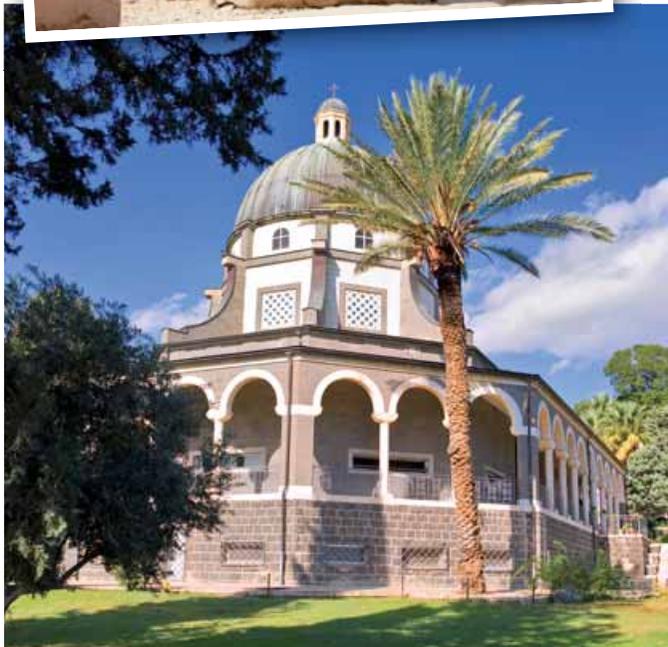
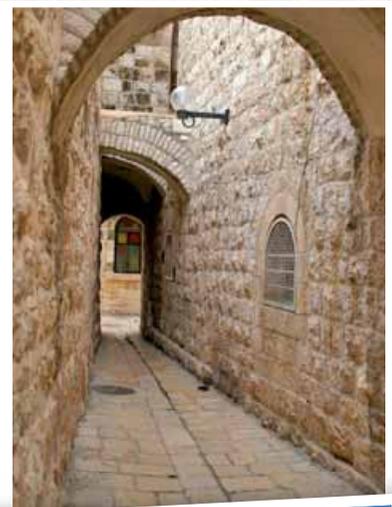
Another attraction of the excursion is a cruise along the Bosphorus which connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara. As we cruise, we can admire beautiful villages, and magnificent buildings such as churches, mosques, and palaces. In the narrowest part of the strait we pass by Rumeli Hisar fortress, which was built in 1452.

The final point of the excursion is a visit to the colourful Grand Bazaar. It's a huge marketplace which is divided into two parts: a traditional and modern one. The traditional part is surrounded by a wall and it can be entered via one of the 11 gates. It's almost a city within a city: full of stalls and stores where you can buy nearly everything. The participants can also attend a presentation of the unique art of carpet weaving.

IZRAEL: HAIFA, ASHDOD

Next day, the cruise liner departs Istanbul, spends one full day on the sea, on the fourth day calls at the port in Haifa, and on the fifth one in Ashdod. There it's worth participating in an excursion around the most interesting spots related to the Christian religion. From Haifa the route leads to Nazareth where the biggest attraction is, undoubtedly, the Basilica of the Annunciation — the largest Christian church in the Middle East. The large cone-shaped dome finished with a stone lantern and 57 metres tall, protects the Grotto of the Annunciation where the archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary. We will also visit the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus gave its renowned Sermon on the Mount. The terraces of the church, which was built here in 1937, offer remarkable views on the Sea of Galilee.

The cruise with Royal Caribbean to the Holy Land is an unforgettable experience, not only religion-wise



Tabgha, a valley located on the north-western shore of the sea, is another impressive spot. It was first mentioned by a Romano-Jewish historian Josephus Flavius around 1st century BC, and contains several sites related to the life of Jesus Christ. The most important of them are the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes and the village of Capernaum with the ruins of a synagogue where Jesus preached.

We will also have a chance to visit the banks of the Jordan river where John the Baptist baptised Jesus, as well as the Gethsemane Garden in Jerusalem – where Judas betrayed the Christ. The impressive Basilica of the Agony is built on site of the death of Jesus. Since many people from all the parts of the world contributed to its rebuilding, now it's also called the Church of All Nations.

We will also visit the square next to the renowned Wailing Wall – a remnant of the Jerusalem temple which was pulled down by the Romans in AD 70. It's a place of Jewish worship and there are always a great number of people praying at the wall. The renowned El Aqsa mosque is visible from here.

We will walk along Via Dolorosa (Eng. "Way of Suffering" – the path that Jesus walked, carrying his cross, on the way to his crucifixion), visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where Jesus's tomb was located, as well as the Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem.

From Ashdod it's worth going to Masada – a fortress where the Jews had for long resisted to the Roman siege during the uprising of AD 70. The fortress is located 442 metres above the Dead Sea. When the Romans finally breached the walls of the fortress, they found out that the defenders had chosen to commit mass suicide rather than give in to the invaders. The last point of the excursion is a visit to the shores of the Dead Sea – the place of the lowest elevation on the Earth's surface on dry land.

EGYPT: ALEXANDRIA

The sixth and seventh days are reserved for a visit to Alexandria, Egypt. The place offers a lot of attractions. We can go to Cairo – the largest Egyptian city – to see the Mosque of Muhammad Ali, go on a mini-cruise along the Nile river combined with lunch, and finally reach the city of Giza where we can admire the wonders of the ancient world: the Pyramids and the Sphinx. The excursion also includes a visit to the Institute of Papyrus

where we'll learn how papyrus is made.

The city of Alexandria is an attraction by itself. It was established in 332 BC by Alexander the Great and it soon became the cultural and economic centre of the ancient world. The tour round the city will start with the charming streets which lead to the Mansheya Square with the bronze statue of Muhammad Ali – the father of the modern Egypt. From there we will make for the Kom el Shoqfa catacombs – a three level complex of tombs dated back to 2nd century.

We will see the Lighthouse of Alexandria which is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, as well as Abu El Abbas mosque – one of the most famous in the Muslim world. We will also visit the National Museum which displays exhibits from the flooded Palace of Cleopatra, a Roman Kom El Dekka amphitheatre, and the Library of Alexandria.

There is also an interesting excursion to Luxor and the Valley of the Kings. It's possible to get there from Alexandria by plane – the flight takes 1.5 hour, but the trip is worth the effort. In Luxor we will visit the Karnak Temple complex and the Sphinx Alley. After the lunch, we will see the Valley of the Kings with tombs constructed for the Pharaohs and powerful nobles of the New Kingdom. The most renowned is the tomb of Tutankhamun from the 14th century BC. We will have an opportunity to visit the tomb of Hatshepsut, as well as see the giant statues of Amenophis III, known also as the Colossi of Memnon.

