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ART HOTELS

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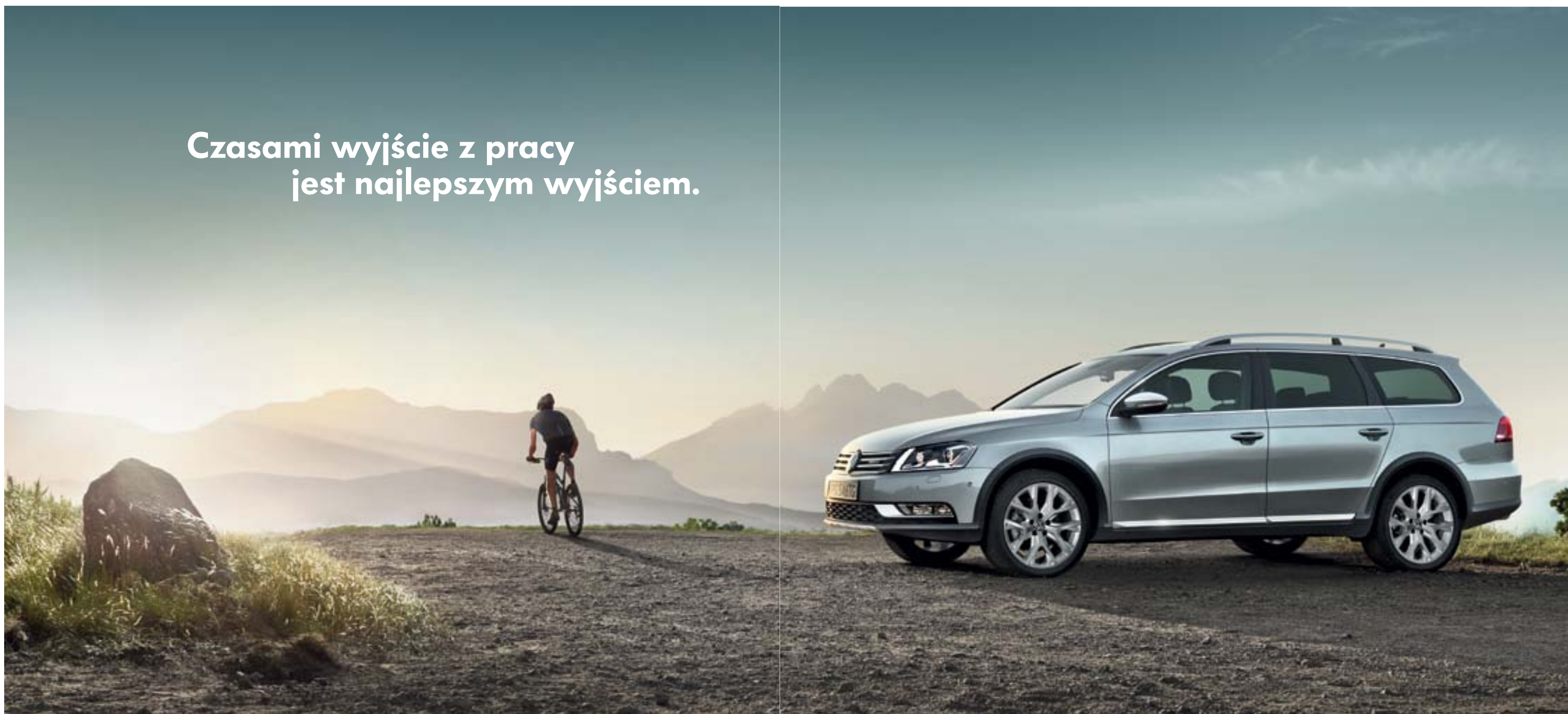
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Druk Drukarnia TINTA

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

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

© 2009 Perry Publications Ltd – a subsidiary of Panacea Publishing International Ltd, United Kingdom



THE ART OF HOSPITALITY

The history of the hotel trade has a long tradition worldwide. Already in ancient Greece, travellers could stay overnight at inns called pandokias. To attract and impress the guests they were built on a grand scale and lavishly decorated to prove the dominance of the Greek culture. Also ancient Romans would spend their summers in spas in Ostia, Pompeii, Bagno di Luca and Herculaneum – benefiting from the therapeutic properties of thermal waters. The first officially recognized Polish hotel was the „Marywil Inn” built in 1691 in Warsaw. It was located in the place of today’s Grand Theatre. “Marywil Inn” was created on the initiative of Queen Marie Casimiere Sobieski and was open until 1825, and since it was visited mostly by merchants, it also played the role of a shopping centre. Today, the world’s best hotels definitely allude to the ancient Greek model. They are not only comfortable, but also beautiful. To attract the attention of customers, they offer them (apart from convenience and luxury) something much more intriguing – the access to the world’s famous works of art. To find out how they do it, read our article about art hotels, which may be your inspiration for another trip.

Marzena Mróz

Marzena Mróz
Editor-in-Chief



JANSEN

TIMEPIECES & JEWELS



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Portugal

Concerts, workshops, festivals

COUNTRY FULL OF CULTURE

This year, Guimarães is one of the two cities hosting events for the European Capital of Culture. The city holds various concerts, exhibitions, workshops and film screenings. For a full programme of events go to www.guimaraes2012.pt

Indie Lisboa is an international festival, which aims to discover new, interesting films and directors. Keywords for this event are „creativity” and „independence”. There will certainly be numerous new forms of narrative and videos dealing with current problems. There will also be screening of films not participating in the competition, including Werner Herzog's documentary „Into the Abyss” Abel Ferrara's drama „4:44 Last Day on Earth”, and „Wuthering Heights,” directed by Andrea Arnold. Lisbon, 26 April – 6 May 2012; www.indielisboa.com

Madeira Film Festival aspires to become the most exclusive and independent festival in Europe. It presents independent productions by directors from around the world, including documentaries, short forms and documentaries. The „environment” category includes projects whose subject is the nature. The organizers also plan to hold workshops on acting, cinematography and film distribution. The venue for all the events will be a famous hotel which hosted among others Gregory Peck and Roger Moore.

Reid's Palace Hotel, Funchal, Madeira, 2-6 May 2012
www.madeirafilmfestival.com



Lufthansa

New flights

FROM CRACOW AND POZNAŃ

25 March marked the launch of a new connection by Lufthansa from Cracow to Dusseldorf. The connection will be operated six times a week by a modern Bombardier CRJ 900 and CRJ 700 aircraft. Lufthansa has also launched an additional daily flight to Frankfurt.

„We are delighted that Lufthansa has increased its presence at our airport, especially because it's an airline, which is famous for high quality service for business passengers. Our passengers are now able to fly to more places around the world,” says Jan Pamuła, the CEO of Cracow Airport.

A roundtrip ticket from Cracow to Dusseldorf will be available from PLN 399 (including all taxes and fees).



On the same day, Lufthansa launched a new Poznań-Dusseldorf connection. Flights are held six times a week - every day except Saturdays - according to the following schedule: departure from Dusseldorf at 11.00 am, arrival in Poznań at 12.30 pm, departure from Poznań at 1.05 pm, arrival in Dusseldorf at 2.35 pm.

“Poland is a priority for Lufthansa, being one of the countries in which our offer expands remarkably fast,” emphasizes Bart Buyse, General Manager Poland at Lufthansa German Airlines. Reservations can be made at www.lufthansa.com or via hotline on: 0801 312 312 and 22 33 81 300.



British Airways London

THE OLYMPIC MENU

In view of the upcoming Olympic Games, British Airways offers a new unique menu. Gourmet dishes made with fresh fish, best quality meat and vegetables, as well as elaborate desserts will certainly pamper the palates of sports fans.

The unique sporting atmosphere and emotions that accompany the Olympics, have encouraged the carrier to start collaboration with Simon Hulstone and Heston Blumenthal - the chefs awarded the with prestigious Michelin stars. The Olympic menu will be available from July 2012 on long-haul flights from London. Manage My Booking bookmark at British Airways website allows passengers to select the offer which best fits their individual preferences up to 24 hours before the flight. The extended menu includes kosher, vegetarian, and vegan dishes, meals for people with allergies, as well as those containing no salt and gluten.

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Mercure Hotels

For the body and the soul

DISCOVER AGAIN A NEW TASTE OF CHOCOLATE

Whether it's in form of a drink, praline, or a bar – chocolate is something we always taste with delight. After all, is there anything else that can improve our mood and boost energy so effectively?

„Chocolate helps the body function more efficiently in times of stress, due to the presence of magnesium, potassium and phosphorus, which are absent in other sweets,” says Alicja Kalińska, a nutrition specialist and the owner of SetPoint Dietetic Centres. If, however, you wish to rediscover chocolate, the offer prepared by Mercure hotel chain may be something you've been looking for. The chain has just launched a campaign called Sweet Secret by Mercure which will leave no one indifferent. Customers who will book two nights with breakfast and internet access within 2 April to 31 May period, will receive a 40% discount for their stay. In addition, there will be a sweet treat waiting for them in the room: a box of handmade chocolate pralines. Hotel restaurants and bars will also offer a special chocolate menu including aromatic coffee served with three delicious pralines, chocolate cake served with fresh strawberries and ice cream in three flavours, as well as a special box of chocolates that will be available to buy in restaurants, bars and at reception desks in all Mercure hotels in Poland.



Embraer, Dreamliner, Bombardier PLL LOT

LOT POLISH AIRLINES THE YOUNGEST FLEET IN EUROPE

LOT Polish Airlines is in the process of upgrading its fleet with modern aircraft and replacing old Boeing 737 machines with new medium-range Embraer 195 aircraft. Currently, LOT has 4 such machines in the fleet, as well as 22 smaller Embraer 170 and 175. The biggest change, however, will be replacement of Boeing 767 machines, which LOT has been using on long-haul routes since late 1980s. This year LOT's fleet will be extended by two Boeing 787 Dreamliner – the world's most modern passenger aircraft, with three more units to be delivered by March 2013. The changes will also be made to the fleet which operates LOT's short-distance routes. Since Eurolot has made a decision to purchase new Bombardier aircraft, LOT Polish Airlines will soon have one of the youngest fleets in Europe with an average age of an aircraft slightly over 4 years.

Hotel

Świnoujście is waiting for you

HAMPTON BY HILTON

On 30 March in Świnoujście, Hampton by Hilton launched its first hotel located in Poland. Poland is a strategic market for Hilton Worldwide, and that's why over the next three years the company wants to open another 12 hotels in our country. “Hampton by Hilton is continually expanding globally, the example of which may be the launch of our first hotel in Poland,” said Phil Cordell, Global Head, Focused Service and Hampton Brand Management, Hilton Worldwide. “Hampton by Hilton is an excellent choice for both business travellers and tourists who are concerned about favourable value for money,” he added. Hampton by Hilton Świnoujście has 104 rooms, an elegant lobby, a fitness centre and a business area with free Internet access throughout the facility. Guests can enjoy comfortable, modern rooms which feature Clean and Fresh Hampton Beds. The building was designed in a style appropriate to the needs of people traveling for business and leisure. It's convenient, comfortable and offers best service in its class. Room rates include breakfast, and the bar is open around the clock.



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Apartments Puławska 111 in Old Mokotów, Warsaw

Apartamenty Puławska 111 dzielnica Stary Mokotów - Warszawa



Cosy building located in well-known district of Warsaw – Old Mokotów. In the immediate neighbourhood, secluded Arkadia Park and Królikarnia Palace from XVIII century. Remarkable location allows you to take full advantage of the delights of the Park and infrastructure of a city centre.

Kameralny budynek, zlokalizowany w prestiżowej, pełnej zieleni, dzielnicy Warszawy - Stary Mokotów. Sąsiadujący z parkiem Arkadia i XVIII-wiecznym Pałacem Królikarnia. Niepowtarzalna lokalizacja umożliwiająca korzystanie z uroków zielonego parku oraz pełnej infrastruktury centrum stolicy.

Air-conditioned, higher standard apartments: height of 2.75m; the intelligent home system; widescreen wooden windows (mute 40 dB); beautiful finishing in the common spaces, lobby with a reception and a concierge services, round-the-clock security, underground parking. Top floor – Penthouses with outstanding view of Warsaw, extending from the huge terraces.

Klimatyzowane Apartamenty o podwyższonym standardzie: wysokość od 2.75; instalacja inteligentnego budynku na poziomie lokalu, panoramiczne drewniane okna (wyciszenie 40 dB); pięknie wykończone części wspólne, reprezentacyjne lobby wraz z recepcją i usługami concierge, garaż podziemny, ograniczony dostęp do budynku, ochrona 24h. Ostatnie piętro - strefa Apartamentów typu Penthouse z pięknym widokiem na Warszawę, rozciągającym się z tarasów o powierzchni kilkudziesięciu metrów.



WHAT'S ON

The Most Anticipated Events in May



WROCLAW MARCUS MILLER CONCERT

Ślodowa Island, 2 May

A legendary guitarist, who recorded music with Aretha Franklin or Miles Davis, is going to perform during Thanks Jimi Festival in Wrocław.

He is one of the few bass guitarists, who not only supports other musicians, but also perform on their own, and produces albums. Appreciated for his own playing style, Miller is also a main propagator of the so called slapping, i.e. striking the strings with a thumb in such a way, so as to achieve a characteristic percussive sound. He produced his first album in 1984, and receive a Grammy award for the 2001 record. You can listen to Marcus Miller playing on the anniversary album „Jest” by Budka Suflera.

NEW YORK KIEŚŁOWSKI IN MANHATTAN

Until 16th May

A legendary director, one of the few Polish artists, who made a real career in the film world. This time, during a retrospective display of his film in New York Public Library, the audience will be able to see the following films: „Krótki film o miłości” („A Short Film About Love”, The Decalogue series) - on 2 May, „Podwójne życie Weroniki” („The Double Life of Véronique”) with Irène Jacob as the main character - on 9 May, and „Trzy kolory - Niebieski” („Three Colors: Blue”) with Juliette Binoche - on 6 May. Admission free, www.nypl.org

NEW YORK AND LONDON FASHIONABLE MUSEUMS

10 May - 19 August, The Costume Institute, Metropolitan Museum of Art;

1 May - 1 July, Design Museum

Fashion in museum? Why not? Since there are shoes of clothes which look like pieces of art. The New York exhibition of Elsa Schiaparelli from the first half of the 20th century and contemporary Miuccia Prada was inspired by „impossible interviews” by Miguel Covarrubias, printed in „Vanity Fair” in 1930. That's why the creators of the exhibition had this idea to let visitors not only see about 80 outfits by the designers, but also listen to conversations - fictitious, but in line with their opinions about fashion, art, women, creativity, and of course - politics. If New York is too far away for you, go to London instead. In Design Museum you can see all the most beautiful and legendary pairs of shoes by Christian Louboutin.

www.metmuseum.org and www.designmuseum.org



BERLIN GERHARD RICHTER

Neue Nationalgalerie until 13 May

Considered the number 1 on the world art market, Gerhard Richter, whose painting „Abstraktes Bild” was sold for 20m dollars, has just turned 80. Because of this occasion, the Berlin Neue Nationalgalerie, the London Tate Modern and the Parisian Centre Georges Pompidou have organized retrospective exhibitions of his works. On „Gerhard Richter Panorama” you can see over 130 paintings and 5 sculptures. The artist has an unusual attitude to his financial success. When his painting „Kerze” (a candle) was sold for nearly 12m euro, he commented on the fact, saying that is it equally absurd as the world recession - incomprehensible, grotesque and unpleasant.

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TOP 10! BEST ART HOTELS

Forget bland décor – a growing number of hotels are using art to make a statement, build their brand and entice guests, writes **Zuzanna Bass**.

Just off the expansive lobby of the Langham Place Beijing Capital Airport hotel is an open-plan gallery where you can wander in and peer at the latest in Chinese contemporary art. But this evening, the set-up is somewhat different – a long table in the middle has been laid for dinner, and guests are being served a five-course meal where each dish has been inspired by one of the works on display. Tom Pattinson, director of Affordable Art China (affordableartchina.com), which organises annual art fairs in Beijing and Shanghai, has noticed that not only has the demand for Chinese art from foreign buyers boomed over the past few years, but hotels across the country are looking to capitalise on it as well. And it's not just in the East. From Vancouver's Rosewood Hotel Georgia, which has recently unveiled a 200-piece collection, to the Bellagio in Las Vegas, which has an on-site gallery with works by Monet and Hockney. They aren't just decoration. These big hotels more and more often realize they have to put some appropriate work in reception, where first impressions count for a lot. Steve Halliday, managing director of Vancouver's Rosewood, which features masterpieces in the entrance, lobby lounge and restaurant, agrees with this opinion. Other properties have embraced creativity as part of their brand concept – dubbing themselves “art” or “design” hotels and investing in permanent installations. Hotel



Hotel owners are often art lovers and know well that good paintings can attract customers.

Bloom (hotelbloom.com) in Brussels has 287 rooms decorated with frescos by young artists, while the Art'otel brand (artotels.com) now has five properties in Germany and one in Hungary. (It is set to open in Amsterdam this year and in London in 2013.) Each specialises in work by a particular contemporary artist – the Berlin City Centre West's is Andy Warhol – with about 3,000 originals and limited edition signed prints in the bedrooms and public spaces. Why go to all this effort? Alvaro Valeriani, Hyatt's area director of sales and marketing in the UK and Ireland, says it helps to make the hotel more memorable. Aby Rosen, principal of RFR Holding – parent company of New York's Gramercy Park hotel also recognises the value it can add to a hotel. “Fine art should go hand in hand with architecture,” he says. “To experience museum-quality art can be a massive part of a hotel's appeal. A hotel serves as a patron's temporary home and the art featured helps to establish comfort.”