TURKEY: KUSADASI (EPHESUS)

On the eighth day of the cruise the ship stays on the sea, but on the ninth day it lies in the Turkish port of Kusadasi. The biggest attraction of this resort are the remnants of the ancient city of Ephesus, which once was one of the most significant centres of the Greek culture. The trip by coach to Ephesus takes merely one hour, which is enough to immerse in the rich history of that place. The city was established in 9th century BC and it existed until the 15th century when it was abandoned. Interestingly enough, it is there where the Gospel of St. John was written.

Today Ephesus is a museum-city, which is accessed through a large gate. The spots which are especially worth seeing there are the theatres: the Great Theatre for estimated 44,000 spectators and Odeon which seated up to 2,000 people. Also impressive are the remnants of the Trajan Fountain which used to be 12

VISION OF THE SEAS

Vision Of The Seas, which is owned by Royal Caribbean cruise line, was built in 1998. It is 91-metre long, reaches the speed of 22 knots, and takes aboard almost 2,500 people. The ship offers a wide range of attractions to its passengers. Among them are spas, two swimming pools, six hot tubs, and a theatre where evening performances take place. That's not all. The passengers can also use the ship's climbing wall, go to numerous bars and clubs, or even visit the casino to if they feel like gambling a little. The cruise liner also features a fitness centre and a swimming pool with a retractable roof.

Food and beverages (except for alcohol) are included in the price of the cruise. Breakfasts and lunches are served in the form of a rich buffet where everyone will find something to their taste. Dinners can also be eaten in this way, but most passengers chooses to feast at a beautifully decorated table with waiters serving them. Dinners with the captain of the ship are a special culinary treat. There's no need to mention that both the meals and wines are excellent and the service is perfect.

The ship features several bars and club rooms where you can pleasantly spend the evening.

There are also cafeterias, ice-cream parlours, pizza eateries, and a real shopping centre with shops offering brand cosmetics, clothes and spirits. In the evening there is live music and a disco, which doesn't finish until early in the morning.

The passengers travel in comfortable conditions – they can choose between inside cabins, outside cabins with balconies, and a couple of suite types. Standard facilities include two beds, a wardrobe, a bathroom, a TV set and a mini bar and a phone. The price includes the meals and cold drinks. Alcohol and optional trips are not included in the price.

The ship also features a well-equipped conference centre.



metres high. The Baths of Scholastica are typical Roman thermae, and the giant Temple of Hadrian as well as the Library of Celsius are always full with people taking photos.

Ephesus is not the only interesting place in Kusadasi. The area is also renowned for its aquapark which attracts thousands of tourists from all over the world. The pools, artificial waves and the river, spas, a pool with the oceanic water, a complex of water slides, and finally a park with dolphins where we can watch an amazing show featuring those friendly animals.

The tenth day of the cruise is spent on the sea, and on the eleventh one the ship returns to the port in Istanbul, where this incredible pilgrimage which of immersion in the world of the ancient attractions ends. ■

Tomasz Rozwadowski

TOP TEN GOLF COURSES

in RSA



1 Leopard Creek

Leopard Creek, which is considered to be one of the best golf clubs in South Africa, is located on the edge of the renowned Kruger National Park. Gary Player's design takes advantage of the natural environment, which is home to Africa's "big five" – lion, leopard, elephant, rhinoceros and buffalo – and over 200 species of birds that make their homes in the surrounding trees, some of which are over 100 years old.

Players are protected from the wildlife by means of innovative architectural and landscaping techniques – although water hazards might include the odd hippopotamus or crocodile!



3 Wild Coast Country Club

Designed by the world-renowned Robert Trent Jones, the course is set against the background of the Indian Ocean, making it beautiful – but punishing for those that stray into the rough. When the wind gets up the Wild Coast Country Club can present a very difficult challenge.

The club's signature hole is the par-three thirteenth, which measures only 146 metres but is a real tester.



4 Fancourt Hotel, Country Club and Golf Estate

Located in the picturesque southern Cape, The Links at Fancourt hosted a memorable 2003 Presidents Cup clash between the USA and the International Team, as well as the inaugural Women's World Cup of Golf in 2005.

Gary Player's design took a marvel of construction to piece together, with over 700 000 cubic metres of earth being moved to create a typical Links-style course on what had been a flat piece of land.

2 Gary Player Country Club



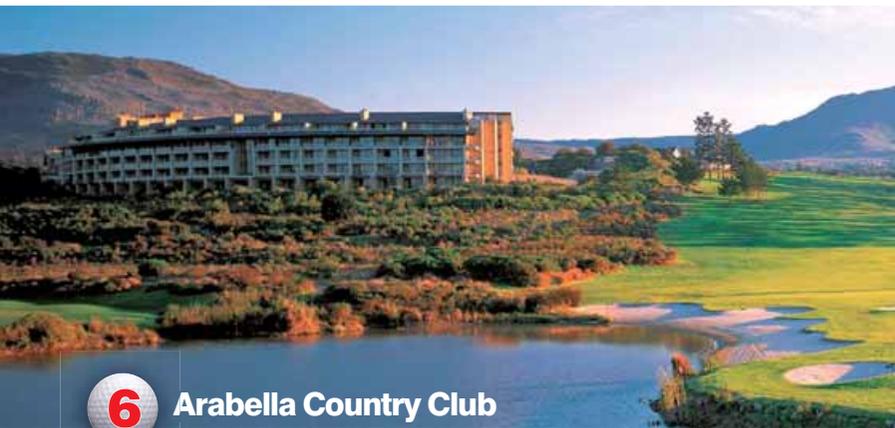
Host to the Nedbank Challenge, the Gary Player Country Club at Sun City in North West province features two holes that have ranked in Golf Online's list of the 500 best holes in golf: the 520 metre par-five ninth, and the 402 metre par-four eighteenth. Golf Digest USA has ranked the course at number 29 in the world outside the US. The course is one of the longest in South Africa and certainly one of the toughest, with the rough especially punishing. It places a premium on accurate approaches, with plenty of bunkers and water hazards sprinkled around the layout to test even the best.



5 Durban Country Club

The Durban Country Club has hosted more South African Open Championships than any other in the country, with a list of winners that includes Gary Player, Bobby Locke, Bob Charles, Ernie Els and Tim Clark.

Golf Digest USA has ranked the course 62nd in the world outside the US, while three of its holes have been included in Golf Online's top 500.