1. GRAMERCY PARK NEW YORK
Offering “an enlivening mélange of high Bohemia”, the luxurious Ian Schrager/Julian Schnabel-designed Gramercy Park presents museum-quality art. The 185-room property features changing displays in the lobby, restaurants, bar and roof club, so visitors can sip a coffee next to a collection of 20th-century masterpieces by artists such as Andy

Warhol and Damien Hirst. Guest curators also put on shows every few months. Visit artgph.com

2. SWATCH ART PEACE HOTEL SHANGHAI
Swiss watch company Swatch has collaborated with artists such as Keith Haring and David La Chapelle, but this property – for which it is the primary investor – is a new departure. Open since November and operated by YTL Hotels, it has 18 studios where artists can live and work rent-free for up to six months in return for donating one piece of work. There are also seven “aesthetic” guestrooms and exhibitions open to the public. Visit swatch-art-peace-hotel.com

3. KEMPINSKI CORVINUS BUDAPEST
As well as displaying more than 1,000 statues and paintings in its public areas, 335 bedrooms and 31 suites, the Kempinski was one of the first hotels in the country to have its own on-site art gallery when it opened in the early 1990s. There are temporary exhibitions of predominantly Hungarian work from the 18th century to modern day, plus evening private views and tours. Visit kempinski.com

4. LE ROYAL MONCEAU RAFFLES PARIS
This historic property's two-year revamp, completed in October 2010, has given it a fresh emphasis on culture and art. The restaurant, garden and first-floor landing feature a specially commissioned ceiling mural, an oversized teapot sculpture and “hunt-inspired trophies in unpolished wood” by French, Portuguese and Russian artists, while the 149 guestrooms provide wall space for a growing collection of photographs. An on-site library is stocked with more than 700 books on contemporary art, design and architecture, while a dedicated concierge provides information on the French capital's art districts. There is also the on-site Art District gallery. Visit raffles.com/paris

5. MERRION DUBLIN
The five-star Irish hotel has a private collection of 19th- and 20th-century work by European artists such as abstract painter Mainie Jellet, whose Seated Nude hangs in the cocktail bar, and the younger brother of W B Yeats, Jack B, whose The Hour of Sleep



PHOTO: PRESS ARCHIVE. BACK PAGE PHOTO THANKS TO COURTESY DESIGN HOTELS™, FOT: MATEJKA PRASOIVE

resides in the front hall. Tours can be arranged with guides from the National Gallery, and guests can even enjoy an arty afternoon tea, with pastries inspired by some of the hotel's artworks – try the “tear-drop of pistachio and white chocolate mousse” based on John Boyd's Shut Eye with Acolyte (Praxis). Visit merriionhotel.com

6. COSMOPOLITAN, LAS VEGAS

The Cosmopolitan opened in 2010 and features publicly accessible pieces including digital art by Leo Villareal, giant stiletto shoes by Roark Gourley, and graffiti on the walls of the underground car park by artists Kenny Scharf, Shepard Fairey (creator of the iconic Barack Obama Hope poster for the 2008 presidential elections), Shinique Smith and Retna. You can even buy small US\$5 originals from on-site vending machines, and there is an artist-in-residence scheme. Visit cosmopolitanlasvegas.com

7. ST REGIS, SINGAPORE

The St Regis's US\$10 million collection comprises more than 70 original paintings and sculptures by greats such as Marc Chagall, Frank Gehry and Fernando Botero, whose Reclining Woman resides outside the entrance. Making the most of local contemporary talent, the hotel has also commissioned pieces including Anthony

Poon's Sense Surround, a crimson ribbon-like steel installation. The red-walled Astor bar features ten bullfighter lithographs by Picasso. Private tours are available. Visit starwoodhotels.com/stregis

8. DOLDER GRAND, ZURICH

The Foster and Partners-designed Dolder Grand features more than 100 artworks, many of which are part of owner Urs E Schwarzenbach's collection. Stroll around the outdoor courtyards, public areas, restaurant or spa wing and you may spot Marc Quinn's Archaeology of Desire, Henry Moore's Three Piece Reclining Figure: Draped or Salvador Dali's Femmes Métamorphosées – Les Sept Arts (pictured on our front cover). Andy Warhol's Big Retrospective Painting graces the space above reception, while other creations are viewable only to guests staying on certain floors. Visit thedoldergrand.com

9. SEMIRAMIS, ATHENS

A member of the Design Hotels collection, the 51-room Semiramis is the brainchild of famed industrial designer Karim Rashid. Patron and owner Dakis Joannou collaborates by exhibiting art from his personal collection, offsetting the wacky décor. Rotating biannual shows give guests face-time with works from contemporary master Jeff

Koons, and Brit Art duo Sue Webster and Tim Noble, along with pieces on loan from international galleries. Guestrooms have lightbox installations above the beds, signature furniture by Rashid and electronic message boards that replace traditional do-not-disturb signs. Visit yeshotels.gr

10. KRASICKI HOTEL, LIDZBARK WARMIŃSKI

The hotel is housed in the old castle of Warmia Bishops which languished for many years. Now it has become a real work of art. It was restored with real passion (excellent combination of modernity and history) and now embodies the idea of patronage started by a former landlord of the place, Bishop Ignacy Krasicki. Although it opened just a year ago, it has already received many prestigious awards, including the International Hotel Award, which has been presented to the world's best hotels for 18 years. Krasicki Hotel won its award in “Best New Hotel Construction & Design” category. This gem of medieval and baroque architecture waited for the investor for many years. Luckily, Andrew Dowgiałło the co-owner of Anders Group and a lover of historic buildings, decided to restore the place to its former glory. Here you can celebrate the name day of Ignacy Krasicki, and the hotel is also a co-organizer of international culinary festivals and participates in “Art Culture” events. hotelkrasicki.pl



PHOTO: PRESS ARCHIVE

Warszawa – Pekin

od 1899 PLN

POLSKIE LINIE LOTNICZE

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Warszawa – Pekin

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Airlines

FRANKFURT-WINDHOEK-FRANKFURT

AIR NAMIBIA A340-300

**BACKGROUND**

Namibia doesn't have its embassy in Poland, so to apply for a visa you need to go to Berlin. Planes to Windhoek, Namibia depart from Frankfurt Airport. Have some spare change to rent a luggage trolley.

Terminal 1 is huge, but well-marked. Signposts direct passengers to a platform of the airport railway and it's the fastest way to get to Terminal 2, from which Air Namibia takes off.

PRICE

(after the May weekend) there are 3 business rates starting at PLN 9600; the cheapest economy ticket is PLN 2960 (including taxes and airport charges)

CONTACT:

Air Namibia in Poland
Air Namibia C/o Aviareps S.A.
ul. Sienna 72/3
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CHECK-IN

I checked in three hours before the flight. I had a ticket in economy class. There was no queue at the check-in desk and the whole procedure took around 3 minutes. Passport and security control took no more than 10 minutes.

BOARDING

I got to gate E5 one hour before the departure and after 20 minutes the boarding procedure began. Business class passengers had a separate lane.

THE SEAT

Seat configuration in economy class is 2-4-2. My seat C45 was in a two-seat row next to the aisle. There was a blanket, a pillow and headphones on it.

THE FLIGHT

The Airbus took off at 8.20 pm. When it reached the cruising altitude the cabin crew started serving drinks. As for red wines, there were two South African ones to choose from. I recommend Guardin Peak Merlot 2010. An hour after the take-off we were served dinner. I ordered beef (the choice also included chicken). It was served with broccoli, dumplings and potato salad, while for dessert I received lemon mousse. Then there was time for coffee or tea and after 10.00 pm the aircraft went into the night mode.

After unfolding the seat and adjusting the headrest, I covered myself with the blanket and soon fell asleep. I was awoken by thirst which is typical on long-haul flights. I asked for a

glass of water and got it a few moments later.

At 5.15 am the lights went out and the cabin crew served a light breakfast. Then we were handed in visa forms which we had to fill in.

ENTERTAINMENT

On night flights an in-flight entertainment isn't that necessary, but it's worth noting that in pocket of the seat there is Air Namibia's English-language monthly magazine „Flamingo” and a catalogue of products available in the duty-free shop. Those who feel like listening to music can plug their headphones into the aircraft's audio system to have a choice of 10 music channels.

ARRIVAL

10 hours after the take-off the plane landed at Hosea Kutako airport, 42 km from Windhoek. Passengers get off the plane onto the apron and then walk about 200 meters to passport control. There are only two

desks available, so it's a good idea to hurry in order to avoid standing in a queue. I was a bit slow when disembarking the plane, so I ended up at the end of a long line. At least I didn't have to wait for my luggage, because it had already been put on the carousel.

You can reach Windhoek by bus, taxi or rent a car at the airport.

RETURN FLIGHT

For my return flight I booked a ticket in business class. This allows efficient check-in and passport control. I was also able to use the airport's business lounge. It was full and all seats were occupied, so I sat at the bar. Delicious Windhoek Lager beer, as well as stronger drinks and sandwiches are served free of charge. On the downside, there's no WiFi in the lounge.

BOARDING

Business class passengers board first via separate airstairs. Once you take your seat, a stewardess offers a free drink. You can choose from juice, water and wine.

THE SEAT

I took seat D4. The first row began with D3, so I was sitting at the front, and thus was served as one of the first passengers. The seat is comfortable and fully adjustable. Apart from the blanket and a pillow, business class passengers also receive a travel kit.

THE FLIGHT

After the take-off the cabin crew served snacks, bottled water and alcohol. I ordered red Welbedacht Cabernet Sauvignon 2008. I received a salad as an appetizer, and decided to try all main courses, that is salmon, chicken and beef. Out of the three I strongly recommend the fish. Dessert options consisted of fruit, cheeses or a bun.

In the morning we were served juice, fruit and yogurt followed by hot or cold breakfast (ham,



cheese or omelette, ham, mushrooms, tomatoes and potatoes).

ENTERTAINMENT

Each business class seat has a screen installed in the armrest. You can choose among several film and music channels.

VERDICT

Flying with Air Namibia is a quick way to get to South Africa, and night flights allow you to save some time. Planes to Windhoek depart Frankfurt daily, but there are no return flights on Mondays and Saturdays.

Piotr Grzybowski

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WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Not many people, even in Cracow, know the history of Maltański Hotel, where I stayed for a night during my trip to the city. Three little buildings, quite inconspicuous - the locals call it "palace complex" - don't attract the attention of either tourists or passers-by. For me, the sense of history is the most important, and I wasn't disappointed. The former owners of the building were: Lubomirski, Czartoryski and Potocki families. The mansion was designed in 19th century by Wilhelm Hoffbauer, an architect from Vienna, and was distinguished by its simple design, yet merged into the architecture of the time. Later, thanks to Zofia Zamojska, the mansion was expanded and gained a more Neorenaissance style. Today, in the reception area, you can see a fireplace, which comes from those times. After 1945 the palace was inhabited by landowners, deprived of their own properties. Later the mansion was taken over by the State, and it returned to its lawful owner, the count Władysław Tarnowski, as late as 1990.