6 Arabella Country Club

Bordering the largest natural lagoon in South Africa, with the ninth, seventeenth, and eighteenth running parallel to the water, Arabella Country Club provides both a wonderful golf challenge and an eye-catching landscape. It made a strong impact when Golf Digest named it the best new course in South Africa in 1999, and it has kept up the high standard it set early on, featuring regularly as one of South Africa's top-10 courses.



7 Glendower Golf Club

Built in 1937, Johannesburg's Glendower Golf Club made an early impact, hosting The Transvaal Open only two years into its existence.

The course hosted the South African Open in 1987, 1993 and 1997. Trees, water hazards—on 11 holes—and bunkers are plentiful. The signature par-four tenth has been included in Golf Online's 500 best holes in the world.



8

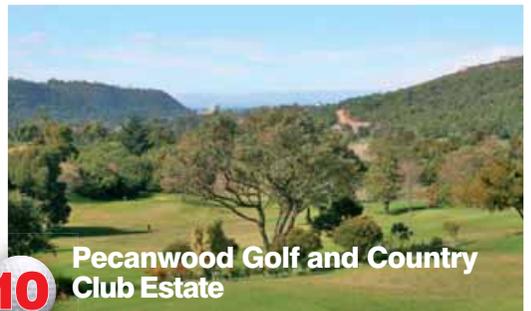
River Club Golf Course

The very exclusive River Club Golf Course in Sandton, Johannesburg is highly rated for its always immaculate conditioning. Unfortunately, only members and their guests have access to this scenic layout. Apart from the course's stunning condition, the River Club also features one of the toughest finishing stretches to be found anywhere in South Africa. It is also a long course, playing to about 6,500 metres.



9 George Golf Club

Situated not far from Fancourt on the Western Cape's beautiful Garden Route, the picturesque, rolling course is packed with trees. The front nine features only one par-three hole, but the back nine has three of them. The signature hole, the par-three seventeenth, has been included in Golf Online's 500 best holes in the world.



10 Pecanwood Golf and Country Club Estate

Bordering Hartebeespoort Dam in North West province—within an hour's drive of both Johannesburg and Pretoria—Pecanwood Golf and Country Club Estate is set against the backdrop of the beautiful Magaliesberg Mountains. Although the course is flat, well positioned bunkers ensure that it offers a good challenge to golfers of all standards. The greens feature Crenshaw bent grass, which is extremely resilient and can therefore always be cut low and fast.

More Than Words

In January, Las Vegas hosted the world's biggest Consumer Electronics Show. Leading producers, new products, beautiful hostesses. All of these could be seen at this year's CES. We were particularly interested in "all-in-one" mobile phones, also

known as smartphones. Hoping that it won't be long before we can see them on the Polish market, we present you 6 of the most interesting devices.

HTC ThunderBolt

HTC presented at CES as many as three new models capable of connecting to 4G network. The phone which caused the biggest stir was HTC ThunderBolt, which had for long been discussed by specialist magazines. The reports stated both various names (initially Incredible HD, later Mecha), and the technical specifications among which were a dual-core processor and a powerful battery with 1,800 mAh capacity to keep the phone alive for long. However, those beautiful dreams about the long-distance runner from Taiwan evaporated at its official premiere. Nevertheless the model is still an impressive piece. The smartphone is going to debut in US Verizon network. ThunderBolt features a single core 1GHz processor, and other specifications include a 4.3 inch WVGA TFT capacitive touch screen (800 x 400 pixels), 768 MB RAM, two digital cameras (8 MP and 1.3 MP), 8 GB internal memory (plus a preinstalled 32 GB microSD). The phone obviously also features Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, an integrated Skype, and GPS. ThunderBolt is powered by Google Android 2.2 operating system with HTC Sense interface.

Summary:

ThunderBolt is a solid phone with decent specifications. Obviously the earlier leaks regarding the dual-core processor didn't help the phone's career, but anyway so far it's only available on the US market. Perhaps HTS will soon decide to listen to the fans of the brand and build a smartphone featuring a dual-core processor. A new, fresh-look design of the phones would also be welcome.



Sony Ericsson Xperia arc

The Xperia family has gained a new member named "arc". The flagship product of the Japanese-Swedish joint venture is powered by Google Android 2.3. operating system. The "arc" features a 4.2-inch Sony.Reality Display with 854 x 480 resolution, and a high quality of image generated by the Mobile BRAVIA Engine. In line with the tradition for this brand, the camera has received solid components:

a Sony CMOS Exmor R sensor with 8.1 MP and focal length f/2.4. Other technical data: Qualcomm processor clocked at 1 GHz, 512 MB internal memory, a microSD slot (up to 32 GB) and the whole connectivity package (Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, A-GPS). All of these packed in a tasteful chassis whose dimensions are 125 x 63 x 8.7 mm). The phone weighs 11 grams and is the first of the new range of Sony

Ericsson's smartphones due to debut this year.

Summary:

It was worth the wait! The very first look at the phone tells us that Sony Ericsson has worked hard to design the "arc" model. The used materials are of high quality and the design very attractive. Let's hope the "arc" will soon hit the Polish market.

LG Optimus x 2

It seems that the Korean engineers carefully follow online discussions. Users have for long demanded to increase the “pulse rate” in smartphones by implementing a dual-core processor. Optimus x2 is the world’s first dual-core smartphone (1 GHz ARM Cortex-A9, Tegra 2 chipset) with Android operating system (as of now the version is 2.2 but may be upgraded to 2.3) and 4G com-

patibility. Add to this a 4-inch TFT screen (800 x 480 pixels), 8 GB of internal memory plus a microSD slot (up to 32 GB), and two digital cameras (8 MP and 1.3 MP). The dimensions of the Korean machine are 123.9 x 63.2 x 10.9 mm, while the weight is 139 grams. Optimus x2 has already been available in Korea and its European debut is expected soon.

Summary:

The thunderbolt (sic!) from Korea is truly impressive thanks to its fast processor, a high quality display, and excellent Full HD video streaming through HDMI to TV. It’s a pity, though, that LG didn’t opt for a more original design of the phone. Also the materials used for its construction could be of better quality as for such an advanced phone.



Motorola ATRIX

Motorola had to face an extremely difficult task. All major manufacturers introduced new smartphones which support 4G network and in most cases will debut on the US market.

Motorola needed to have a very strong card in their hand, because being the US company, the USA are their primary market. And they did it! Atrix evoked a huge interest among the journalists. The phone fea-

tures a dual-core Nvidia Tegra 2 processor clocked at 1 GHz, a 4-inch touchscreen with 960 x 540 resolution, 1 GB RAM, 16 GB of internal memory (plus a microSD slot), a 5MP digital camera (and a video-call camera), as well as a powerful 1,930 mAh battery. This impressive device is powered by Google Android 2.2 operating system and obviously supports 4G technology. The ATRIX will be available in AT&T’s offer.

Summary:

A great potential hidden in an elegant casing. The dual-core processor is definitely one of the biggest advantages of Atrix, as is 1GB of RAM. On the downside, the 5 MP camera doesn’t seem to be a very impressive component on board of Motorola’s flagship product. An interesting solution is the optional docking station with a 11.6-inch screen, a full QWERTY keyboard and stereo speakers.



Sharp Galapagos 003SH

Galapagos is not only the archipelago on the Pacific, but also a whole range of mobile devices produced by Sharp – from tablets to smartphones. In April 2010 Sharp presented the world's first 3D touchscreen for mobile devices. Only 9 months later a new 003SH model featuring this technology was presented. The phone has a 3.8-inch touchscreen, offering 800 x 400 resolution and capable of displaying 3D images without the need of wearing special glasses. The device has a 9.6 MP digital camera, a 1 GHz Snapdragon processor, and built-in Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, as

well as GPS. The world's first smartphone with a 3D display is powered by Google Android 2.2.

Summary:

A desirable gadget not only for smartphone lovers, but also for players – Galapagos 003SH features a range of 3D games by Capcom – a renowned Japanese game maker. The only downside of this model is its availability, or rather its unavailability on the European market. However, as it is often the case with devices which are first promoted on the Japanese market, sooner or later they will also appear in Europe. Let's hope so!



Samsung 4G LTE Smartphone

Traditionally, the Samsung's stand was one of the most besieged at CES, also thanks to the company's new mobile devices. Samsung 4G LTE Smartphone, as the name suggests, has been created with 4G in mind. The device will first be promoted by the US giant Verizon in the first half of this year. The phone has a 4.3-inch Super AMOLED Plus touchscreen, a 1 GHz processor and two digital cameras (1.3 MP and 8 MP). It features a super-fast internet browser supporting

the new HTML 5 standard. Samsung has decided to use here Google Android 2.2 operating system.

Summary:

The detailed specifications of the newest Samsung are still unknown, but we can certainly predict that it will be one of the major players on the market of mobile phones supporting 4G technology. Why? For example thanks to its excellent display, an original design, and Samsung's applications.

The land of mystery

Already known for its struggle against the English crown, complex language, and a couple of decent football players, there is yet a startling revelation to be made about Wales. After all, what could this country possibly have in common with Japan, especially when it comes to its cuisine?

In his famous trilogy, Tolkien adapted Welsh grammar and phonology when crafting the fictional language of the characters. Following this linguistic creation, we did not experience a worldwide mass increase in the number of Welsh-speaking people, yet there were surely many of those who were able to appreciate the Gothic mystery and melody reflected in the names of characters and places from the Tolkien's world. The Welsh call their land Cymru (the name "Wales" is just an English version), and they refer to themselves as Cymry, which means "fellow-countrymen".

It is therefore hardly surprising that the Welsh (perhaps the term Cymric would be more suitable here) names for dishes also strike us as highly original. For instance, *Tatws pum munud* is a classic Cymric stew, while *Crempog* is an equivalent of an English buttermilk pancake; and who would have thought that it is the traditional griddle cakes that go by the name of *Picau ar y maen*? These cakes are immensely popular with the Welsh, and are best served while still warm, with icing sugar sprinkled on top.

Picau ar y maen are incredibly easy to make and the whole cooking process takes very little time (roughly 20 minutes). In order to prepare the cakes, you will need the following ingredients: 280 grams of self-rising flour, 60 grams of sugar, a quarter teaspoon of ground nutmeg, a little more than 2 teaspoons of baking powder, 120 grams of butter, cut into cubes, 1/3 cup of raisins, grated orange zest (optional), 1 lightly beaten egg, 4 spoons of milk, a quarter teaspoon of salt and a quarter teaspoon of ground cinnamon. Having sifted the flour into a bowl, add the butter, sugar, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and mix everything together. After that, add the raisins (and orange zest),

egg and milk. Blend until the mixture comes together as a dough, and then roll out on the work surface until it is less than a centimetre long. Cut the pastry into rounds (or different shapes) and cook on a frying pan for about 2,5 minutes on each side. When done, the Welshcakes should be golden brown but still a little soft in the middle. Whether spread with jam or salted butter, dusted with icing sugar, or topped with honey, the cakes taste like little drops of heaven.

Those who strongly believe that there is no link between Welsh and Japanese cuisine, could not be more wrong. Indeed, it is laver which establishes such connection and is considered a delicacy in the two culinary realms (cultures). In Cymru this edible seaweed constitutes the main ingredient of laverbread – a delicious traditional dish served with seafood, fish or meat products like bacon or sausage. When fresh, it should be simmered for 3/4 of an hour, but if you have got the pre-cooked version, simply cook it over low heat in butter, and then flavour with some orange juice, salt and pepper. Although laver has a mud-like

texture, the taste makes up for the looks. Surprisingly, laver can be served with virtually anything.

However, what Welsh cuisine is the most famous for is Rarebit. Due to a striking resemblance to its English counterpart, you can guess the meaning of the speciality (rabbit). Apparently, the name itself was coined in the days when the Welsh were notoriously poor and the animal in question was considered a rare treat. You will need the following ingredients: 4 slices of bread, 250 grams of



Welsh cuisine teaches us one remarkable thing: laver can be combined with almost any dish

butter, mustard, 1/2 glass of ale, cayenne pepper, Worcestershire sauce and cheddar cheese (the two final ingredients are a must!). First toast the bread on each side and place it in an ovenproof dish. Having added the rest of the ingredients, bake everything in the oven for 10 minutes, and now consider your job done. Naturally, you can decorate your toasts with some tomatoes, eggs or greenery, depending on your preference.

We could keep on writing passionately about Welsh cuisine – the gastronomic delights such as *bara brith* (traditional teabread enriched with dried fruit), smoked salmon and mutton are still awaiting to be discovered. Having given the world Tolkien's fictional language, Wales still has to offer a bewildering array of flavours. ■

Artur Kolger



Expression of wine

The production

Part IV

Gone are the days where you could easily guess the grape variety or the region a certain wine comes from just by tasting it. Nowadays, winemakers are equipped with very modern solutions, thanks to which, they can control the production process and influence the taste of wine.

Last month we covered the subject of maceration and fermentation. We already know that although wine doesn't require human assistance to have rich flavour and aroma, but the technology part is impossible to skip.

When selecting an appropriate mode of wine production, it is all about adequate proportions. Winemaking and ageing are friendly processes and are supposed to help it reach its maximum potential. That's why too much interference might obscure wine expression, whereas too little – might stop it completely. This time we'll cover the wine maturation and enhancing.