In one part of the palace complex, there is now Maltański Hotel, belonging to Donimirski Boutiques Hotels Group. Nearby, in the place where once was a garden, there is now a huge car park. When parking a car on the palace area, many people notice the excellent location and great charm of the hotel. It has indeed a wonderful atmosphere. No wonder you need to book a room a few months ahead of time.

WHERE IS IT?

The hotel is located at Straszewskiego 14 Street, in the heart of Cracow, near Planty. It's only 300 metres away from Wawel Castle, 500 metres - from the Main Market Square and other historical sites. You can't think of a better location if you want to spend a few days in Cracow. What's more, you also get a breakfast in an intimate atmosphere, and the car park is just by the hotel.

ROOMS

The hotel has two single and 14 double rooms. Three from the latter ones are of higher De luxe standard and

come with air-conditioning. The rooms are spacious, furnished in classic style with very elegant decorations. All the elements were carefully selected. The rooms come with a TV set, wireless Internet, Video player, a bar, an electric kettle, tea and coffee making facilities as well as set of china. The bathroom facilities - both the mirror and the floor were heated - came as surprise. The ground-level rooms have access to patio in the summer.

THE RESTAURANT

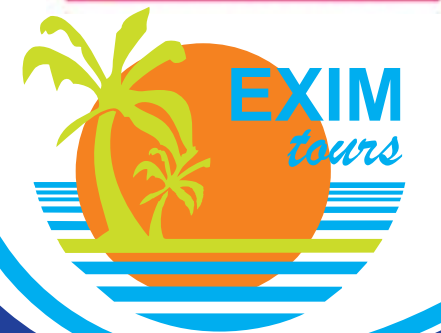
The hotel has a small dining room, where excellent breakfast in a form of buffet is served. You can also have here a cup of tea or coffee at any time of the day. On request, the room can be changed into a meeting room for a small group of people or a small event.

VERDICT

Excellent location, intimate atmosphere and the sense of history surrounding you everywhere. What else can you dream about?

Katarzyna Siekierzyńska

GOTOWI NA LATO?



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WHAT'S IT LIKE?

When we think of a hotel situated on the edge of a forest – not just any forest but the largest primeval one in Europe – we often expect to witness there truly austere conditions, or at best a luxury version of a hunter's hut. Indeed, Żubrówka hotel is built from ecological materials, but this is where similarities with old rustic houses end. The hotel's interior can satisfy even the most refined tastes as the place was designed to re-

semble chambers of the Russian Imperial Palace which was built in the nearby Palace Park in the late 19th century.

WHERE IS IT?

It's hard to imagine a better location. The hotel is located just off the main road leading to the nature reserve. It's probably the most beautiful place in Białowieża. It's just enough to take a short walk there to leave behind all traces of civilization. That area must have looked similarly 500 years ago. There's even a 600-year-old oak tree growing there. Who knows, perhaps when the tree was small, King Jagiełło rested nearby after a long hunt in the forest?

ROOMS

There are 112 bedrooms in the hotel. 106 of them are comfortably furnished single and double rooms. Some of them are of a slightly higher quality which means that they are bigger and have a balcony. Surprisingly, they are available for the same

price as the smaller rooms. Many guests choose a deluxe room called the Room of Rasputin and the suites whose names may suggest what you're in for. There are the Senator's and the Duke's Apartments, as well as the Presidential, the Royal and the Tsar Suites. The Presidential Suite has two bedrooms, while the Royal and Tsar Suite feature a fireplace.

All rooms are air conditioned and equipped with telephones, minibars, hair dryers, bathrobes, towels, disposable slippers, electronic door opening system and integrated lighting. They also have access to satellite TV, Pay TV and wireless internet access.

Some rooms have been specially adapted for the disabled, while non-smoking rooms are labelled.

BUSINESS FACILITIES

The hotel is well prepared for any type of event. It has four meeting rooms ranging in size from 52 to 150 sq m and they

can be combined to form one large space, which makes it possible to organize events up to 500 people.

The conference centre is equipped with the latest AV equipment, multimedia projectors, central sound system, wireless microphones, and a remote controlled blackout curtains.

ENTERTAINMENT AND RELAXATION

Recreational facilities are something Żubrówka can be proud of. The pool complex comprises a leisure pool (in summer it has a direct exit to the outside) with countercurrent. There's also a children's pool and a water cave. The spa is also impressive with its sauna, "Ruska bania" steam bath, and spacious hamman bath guarantee a perfect relaxation.

Enthusiast of a more active leisure won't be bored, either. The hotel has its own tennis courts, an 18-hole mini-golf course, a beach volleyball court, and a playground for children.

If you feel like taking a trip into the forest, you can use the services of a guide, ride there on a horse-drawn carriage, or even fly a balloon. The hotel's concierge will take care of everything. The concierge will also help you order flowers, book a

table in any restaurant in Białowieża, or rent a car.

THE RESTAURANT

Guests can choose from three dining rooms which can seat 100, 60 or 25 people. The chef prepares excellent dishes of regional and a hunter's cuisine. Breakfast offered in a form of buffet and served in convenient hours (from 7.30 am to 11.00 am) also leave nothing to be desired. Apart from standard menu dishes, you can also order such delicacies as pancakes, omelettes, and baked cheese. Right next to the reception area there is a cafe, which serves excellent desserts. And those who after an eventful day still feel like having a bit of fun, should pop into the "Tsar's Boudoir" club which is open until 4.00 am.

VERDICT

It's an ideal place for a weekend getaway and a corporate event. The restaurant offers excellent cuisine, and if you are lucky, you will see the waiters playing the hunting horn. Add to this friendly service and eastern hospitality. Standard rooms don't have a mini safe, which is a bit disappointing.

Ewelina Turkot



Luxury and modern facilities blend perfectly with the design of the interiors modelled on the historic ones. And around there's true primeval forest ...

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RADISSON EDWARDIAN MERCER STREET



CONTACT

Mercer Street hotel, 20 Mercer Street; tel +44 (0)20 7836 4300; radissonedwardian.com/mercerstreet

PRICE

Internet rates for a midweek stay in February started from £205 for a Standard room.

BACKGROUND

After more than six months of closure, a £15 million revamp and rebrand saw the Mountbatten hotel in Covent Garden completely reopen at the start of October as a member of Rezidor's Radisson Edwardian group, and renamed the Mercer Street hotel. It is located on the corner of Mercer Street in Seven Dials, in walking distance of the British Museum, many shops and theatres, and Covent Garden, Tottenham Court Road and Leicester Square tube stations.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

The designers of the four-star, seven-floor property have taken brave steps to introduce a somewhat unconventional – and at times incohesive – set of colourways and ornamentations, with crushed velvet bedspreads in fuchsia and lime green, and artworks ranging from golden sheep in the lobby.

ROOM FACILITIES

There are 129 rooms across two categories (Standard and Deluxe), plus eight suites (707 is probably the best), each with different décor. A good portion

of them are quite feminine in style, with silver padded headboards and raspberry-coloured carpets, while others are a little more masculine.

Amenities that come as standard include safes, robes, tea- and coffee-making facilities, air conditioning, free wifi, and fridges (large Union Jack ones by Smeg in the suites). The rooms also feature Samsung/Apple TVs that are designed to sync with iPods, iPhones and iPads. There are mini bottles of upgraded products in the suites, along with large walk-in wardrobes, living areas with sofas and low tables, Nespresso machines and king-size beds.

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

The hotel's bar and restaurant, Dial, is fitted out with bold purple and black banquettes and armchairs. Open for breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner, it has a relaxed atmosphere and a range of tasty dishes. I had an attractively presented salad of roast butternut squash and red pepper with toasted pumpkin seeds, broad beans and mint dressing, followed by succulent herb-crusted cod fil-

let with mashed potato and a lemon and chive butter sauce.

BUSINESS AND MEETING FACILITIES

The hotel has six meeting spaces (two on the ground floor with daylight and four on the lower ground floor with artificial illumination only), the largest of which holds 50 delegates theatre-style. Walls are covered in pink chenille fabric. A business centre has three PCs and free printing.

LEISURE FACILITIES

There is a subterranean fitness area with a decent selection of free weights, Core Centric balls and Technogym equipment. There is no spa but for those wanting a massage, therapists can be booked for in-room treatments at least one hour in advance.

VERDICT

A well-located hotel for both business and leisure travellers. The décor may be a little mismatched in places but the free wifi and Apple TVs are a plus, and the staff are welcoming. A good four-star option.

Jenny Southan



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Hotel

LISBON

REAL PALACIO



The interior of the old house were adapted for the hotel needs by Graca Viterbo, a well-known Portuguese designer, who delights with her unusual solutions. At the same time preserving the style and charm of the old residence.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Lisbon is one of the most beautifully situated capital cities in Europe. The city is located on 7 hills on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, in the estuary of the Tagus river, and it makes quite an impression because of the number of monuments, fascinating history of geographical discoveries, which indeed originated from the capital of Portugal.

In Lisbon there are numerous modern chain hotels, but I prefer choosing historical sites. This time, I stayed at a 5-star "Real Palacio" hotel, belonging to the Portuguese hotel group - REAL. The hotel today, is a fine architectural masterpiece combination of reconstructed residence once belonging to an aristocratic family of Quinhones from the 17th century, and a new part of the building, built in 2003. It is really charming. The interior of the old house were adapted for the hotel needs by Graca Viterbo, a well-known Portuguese designer, who delights with her unusual solutions, at the same time preserving the style and charm of the old residence.

By the reception desk there is a rest room with shelves filled with books and old furniture. There are old paintings hanging on the walls. The guests play chess, read books, newspapers or have a rest.

On the sun-lit yard of the house, there is a cafe and a bar, where you can have a cup of coffee, a cocktail and chat. There is also an exhibition of the old family souvenirs, as well as weaponry once belonging to the former house owners. On the other side of the reception area, near the restaurant there is a lovely patio - when the weather is nice - that is almost always - you can have a lunch or early dinner there.

WHERE IS IT?

The hotel is composed of two buildings, and is located in the centre of Lisbon, in the close proximity to Marquel de Pomal square, and Edward VII park, picturesquely situated by the ocean, and El Corte Ingles shopping centre. An underground station is also a stone's throw from here, as well as historical sites or tourist bus stops - the quickest way to visit all the more distant parts of Lisbon.

ROOMS

The hotel offers 147 rooms, including 60 double rooms, 73 rooms come with double beds, 10 single rooms and 4 suites. Rooms are spacious, and come with air conditioning, comfortable and stylish desks and armchairs, free Internet access, plasma TVs with satellite TV, a safe and a mini bar.

Double rooms are of 25 sq m while suites - 39 sq m. The interior is decorated in warm colours and has a unique design. Bathrooms are big, and equipped with hair-dryers and a set of miniature cosmetics. Guests have access to a mini spa offering jacuzzi, a Turkish bath and a fitness room.

BUSINESS FACILITIES

The hotel is well prepared to organize all kinds of conferences, events and business meetings.



CONTACT

Real Palacio Rua Tomas Ribeiro, 115 1050-228 Lisbon, Portugal
tel. (+351) 213 199 500, fax (+351) 213 199 501
e-mail: realpalacio@hoteisreal.com www.realhotelsgroup.com

There are five multi-functional air-conditioned rooms, which can accommodate even 230 people. In the underground, there is a car park for 190 cars.

THE RESTAURANT AND THE BAR

There are two restaurants - a culinary centre of the hotel. "Guarda Real" serves mostly fresh fish and seafood, that is traditional dishes from Portuguese and Mediterranean cuisine. The chef prepares every dish with artistic finesse and reverence. The staff can advise you on the most appropriate drinks to match your dish, and the choice of alcoholic beverages is really impressive. The restaurant is frequently visited by people from outside the hotel, as they love to savour the taste of the wines and dishes served here.

"Do Real" restaurant serves breakfast in a form of buffet, between 7.00am to 10.30am.

VERDICT

A very cosy and quiet hotel for the tourists wanting to visit Lisbon and its neighbourhood, as well as for business traveller. Excellent location, near the airport, the city centre and historical sites. Exceptionally friendly service and excellent cuisine. I really recommend visiting Lisbon.

Katarzyna Siekierzyńska



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Restaurant

WARSAW

FLAMING&CO
CHAMPAGNE BAR



WHAT'S IT LIKE?

The experts say that such exquisite alcohol as champagne, is a panacea for all the trouble of this world. To check this out, I visited the first champagne bar in Poland, where you can taste not only the legendary Dom Pérignon - considered the best champagne, after which the bar was named - but also other brands, such as Moët Chandon or Veuve Clicquot. The place is elegant, but at the same time cosy, and doesn't create an impression of being accessible only for the chosen ones. What's important, the world's best and most expensive alcohols can be ordered by a glass, with a guarantee that they will be freshly open. And they can't complain about the not being busy.

MENU

It is diverse, but also matches the kinds of alcohol served in the bar. During lunchtime, you can order Fine de Claire oysters

(PLN 10 a piece), foie gras parfait (PLN 32), octopus salad with fennel (PLN 25), tataki tuna (PLN 27) or guacamole gambas (PLN 27). What's more guests are given free pre-starters in a form of fried almonds with anise, marinated olives and crumbled parmesan with balsamic vinegar. In the evening the menu is changed. Apart from oysters, you can have lobster (PLN 120), foie gras with pear (PLN 60), lamb with rosemary (PLN 59), while as a light starter, you can order grapes with pistachio (PLN 17).

ALCOHOL

In the bar there is mostly champagne. You can try the before mentioned: Dom Pérignon, Moët Chandon and Veuve Clicquot but also Ruinart brut (PLN 360 for a bottle), Taittinger Nocturne Blanc (PLN 385 for a bottle), Louis Roederer Brut Premier (PLN 375 for a bottle), or Laurent-Perrier (PLN 325 for

a bottle). Vintage champagne is a separate category. You can have a bottle of Dom Pérignon 2000 for PLN 600 or order it by glass for PLN 99. For Perrier - Jouët 2000, Belle Epoque, you will have to fork you PLN 890, while Taittinger Comtes de Champagne 1998 Blanc de Blanc costs PLN 1490 a bottle. Experts will surely appreciate the possibility of ordering a real gem among wines - Bolinger Vieilles Vignes Francaises Blanc de Noirs 2002 - for mere PLN 2900 a bottle. Enthusiasts of rose champagne have a couple of options to choose from: Moët Chandon Rose (PLN 365 for a bottle), Ruinart Rose (PLN 430 for a bottle), Bollinger Rose NV (PLN 530 for a bottle), and Krug Rose (PLN 2100 for a bottle). There is also an extended menu of cocktails, based on champagne. Here, you will find Bellini, made from a special variety of not too sweet peaches (PLN 60), French 75 - based on

Moët & Chandon, Bombay Sapphire, sugar syrup and lime juice, or Champagne Cocktail - made from Moët & Chandon, Hennessy V.S., Angostura bitters and brown sugar. There's also quite a wide selection of whiskey. In the menu you will find: Middleton Very Rare, Glenmorangie 25 Years, Edrour 11 Years, Adberg or The Glenrothes 1978. Because most of the alcohol is sold by glass, you can try everything as much as you like...

THE INTERIOR

Not very big, elegant and cosy. The style of the interior looks like a 21st century version of Gothic Revival. Dominant colours are white, navy blue and black, which is an allusion to the bottle of their flagship alcohol - Dom Pérignon. The walls are decorated with pictures of famous film stars, the tables come with champagne coolers

with white roses inside instead of ice. The only thing you can find with are not very comfortable, wooden chairs which seem rather unstable.

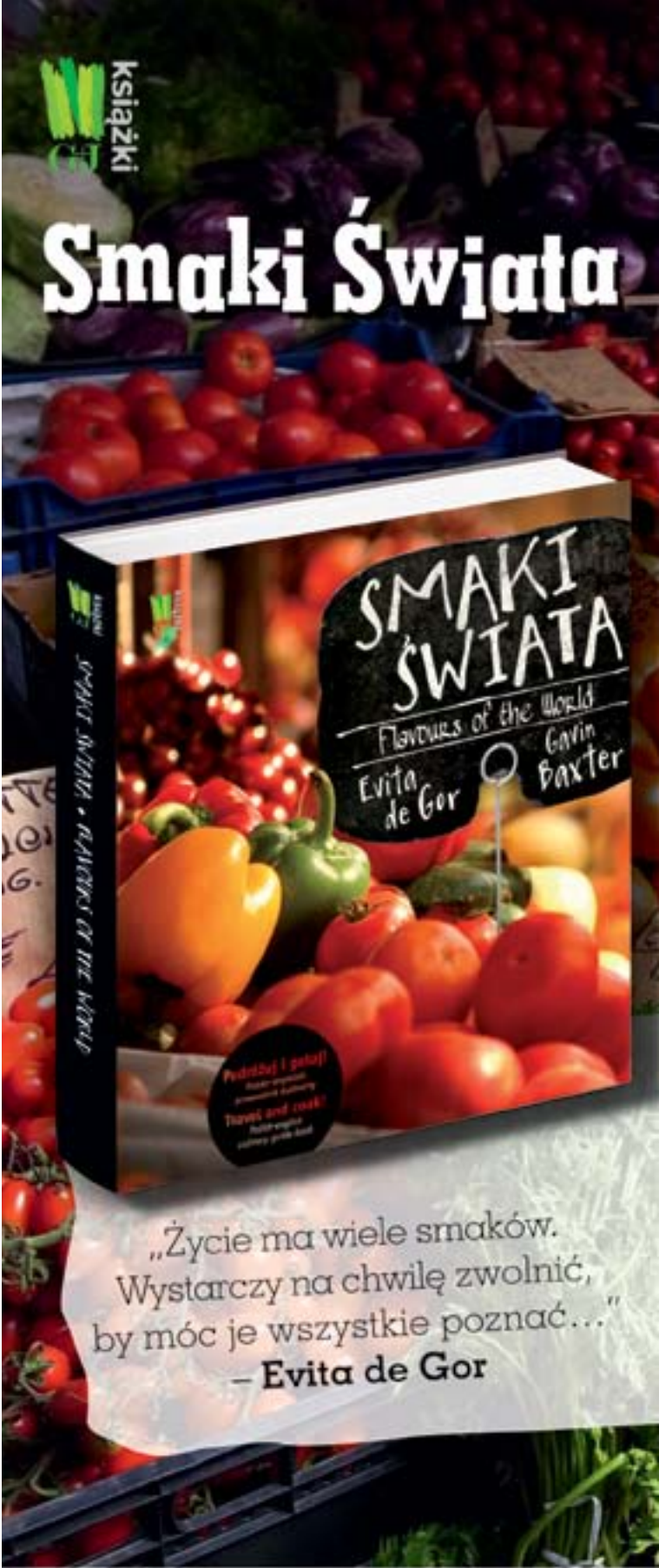
VERDICT

It's a nice place for lunch, a cocktail in the evening or a sophisticated dinner. Apart from the most popular Dom Pérignon variants, you can also try good vintage wines, otherwise unavailable on the Polish market - they are ordered from France only to this unusual champagne bar. The bartenders can give you advice and feel the mood of their clients. Another advantage of Champagne Bar is a possibility to savour different variants of Dom Pérignon, served both by glass, as well as in a form of cocktails. A nice spot for all the gourmets, as well as the enthusiasts of fine alcohol and unique atmosphere.