WINE MATURATION

Wine maturation is a highly important process for the wine's character, but not always necessary. If a winemaker wants to create light, fresh raspberry red Pinot Noir, he can safely bottle it right after fermentation and three months after harvesting, he can sell it forward. In this

BIGSTOCK / FOTOLIA

case, the ageing of wine could only spoil the effect. However, if he wishes to make more massive, spiced and long-lasting wine, he has to let it mature. He has two options to achieve it – they can be used selectively, or at the same time.

One of them is aging wine on dregs, left from dead yeasts as a result of fermentation. This gives the wine slightly bread-like, milky character. The second – and the most important one is aging in barrels. And here, again, there are plenty of possibilities. You have to choose an appropriate barrel and suitable aging time, which may vary from a couple of months to many years (*Vin jaune*). In the it was necessary to put wines in barrels, because the bottles were still to be discovered and clay dishes were difficult to transport. Only later did the winemakers realise that it had a positive effects on wine – it softened the tannins, so that they not so sharp on the tongue. It combines together all the wine aromas into one smooth structure. Yet later, it was discovered that the barrel may act like spice, completing the flavour of a wine with additional aromas and tannins rinsed from the wood, which makes the wine more noble and long-lived.

Barrel aromas may be different, depending on the barrel's provenience. French barrels give more intellectual, hard aroma of spices, pepper, coffee or freshly tanned leather, whereas American barrels complete the wine with more hedonistic traces of vanilla, cream or chocolate. What also contributes to the taste of wine is the degree of "toast" on the barrel. The intensity of the aromas depends on the size of barrels, which capacity may equal from 100 litres to even a few hundred of hectolitres. The fact whether a barrel is old or new is also important, as a new one heavily influences the wine by masking its fruitful aroma – that's why the aging process cannot be too long. Whereas with an old barrel, this risk decreases and you can age the wine for much longer without influencing its character. And this is what is dangerous for the contemporary viniculture, especially in the New World, which seems to be in love with barrel aromas. As a result, the wines are often deprived of their genuine character. One might be tempted to remind all these oenologists, that wine is made from grapes, and not oak wood. The barrel is there only to support, but it does not make wine. Soon we'll get to

Wine aging time may vary from a couple of months to even many years



the point where you can pour some beetroot concentrate to the barrels, and keep it in for long enough, so that nobody can tell if it's from beetroot, grapes or turnip cabbage.

ENHANCEMENT

The contemporary world of wine, like any other, is going faster and the winemakers often try to shorten the process of wine making, decrease the costs and make more profit. By putting some mysterious additives into wine, you can make Grand Reserva – commonly reserved for long-term aging wines, like one from the Spanish Rioja in Chile – appear on the market only after two years at a reasonable price.

The sulphur, so much feared by so many people, are completely safe, provided they are used with moderation. In the end, you have to remember that Chateau Margaux contains more sulphur than local fruit plonk. The sulphur is used only to conserve the wine and stop the fermentation process – in order to get rid of the so called native yeasts and replace them with budding yeasts. The "contains sulphur" information put on the label is of concern only for allergy sufferers. You should not discourage, if the wine comes from a reliable producer. But the fun has only begun, as he masters of ceremony are now winemakers from the New World, who started with replacing expensive barrels with oak chips, which are put into the tank. The chips give wooden flavour, and as a result, this sophisticated aroma is now accessible for much lower price,

although the quality is a bit poorer. Later came the idea of increasing the acidity of wine coming from too hot climates, so that it can reach the proper balance by itself. Then they came up with other dubious innovations, like liquid barrels, antibiotics for wine stabilisation, powder tannins against excessive oxidation, etc.

I don't want to sound like a caustic fan of the Old Continent, who thinks that everything coming from America is below his dignity. In the New World, there are also "pure" producers, while at the same time not everything in Europe is so natural and orthodox, as some of the solutions originally invented in the South hemisphere, are now widely employed in the South of Europe. Even the most noble wines are artificially enhanced. As they come from cool climate, even the best German Riesling may be chaptalized, i.e. sweetened during the fermentation process, while the wines from Champagne even after the fermentation (all the Demi Sec are sweeter).

The contemporary technology are both a great opportunity and a threat to the wine. Technology makes it possible for some wines to come to existence, while others tend to lose their character to the point when it no longer matters whether the wine comes from France or New Zealand. Appellation is of less and less importance, and some of the wines could be just labelled DOC Earth, which doesn't necessarily mean they are of poor quality – quite the contrary – they could taste really good. Only, should every restaurant in the world have sushi and tiramisu on their offer? ■

Michał Poddany & Robert Mielżyński

A Different Kind Of Story

Suzuki. Cheap, small, not very sophisticated – this is what we thought about these cars only a couple of years ago. Today they are completely different. Suzuki cars have grown bigger and now are much more luxurious. A proof? Just take a look at the new Kizashi saloon car.

Forget about old (albeit indestructible) Swifts, or small box-like Samurais. Those days are gone. Now the interest of potential customers have shifted towards Vitara – a popular SUV, or the above mentioned Kizashi. This is Suzuki's flagship model! Starting with the dimensions. The saloon is almost 4.7 metres long and offers a spacious 460 litre boot. Secondly, the design. The Japanese

designers don't always cater for the European tastes, but Kizashi first debuted in the USA. So what – you may ask. Well, the things which are considered to be beautiful in the US, often also appeal to the tastes of the Polish people. Kizashi has an aggressive, stunning body, and is clearly different from other Japanese vehicles of this type. Suzuki designers went their own, a very Japanese way. The result is a car which looks a bit extravagant, but also nice.

A TEMPTING PRICE

What about the price, then? Well, in the first moment you might think that this car is too expensive. In Polish dealerships the cheapest version is valued at PLN 115,000. Is it a lot or not? All depends on the point of view of the potential owner who would like to buy this car. Let's check, however, what you will receive for that price. It turns out that the equipment of the car leaves nothing to be desired. For the above mentioned price you get almost anything even a really demanding car lover would want: the whole set of airbags, ABS with EBD, ESP, heated mirrors and seats, a CD player with control buttons on the steering wheel, aluminium alloy wheels, automatic climate control, a sunroof, and even leather upholstery. But if all of these are included in the price, what are the other options? Well, for as much as PLN 130,000 you can get a new Kizashi with CVT transmission and 4WD. This seems to be an offer worth consideration, especially for Polish bumpy roads.



A RISKY APPROACH?