Marzena Mróz



The experts say that such exquisite alcohol as champagne, is a panacea for all the trouble of this world.



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SIXT AG RENT A CAR



BACKGROUND

SIXT AG was founded 100 years ago in Munich, and its founder Martin Sixt started with merely a few cars. Today, the company has over 4,000 stations worldwide.

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FORMALITIES

You can book a car in several ways: by www.sixt.pl, sending an email to rezerwacje@sixt.pl or by calling the Reservation Centre at +48 22 511 15 55.

I decided to book my car via the website, which is really simple to do. I entered the location I wanted to pick up the car from (Warsaw airport), chose the date, time, and the BMW 3 Series group (no specific model), as well as my personal data. The website calculated the amount to

be paid and I was asked about the method of payment (I chose the credit card) and informed that to rent the car I must be at least 25 years old and have a valid driving license (for at least 3 years).

I meet both these conditions, so after a moment I received a confirmation of my reservation.

THE CAR

On 15 March I went to the rental station, where I presented my identity card. I was given the contract of car hire to sign, as well as a control card with the technical description of the car and its drawings in the event of a collision. Together with the assistant I inspected the car and he explained to me briefly the main functions and the electronics in this model.

The car - a clean, shiny, black BMW 318d made a good impression on me. I liked its size – it's not too big and has a spacious boot, as well as automatic transmission. There are certainly a few advantages of this model that a woman would appreciate, e.g. the automatic transmission, excellent acceleration, intuitively designed dashboard, and comfortable seats. Perhaps I should buy it? Or rather lease.

RETURNING THE CAR

On 18 March after covering almost 600 km I returned the car (with a full tank) at the airport's car park, although I could return it to any SIXT station, even abroad. I had no trouble finding the station as on the way to the airport there were numerous “Car Rental Return” signs. The return procedure takes a few moments. You return the documents, the keys, and the assistant checks the technical condition and the fuel level.

THE CHOICE

SIXT offers several groups of cars. Economic brands include Ford, Skoda, Nissan, Kia, Hyundai, and Opel. The premium group features such makes as Volvo, Mercedes, and BMW. The best idea is to visit the website, where in addition to standard rates, you can find great promotional offers.

VERDICT

Large choice of cars, fast and professional service, easy renting procedure, other interesting offers such as leasing and sales. The company has an established position on the market.

Marzena Mróz



CONTACT

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BOOKS AND MUSIC

Marcin Furgurski recommends books and CDs



Eastward to the West

In his latest book, Robert D. Kaplan, the author of the bestselling „Balkan ghosts” takes us on a journey eastward to the western part of European civilization. Between Hungary, Romania, the countries of the Caspian Sea, Turkey, Syria, Israel and Caucasus, he looks for new hotspots, and points of reference. Kaplan- an American journalist, writer and political commentator - describes the special atmosphere of the places, trying see their future. Apart from the people, what also guides him are works of Herodotus and Strabo, museum exhibitions and transport networks dating back to hundreds of years. It's an intriguing book, describing a journey through the Balkans, the Middle East and Caucasus.

Robert D. Kaplan „Na wschód od Tatarii” (Eastwards to Tartary), Wydawnictwo Czarne



Saving from the oblivion

How did Three Crosses Square in Warsaw looked like before the II World War? What tenant houses were there on Nowy Świat Street in 1905? Who built Poniatowski Bridge in 1921? This unusual album presents hundreds of photographs of „old” Warsaw along with the author's comments. What makes a huge impression is a photograph of Nowy Świat Street from 1870, Krakowskie Przedmieście from 1880, or the one of the steel plant of Praga, taken almost 130 years ago. Sepia photographs ideally convey the atmosphere of the 19th-century capital, take us big to the 1920's and show the changes that Warsaw architecture underwent at the turn of the centuries. Among the photographs, there are such „pearls” as a picture taken at Henryk Sienkiewicz's funeral, showing Krakowskie Przedmieście in 1903, or a welcoming event for tsar Nicholas II of Russia.

Olgiard Budrewicz „Warszawa w starej fotografii” Wydawnictwo Bosz



Going through Africa on a bike

Africa is a tempting and inspiring continent. You can travel across it by plane, train or - as we learn from the book - by bike. A group of travellers from Poland: Maciek Czapliński, Mariusz Mitrowski and Ryszard Karkosz - inspired by Kazimierz Nowak who travelled across Africa on a bike in 1930's - decided to repeat his achievement in the 21st century. As a result, they rode from the north edge of the Black Continent to the southern Cape Agulhas. The book is not only an intriguing diary of the adventure, but also a record of encountering exotic and diverse African culture.

Maciej Czapliński „Afryka. Przekrój podłużny. Rowerowe safari z Kairu do Kapsztadu” Wydawnictwo Bezdroża



An impulse to listening

The band is admired for unusual fusion of nu-jazz, electronic music and sense of melody. Its latest album called „Impulse” surprises with rich guitar sounds and interesting effects, like echoes, clipping and delays. The fans says that in some parts, the band seem to set off on space and psychedelic voyages in the footsteps of Hancock himself. The tracks „Pobudzenie” and „Ciężkie powietrze” seem particularly interesting.

„Impulse” Jazzpospolita



Gershwin and the afro rhythms

An exotic and interesting album by African-German vocalist, Lyambiko. This time the artist presents only songs by George Gershwin, the author of such world-recognized hits like „Rhapsody in Blue”, „Porgy and Bess” or „Cuban Overture”. The album includes such famous songs as „Summertime”, „A Got Rhythm”, „Someone To Watch Over Me”, „Let's Call The Whole Thing Off”, „They All Laughed”.

„Sings Gershwin” Lyambiko



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TEN TOP METROS OF THE WORLD

Too hot, too crowded, too expensive
– there's a lot to gripe about when it comes to subways,
but which ones are the best in the world?
Jenny Southan investigates.



Like veins in the human body, metros are the vessels through which the lifeblood of a city flows. And when the system becomes clogged or damaged, the negative repercussions are felt throughout society. In his book *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell makes the connection between the facelift New York’s subway received in the late eighties and the subsequent dramatic drop in crime.

Three decades ago, the Big Apple’s underground system was in a terrible state – carriages were covered in graffiti, fare-dodging and panhandling were rife, and muggings, assaults and murders commonplace. In 1984, there was a fire somewhere on the system every day. The Transit Authority (TA) decided that one way to tackle the problem was to create the appearance of order – carriages were therefore repainted religiously until, by about 1990, the youths who were vandalising them gave up and the graffiti epidemic was crushed.

Surprisingly, both petty and serious crime across New York also began to plummet – a widely recognised phenomenon that supports “broken windows theory”, which states there is a relationship between badly maintained urban environments and anti-social behaviour. The start of the new decade also saw the TA clamp down hard on those subway users who had not bought tickets, and by 2000, the number of felonies committed on the system had gone down by 75 per cent. Which goes to show the wider impact a well-functioning metro can have.

So which cities have the best systems? The 2011 Metro Rail awards gave top place to the London Underground, while Metro

de Madrid scooped the prize for most innovative use of technology, RATP Paris won the best in Europe, Seoul Metro the best in Asia-Pacific and Chicago Transit the best in the Americas.

Ahead of the 2012 results, out this month, we have compiled (in no particular order) ten of the best, taking into consideration factors such as ease of use, price, coverage, maintenance, cleanliness, safety, design, hours of operation, punctuality and technological innovation.

1. LONDON

Having opened as a 6km stretch in 1863, the Tube is the world’s oldest subway, with 408km of track (the second-largest after Shanghai), 275 stations (55 per cent of which are above ground), 11 lines and three million journeys made every day. While older carriages can get stuffy, a £1.5 billion programme to install 191 cooler, more spacious trains, serving 40 per cent of the network, is under way and due to be completed by 2015 – no mean feat when most of the tunnels date back to Victorian times.

Green Park, King’s Cross St Pancras and Stratford stations have been revamped in time for the Olympics, with ongoing works at Victoria, Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street. The Tube runs from about 5.30am to 12.30am (a bugbear with night owls, admittedly), and although expensive – single tickets cost from £4.30 – using a pre-paid Oyster card is cheaper (from £2). Up to 120 stations will get wifi access by the summer.

The Underground is rubbish-free and safe, begging is not permitted, and forcing

buskers to audition for permits means you will enjoy some decent music. There are even ongoing art projects to lift the spirits of travellers. When there are delays, drivers provide frequent updates to passengers, and clear signposting and an iconic map make it easy to use. Visit tfl.gov.uk

2. PARIS

The French capital’s art nouveau Métro dates back to 1900 and is one of the world’s densest underground systems, with its 301 stations only 548 metres apart on average. Single tickets cost €1.70 and one-day passes €9.75. Once validated, standard tickets can be used for travel on the Métro, buses, trams and zone one of the RER express train network for 90 minutes.

With 16 lines stretching 214km, it is open 5.30am-1.15am (2.15am on Fridays and Saturdays) and carries 4.5 million people a day. The Métro also boasts one of the world’s largest underground stations, Châtelet-Les Halles, with five metro and three RER rail lines. Quieter rubber-tired trains (which have since been adopted in Montréal, Santiago and Mexico City) are found on five lines, although older trains have doors that have to be opened manually.

In May last year, operator RATP began to roll out 49 new automated MP05 trains on line one, the network’s busiest – this will be complete by the end of the year. Trains on this route sport new red flooring, better lighting and information screens, while 12 stations on line 13 now have platform-edge doors to improve safety. RATP is also investing €90 million in modernising



ventilation and smoke extraction, and is campaigning to encourage civility among passengers. Visit ratp.fr/en

3. MADRID

Dating back to 1919, the Spanish capital’s Metro transports about two million people between its 300 stations – 81 of which were built between 2003 and 2007 – every day. At the same time, several new lines and extensions are under way. Newer stations such as Getafe Central are light and spacious, while cross-platform interchanges for speedy transfers can be found in Casa de Campo and Principe Pio. All are well maintained, and many platforms and carriages have TV screens showing local news. Goya station has engravings by the artist, while Chamarín features a giant “digital waterfall”.

The 12 lines offer a 293km network that is open from 6am to 1.30am daily. You can travel from the city centre to the airport in 12 minutes. Single tickets cost from €1.50. A free library service known as “Bibliometro” allows the public to borrow books in 12 stations. Visit metromadrid.es

4. STOCKHOLM

The Swedish capital unveiled its first metro line in 1950 and, today, the stylish, high-tech network has 108km of track across three lines. There are 100 stations – about half of which are underground – distributed across the city’s islands. During the week, Tunnelbana trains run from 5am to 1am, while at weekends they operate all night every 30 minutes. Single zone tickets valid for one to two hours cost from SKr 36 (£3.40), while travel cards for one, three or seven days start from SKr 115 (£10.80).

Operator SL says that “art helps to reduce criminal damage and vandalism”, and, as a result, 90 stations are decorated with frescoes, mosaics, paintings and installations. You can also take guided art tours. As in New York, the system suffered badly from graffiti throughout the 1980s but, nowadays, if a train is defaced it is immediately taken out of service and cleaned up. Visit sl.se/en

5. BERLIN

Getting around the German capital is made easy by its extensive U Bahn railway, 80 per cent of which is underground. The 146km of track serves 173 stations across ten lines, and is integrated with the S Bahn network, which has 15 lines and 166 stations that extend into the neighbouring state of Brandenburg. Dating back to 1902, the U Bahn lines linking East and West Berlin were severed in 1961, and stations in the German Democratic Republic closed until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In 1995, the network was completely unified.

Today, more than one million passengers use the U Bahn per day, and examples of 1960s minimalism, 1970s pop art and postmodernism are present in many of the stations. Olympia-Stadion has a metro museum. Line U5 is being extended westwards – at present, U55 (an extension of U5), which opened in 2009, links Berlin Hauptbahnhof with the Bundestag and Brandenburger Tor, but by 2017 it will be connected to Alexanderplatz.

Single tickets are valid for two hours and cost from €2.30. Frequent, reliable services run from 5am to 1am (all night at weekends). Mobile phones can be used in all sta-

tions and tunnels, and many carriages are fitted with flatscreen TVs showing news. It is clean, safe and you can even take your bike on board, so long as you have bought a ticket for it. Visit bvg.de

6. TOKYO

Famed for its white-gloved “pushers” who force commuters on to overflowing carriages, the Japanese capital’s subway, which opened in 1927, serves almost nine million passengers a day, making it the busiest in the world. With 274 stations and a 300km reach, it has two operators – Tokyo Metro, which has nine lines, and Toei Subway, with four.

While foreigners will struggle to make sense of the vast system – much of the signage is in Japanese and the psychedelic spaghetti map is complicated – more English is being introduced and stops are numbered and colour-coded. Every station also plays a unique jingle so blind people know where they are. Prices start from ¥160 (£1.30) and commuters can pay with Pasma/Suica electronic money cards. Japanese residents can also set up Mobile Suica to pay with their phones. From this month, wifi will be available not only in stations but on trains, although voice calls are banned.

While carriages are packed during rush hour, they are clean, air conditioned and well designed. People queue politely to get on, masks are worn by users with colds, and there are women-only cars at peak times. But one of the best things about the system is its punctuality – if your train is late, the station will issue you with a certificate to give to your boss to prove it. It’s open from about 5am to 1am. Visit tokyometro.jp/en





7. HONG KONG

Fast, clean and efficient, the MTR was unveiled in 1979 and carries about four million people a day. It has 175km of track, more than 80 rapid transit stations, 69 light rail stops and ten lines serving Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. There is also an Airport Express. The MTR operates from about 6am to 1am with trains running every two or three minutes at peak times.

Tickets are cheap (from HK\$4/33p for a single) and can be bought from English-language machines, while prepaid Octopus cards provide discounts. Wifi is available at 32 stations and on Airport Express trains (buy a PCCW pre-paid pass for HK\$20/£1.65 for 24 hours), and there is full 3G coverage in all stations and tunnels.

Electronic maps on the carriages illuminate the stops the train has passed through, and each is labelled in Chinese and English. Smoking, eating and drinking is banned, and many platforms have glass screen doors to prevent accidents. Music and dance performances take place every Friday evening at Central Subway in Hong Kong station, and pieces of eye-catching art are on display throughout the network. Visit mtr.com.hk

8. MONTREAL

While the Canadian city's Metro is one of the smaller networks in our top ten – with only four lines and 68 stations stretching 70km – it scores with its impressive architecture, pleasing environment and quiet, rubber-tired trains. According to fan site metrodemontreal.com: “Unlike many

other subway networks, every station in Montréal is distinct. The system is also beautifully decorated with hundreds of pieces of public art, including sculptures and frescoes.” Champ-de-Mars, Berri-UQAM, Du College, Vendome, McGill and Charevoix stations feature brightly coloured stained-glass windows.

More than one million passengers ride the Metro daily. It is open from 5.30am to between 12.15am and 1.30am (depending on day and line), and tickets cost C\$3 (£1.90), or C\$8 (£5) for a 24-hour pass. Since the network opened in 1966, there has only ever been one collision (in 1971). There are train services every two to six minutes during rush hour, and the whole system operates underground. Visit stm.info

9. MOSCOW

Open since 1935, the Russian capital's subway was the first of its kind in the Soviet Union. It has 185 stations and 12 lines stretching 306km, and transports about seven million people a day, making it the second-busiest after Tokyo. The 20km octagonal Koltsevaya line allows for transfers to almost all the other lines, creating a hub and spoke system. Despite tunnels reaching depths of up to 84 metres, there is full mobile phone reception.

What is most striking is its looks. Believing that creating lavish, imposing environments would instil awe and respect for authority, Stalin commissioned an architectural wonder complete with electric chandeliers, stained glass and gilded stucco work. The result is an underground system that is

possibly the most beautiful in the world – the red marble hall of Ploshchad Revolyutsii, for example, is flanked with 76 bronze statues of revolutionary peasants, workers, soldiers and sailors. Unfortunately, most of the signs are in Cyrillic, so navigation can be tricky.

The network is open from around 6am to 1am, tickets cost from 28 rubles (56p) and trains run as frequently as every 90 seconds. There are plans to add 43 stations and to extend lines by 79km by 2015. Visit engl.mosmetro.ru

10. DUBAI

At 75km, the Dubai metro is the longest driverless rapid transit system in the world. It is also one of the youngest systems, having opened its first line (Red) in 2009 and its second line (Green) last September. There are 87 trains serving 43 stations (although only nine are underground), with four more due to open (two on the Red line this year, two on the Green line on a date to be confirmed). Each is decorated to reflect one of four themes – earth, water, air and fire – and station interiors gleam with polished glass, shiny floors and futuristic light fittings.

The Japanese-designed trains are separated into three classes – Silver (standard), Gold (with 18 luxurious seats per car), and Women and Children. Tickets cost from 2Dhs (35p) and the system is open from 6am to 12am (until 1am Thursdays) and 1pm to 1am on Fridays. Serving around 140,000 travellers a day, it is one of the safest and most punctual systems. Visit dubaimetro.eu

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Najnowsze trendy w zabudowie kuchni proponują czyste formy wkomponowane w pełną powietrza przestrzeń. Sprzęt Siemens doskonale spełnia te wymagania. Podobnie jak piekarniki i płyty grzewcze, również nowe okapy wyróżniają się ekskluzywnym designem o wyjątkowo eleganckiej, oszczędnej linii. Piękna obudowa ze szlachetnych materia-

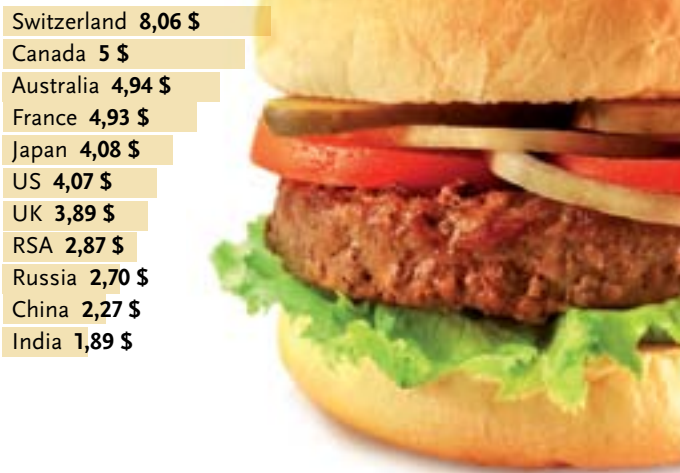
łów kryje innowacyjne rozwiązania i zaawansowaną automatykę, dzięki której urządzenia działają prawie samodzielnie, nie wymagając Twojego zaangażowania. Kontrolowane przez elektroniczne systemy, pracują wydajnie, skutecznie i cicho, zapewniając idealnie świeżą atmosferę w kuchni. Więcej informacji: www.siemens-home.pl