In Poland Suzuki Kizashi is sold only with one petrol engine – a 2.4 litre four cylinder motor with variable valve timing (VVT), producing 178 BHP. You can choose the transmission (6 speed manual or CVT), but there is only one engine. Let's hope that the Japanese will add something to their offer, hopefully some turbo, or perhaps a modern Diesel. Why? The engine is alright (the car accelerates from 0-100 km/h in 7.8 and the top speed is 215 km/h), but as for European standards it may seem a tad too large. The capacity easily translates into fuel consumption. The manufacturer convinces that Kizashi is quite light (1420 kg), so the combined consumption is around 8 litres / 100 km, but with this much horsepower under your foot, the real result may be totally different. The American won't worry about it since petrol in the USA is much cheaper than in Europe, but what about us? Well, let's hope that the Japanese have thoroughly calculated the risk. Still, I believe that Kizashi – a car worlds apart from other Suzuki models – will find a lot of followers. Don't forget that this is a Japanese car, which is a sufficient recommenda. ■

*Rafał Jemielita
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and a co-presenter
of TVN Turbo's "Automaniak"
– a motor magazine programme*



Bangkok

From golden palaces to emerald Buddhas and gilded chariots, **Ian McCurrach** finds the Thai capital a glittering affair

WAT PHO

Life in Bangkok at any time of day or night is a frenetic affair and this tour should provide five peaceful havens away from the chock-a-block traffic and general hustle and bustle. These are large-scale sights across a vast city so trying to pack in any more in the allotted time would be unwise.

The first sights are easily accessed by water taxis, which are cheap, plentiful and a great way to see the city from the Chao Phraya river. They pick up from designated points along the water. Your first stop is Wat Pho, a huge and highly impressive temple complex in the heart of old Bangkok, just north-west of Chinatown.

Set in eight hectares of grounds littered with more than 1,000 images of Buddha from the ruins of the former capitals of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, the temple also houses the glittering gold-plated Reclining Buddha, whose posture signifies the passage to nirvana. It is the largest of its kind in Thailand, measuring a staggering 15 metres high and 46 metres long. Check out the feet and eyes, which are intricately inlaid with shimmering mother-of-pearl, and pay particular attention to the 108 auspicious signs inscribed on the feet. These are iconic represen-

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Bangkok's full name is certified by the Guinness Book of Records as the world's longest. "Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Yuthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Phiman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit" translates as "The city of angels, the great city, the eternal jewel city, the impregnable city of God Indra, the grand capital of the world endowed with nine precious gems, the happy city, abounding in an enormous Royal Palace that resembles the heavenly abode where reigns the reincarnated god, a city given by Indra and built by Vishnukarma".

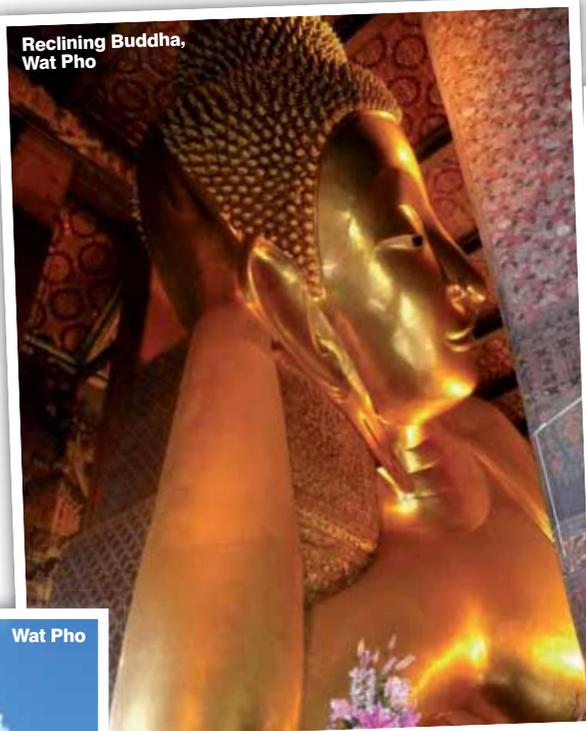
tations of the Buddha's teachings, which are said to ensure that visitors to Wat Pho will return home with something to contemplate.

Looking for longevity and luck? Drop a coin into each of the 108 bowls lining the walls. Open daily 8am-5pm. Entry is 50 baht (£1).

THE GRAND PALACE AND WAT PHRA KAEW

Your next stop is a short walk from here on Thai Wang Road. Prepare to be nearly blinded, especially on a sunny day, by the

JENNY SOUTHAN/DREAMSTIME



Reclining Buddha, Wat Pho



Jim Thompson House



Wat Pho



Chao Phraya river





bling of the glittering gold spires of the Grand Palace and its royal temple, Wat Phra Kaew. This serene regal city, dating from 1782, is situated inside 2km of walls adorned with lotus-shaped crenulations and guarded over by giant *yak* statues (iconic warriors).

The Thai royal family now live elsewhere, allowing the public full access to the palace, which encompasses chambers, throne halls, servants' quarters, ministries, government offices and a prison. Look out for the Chakri Mahaprasad hall, an ornate Italianate Renaissance affair housing the large Thai throne and an array of statues such as the *kinnaree* – mythological half-woman, half-bird creatures.

The big draws at the adjacent Wat Phra Kaew include a shrine containing a piece of the Buddha's breastbone and the diminutive Emerald Buddha. Shorts, bare shoulders and open sandals are not permitted, and ignore anyone who tells you it's not open and suggests you go somewhere else, as it's almost always a scam. Open daily 8.30am-4.30pm (last entry 3.30pm). Tickets are 350 baht (£7).

NATIONAL MUSEUM

Hop on board a water taxi at the Grand Palace pier, alighting two stops later at the National Museum. Dating

MUST-TRY STREET FOOD

■ **PAD** Noodles come in many varieties at street carts, and vendors add their own twists.

■ **TOM YUM** Aromatic soup with fish sauce, lemon grass, kaffir lime leaves and vegetables.

■ **LARB** Refreshing shredded salad with ground meat or fish, lime, fish sauce, and a generous helping of kaffir lime leaves.

■ **YANG** Marinated meat sticks grilled over charcoal. Pork is especially tasty.

from 1874, this former royal palace is one of the largest museums in South East Asia and comprises six main buildings. The displays provide an insight into Thai culture, the country's history and the significance of Buddhism in everyday life. There are many ancient pieces on show from the former capitals, including statues and the remains of ancient palaces. Highlights include a life-size model elephant in full battle armour, giant shadow puppets, gems and jewellery, and vast gilded funerary chariots with glass-inlaid teak. Open Wed-Sun 9am-4pm. Entry is 50 baht (£1). Visit thailandmuseum.com

JIM THOMPSON HOUSE

Take a taxi to the National Stadium on Rama I Road – it will take 15-30 minutes depending on traffic. Opposite you will discover the Jim Thompson House. The former CIA agent turned entrepreneur revitalised the Thai silk industry after the Second World War and built this exquisite canal-front house in 1959.

Thompson painstakingly brought back six teak structures from different parts of Thailand and reassembled them in traditional style, but with modern and luxurious additions such as extravagant chandeliers, a staircase, European dining tables and Italian marble floors. He also filled the property with a large collection of South East Asian art, antiques and artefacts from his travels. The eclectic

showcase includes everything from decrepit old Chinese doorways to 12th-century sandstone Buddhas. Thompson mysteriously disappeared in the Malaysian jungle in 1967, and the collection remains much as he left it.

If you are peckish there is an excellent restaurant in the exotic gardens and you can stock up on stylish silks from the gift shop. Open daily 9am-5pm. Entry 100 baht (£2). Visit jimthompsonhouse.com

SIAM PARAGON

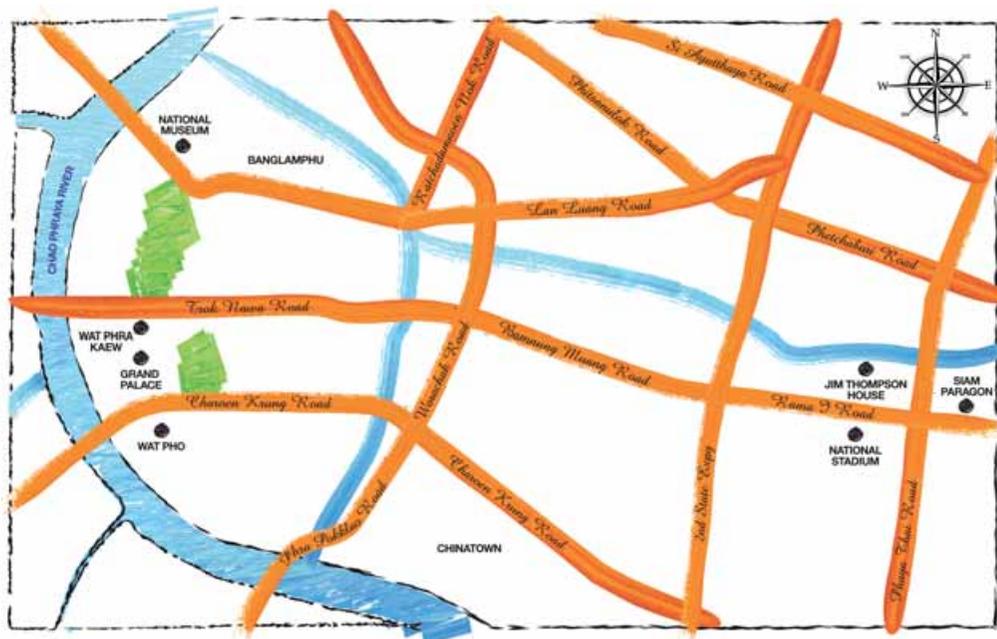
If you are feeling ambitious you could try picking up a water taxi on the *klong* (canal) behind the Jim Thompson House – but be prepared to jump as rather than actually stopping, the craft merely slow down. Too adventurous? Hop back in a cab and go a bit further along Rama I Road to Siam Paragon shopping mall (ten to 20 minutes depending on traffic).

This colossal edifice has five floors where everything imaginable is up for grabs, from Aston Martins to traditional Thai art. Big names including Jimmy Choo and Louis Vuitton have outlets here, and there is a gourmet food market with trial tastings, plus three zoned food halls. Siam Paragon also houses cinemas, an IMAX theatre, concert halls and Siam Ocean World Bangkok, one of South East Asia's largest aquariums. Visit siamparagon.co.th ■

Go to tourismthailand.co.uk



Grand Palace



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



THE PASSENGER'S RIGHTS

A friend of mine was coming back from a medical congress, and his plane was cancelled due to heavy snowfall. The friend got very irritated, as he wanted to get back home as soon as possible. The ground crew changed his booking for another flight. It turned out, however, that the flight had been overbooked and not all the passengers managed to get on board. Fortunately, my friend was among those lucky ones. At the information desk he learned he was entitled to compensation due to the delay. At the airport, however, he wasn't paid any money. I'm also planning to go on a scientific conference soon, and I was wondering what the passenger's rights are in such situations.

Agnieszka

Dear Agnieszka,

The rules concerning passenger transport are regulated in detail by the Warsaw Convention and Montreal Convention. Regulation no 261/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 February 2004 launched a new protection for EU passengers. Information stating passengers' rights should be displayed in a visible place at the airport.

In case of cancelling or a long flight delay, airlines are always obliged to take care of their passengers, regardless of the cause of the delay or cancellation. Generally

this means giving a passenger the right to make a phone call, send a fax, or an e-mail to the family, as well as providing a meal or a drink, accommodation and transport to the hotel. In difficult situations like extreme weather conditions, unexpected strikes or – as it happened last year – a volcano eruption, this passenger care is naturally limited and depends on what a carrier is actually capable of doing at the time.

Compensations, however, are a different story. Passengers are entitled to them only when the delay is enormous or when a flight has been cancelled because of the airline's fault, especially a foreseeable one. You shouldn't, then, expect to get any refund, if the failure is due to an external reason (like a collision with a bird, for instance). Also airport staff strikes, check-in system failures, and limited air traffic, could be regarded as circumstances beyond control, and therefore the airlines are not obliged to pay any compensations to passengers in these cases. That's why your friend should complain with his airline. As the delay was caused by heavy snowfalls, I don't think this claim will be recognised as valid. As for overbooking with the other flight, it was also caused by the snowfalls, not because of the airline's policy, so such situations are not perceived as negligence on the part of the carrier.

A PROBLEM WITH A CHANGE OF FLIGHTS

I've managed to buy two tickets to Dubai from London for August at an occasional price. I'm flying to London from Warsaw with a low cost airline. Yesterday, I was informed that the departure time of the flight to Dubai had been changed. As a result, I won't make it for the plane, as I have to change the airport. I wanted to go to London one day earlier, but it turns out my ticket cannot be changed. I have to buy another – and what's more – more expensive one. Why does the airline make it so difficult for me?

Andrzej

Dear Andrzej,

I'm afraid I don't have any good news for you. An airline has a right to change the timetable and is obliged to inform the passengers about it at least 14 days before their flight. You are flying in August, so this condition was reached. You've bought tickets in advance, which was a reasonable thing to do, as the sooner you buy, the lower are the costs. It was a special offer, and those usual-

ly do not allow any changes or returns. Your whole journey requires two separate tickets. The Warsaw-London-Warsaw ticket and London-Dubai-London ticket are two different contracts of carriage, concluded independently with two different airlines. Neither of them is responsible for providing you with a follow-up connection. It is you who bears the risk. You have no other choice but to change your Warsaw to London flight one day in advance. Naturally it is connected with paying a change fee as well the fare difference, if there is any.

Buying 2 separate tickets is always risky, as it is quite difficult to foresee any possible changes in the timetable, cancellations or flight delays. In such situations you have no right to change the next flight free of charge – usually you have to pay for another ticket.

In such cases you can choose to have a stopover, and thus minimize the risk of such an unpleasant situation you found yourself in.

Potęga smaku i aromatu.
Nowa era dla koneserów kawy.



sensoFlow System aromaPressure System aromaDouble Shot singlePortion® Cleaning autoWhirl Plus directWhirl creamCleaner
oneTouch Function® individualCup Volume creamCenter creamCenter Cleaner autoValve System silentCeramic Drive ceramicDrive

Ekspresy EQ.7 Plus i EQ.5 otwierają nowy rozdział w kulturze picia kawy. Ich zadaniem jest precyzyjne spełnianie najbardziej wyszukanych potrzeb miłośników kawowych specjalistów. Służą temu innowacje w ekspresie EQ.7 Plus: **individualCup Volume**, **aromaDouble Shot**, czy **oneTouch-Function®**. Te profesjonalne rozwiązania dostarczają nowych doznań ściśle według indywidualnych wymagań. Również ekspres EQ.5 bez trudu zrealizuje wszelkie oczekiwania użytkowników dzięki funkcji **aromaDouble Shot** z dokładną regulacją mocy kawy oraz wbudowanemu systemowi **autoWhirl Plus**, wytwarzającemu idealną mleczną piankę. Przyjemność delektowania się aromatycznymi napojami potęguje też komfort obsługi oraz ekskluzywny design. Wejdź na www.siemens-kawa.pl i zobacz, co znaczy smak, aromat i styl.

The future moving in.

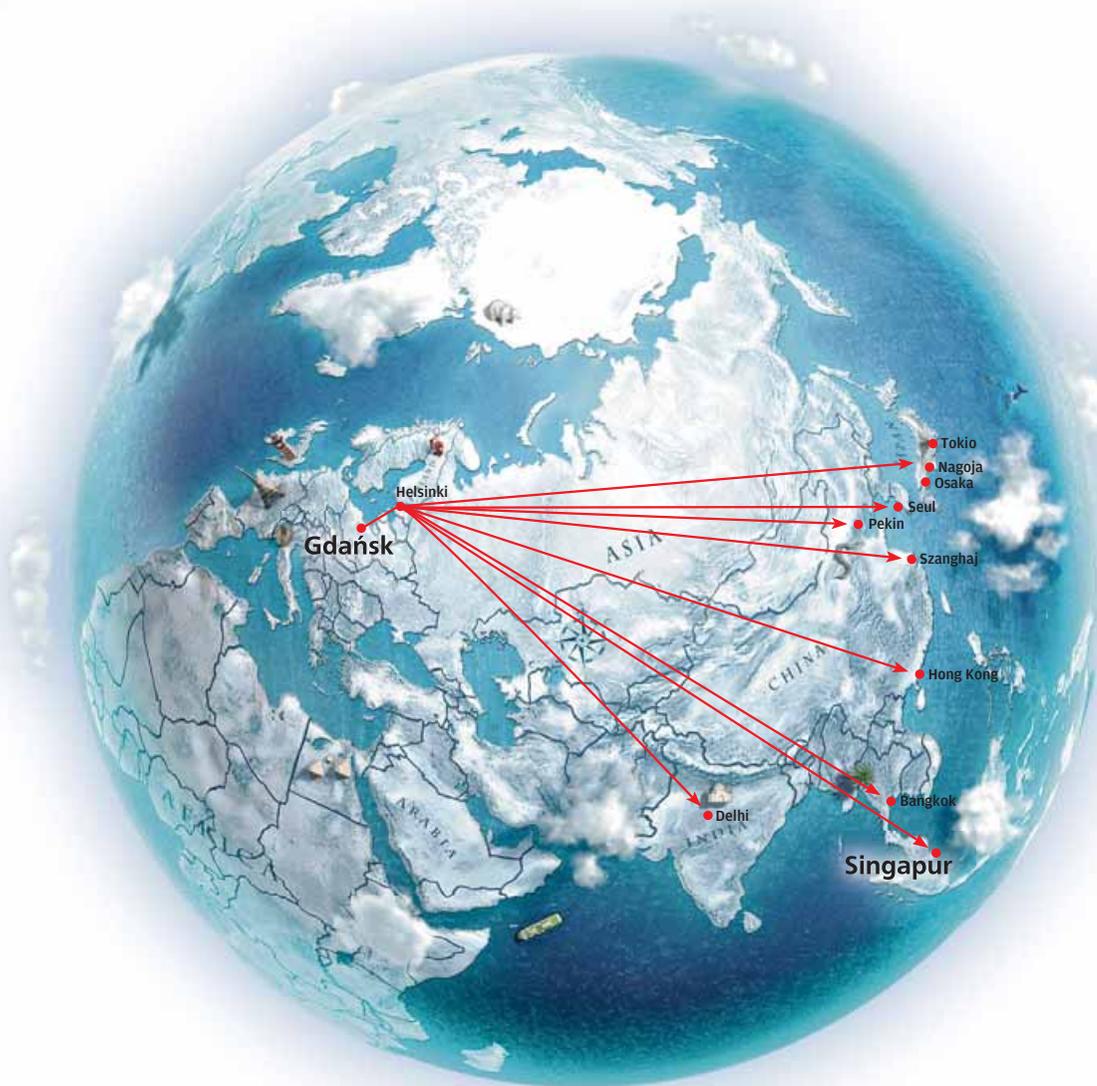
SIEMENS

Wypróbuj nową trasę z Gdańska do

AZJI

Dnia 27 marca zostanie uruchomiona nowa, wygodniejsza i krótsza trasa z Gdańska przez Helsinki do Azji. Oferujemy codzienne połączenia szybką trasą północną przez uhonorowane wieloma nagrodami lotnisko w Helsinkach* do 10 najważniejszych miast w Azji. Najnowsze połączenie – z Singapurem – będzie obsługiwane od 30 maja. Witamy na pokładzie najmłodszej floty w Europie. Zarezerwuj lot już teraz na stronie finnair.com/pl.

* Loty obsługiwane są we współpracy z FinnComm Airlines.



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