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Big Mac



economist.com



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Moscow	400,33 \$	London	240,86 \$
Zurich	338,41 \$	Dubai	227,99 \$
Paris	319,67 \$	Toronto	201,44 \$
Sydney	302,96 \$	Shanghai	188,83 \$
New York	297,83 \$	Cape Town	125,56 \$
Tokyo	249,56 \$		

hoggrobinson.co.uk



Taxi 3 km ride at peak

Zurich	26,97 \$	New York	12 \$
Tokyo	15,66 \$	Cape Town	7,90 \$
London	14,75 \$	Moscow	6,04 \$
Paris	14,75 \$	Dubai	3,27 \$
Sydney	13,68 \$	Shanghai	2,76 \$
Toronto	12,50 \$	Mumbai	1,29 \$

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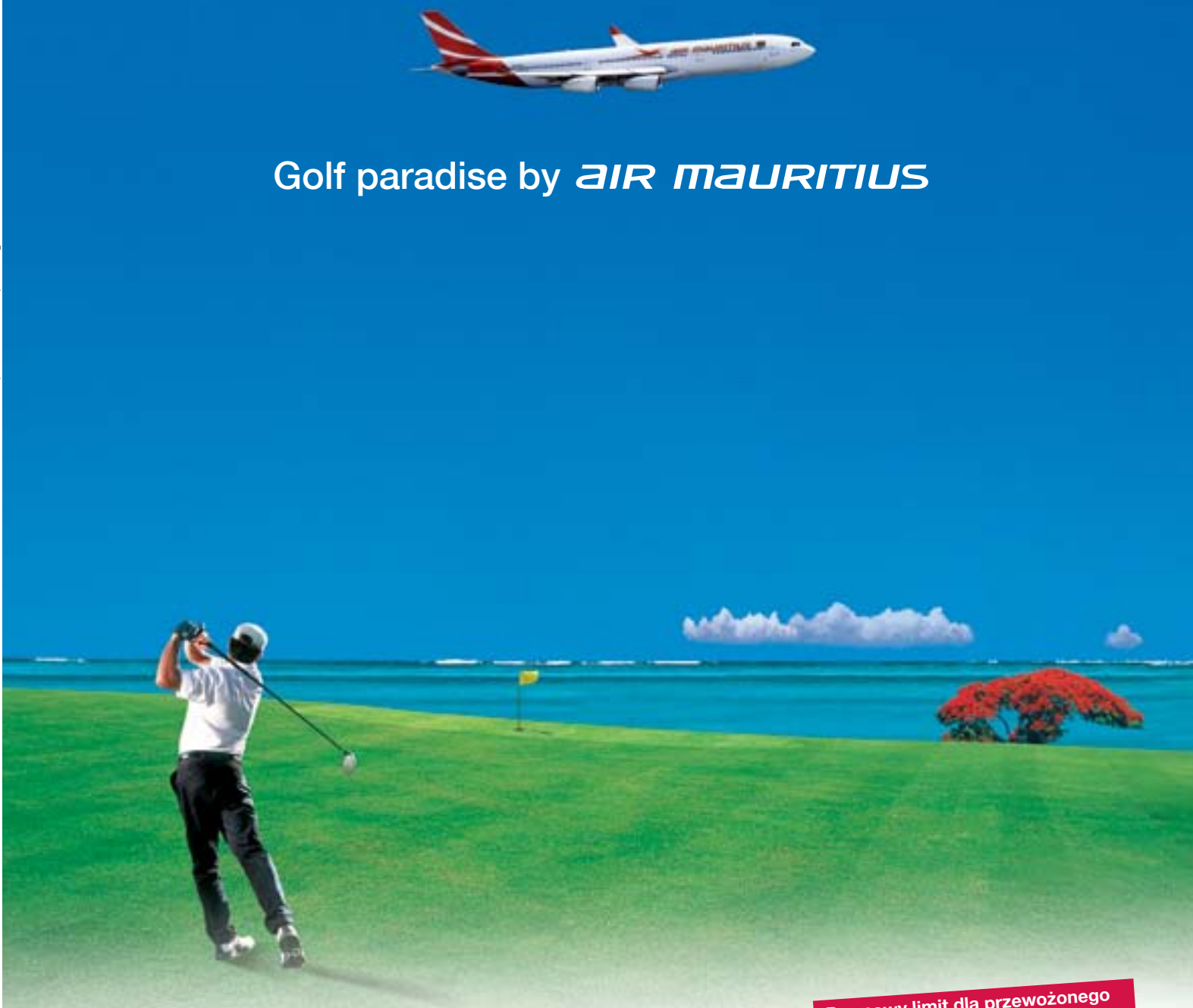


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Moscow	3,29 \$
Cape Town	1,64 \$
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FLY IN A NEW STYLE

Elite cabin crew, three service options on long-haul business flights, a dedicated telephone line for premium and modern graphics which combines modern approach with Polish tradition to create corporate identity - these are just some of the changes LOT Polish Airlines has undergone.



The elite team of on-board staff “Elite Fleet”, three versions of service in business class for long-haul routes, a premium line dedicated to passengers in the Call Centre and a fashionable graphics, combining modernity with Polish traditions, as an element of the visual identification of the national carrier are just some of the changes LOT Polish Airways is making to its standards.

ELITE FLEET

At the end of March, almost 100 years after the first aircraft flight with the world’s first flight attendant-Heinrich Kubis - on board the LZ-10 Schwaben zeppelin, service by the Elite Fleet - team of on-board staff of LOT Polish Airlines started on LOT planes. The team of specially trained flight attendants will first take on the care of business class passengers on long-haul routes and in the next stage, passengers in the premium economy class which will be available on the Polish carrier’s Boeing 787 Dreamliners. Besides care and guaranteeing the safety of travellers, the Elite Fleet has the task of ensuring an individual approach to business clients and guaranteeing world class service. Members of Elite Fleet were selected from among PLL LOT S.A. on-board staff in a multi-stage recruitment process which involved, amongst other things, completing additional specified workshops in modern in-flight passenger service, language training, and training to develop verbal and non-verbal communication.

A NEW QUALITY OF TRAVEL

The Polish carrier, in preparing to add the newest generation of planes - the Dreamliner - to its fleet at the end of the year is implementing more service solutions and new products.

From the beginning of April passengers in business class on long-haul routes will have three versions of service to choose from, the basic difference of which is the moment of offering and duration of meals.

“Depending on how the passenger would like to spend their time on board, they can make a choice of quick service; service on a tray on which we simultaneously serve the appetizer, salad, main dish and dessert or fruit, and a set of cheeses on request; classic service, similar to a restaurant which involves serving the series of dishes at intervals and service on request. The last version is an excellent offer for passengers who don’t want the meal right after take-off, but would like to eat at a moment convenient for them during the flight,” Małgorzata Witon, Director of Products at PLL LOT S.A. explains.

“We want to be able to respond every time to the individual needs and requirements of our passengers so that they can feel comfortable on board our flights.”

A PILLOW, A BLANKET AND CHERRY LIQUEUR

LOT has also activated a special phone line at the Call Centre dedicated to passengers of business class and the new premium economy class. Through this, besides the standard sales and reservation services, trav-

ellers will be able to submit complaints as well as ask for help in solving smaller problems and get them on a „while you wait” basis. As the carrier says, this is the beginning of the expanded „concierge” services that are planned for the future. Another new feature is the separate entrance path to the plane for premium passengers, more comfortable pillows and a much bigger fleece-cotton blanket, a diversified offer of wines and spirits, including the traditional Polish cherry liqueur wiśniówka which is offered to business class passengers at the end of the meal.

LOT IS IN FASHION

The Polish carrier, in implementing new graphic motifs which are meant to strengthen the modern, pleasant and consistent image of the Company, is joining worldwide trends of connecting national symbols and folk details with contemporary elements and modern forms of expression.

“LOT, as the national carrier with a worldwide range, is proud and aware of its role in promoting Poland in a united Europe and around the world.



The new graphics refer to the ethno style, Polish traditions and history. It is contemporary and at the same time harkens back to native Polish symbols that appear in architecture, the landscape and art. We want to highlight our identity and individuality,” Marcin Piróg, CEO of PLL LOT S.A. says. “As a Polish company, we promote our country all around the world,” he emphasizes.

The new appearance of LOT is based on the use of visual mo-

tifs presenting the symbols of Poland, such as the new National Stadium, the figure of Frederic Chopin, the mermaid of Warsaw, Wawel castle and the symbol of the crane which has been a recognizable sign of LOT for over eighty years. This motif will be shown on printed materials (boarding cards, luggage tags, menus etc.), elements of furniture on board, in the renovated sales offices of the carrier and on the company’s official correspondence.



From the beginning of April passengers in business class on long-haul routes will have three versions of service to choose from.

LUFTHANSA PREMIUM PROGRAM FOR BUSINESS

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So far, as many as 5,000 companies from Poland have taken part in Lufthansa's bonus programme for small and medium businesses. PartnerPlusBenefit programme allows you to significantly reduce your company's travel expenses and receive attractive rewards. Optimisation of travel expenses doesn't require reducing the number of flights or lowering the standard of travel. PartnerPlusBenefit offered by Lufthansa and by selected airlines

affiliated with Star Alliance, enables you to recoup a part of your company's travel expenses. Registration in the programme is free. Members of the programme who choose to make a business trip with Lufthansa or another airline belonging to Lufthansa Group, not only have an access to a well-coordinated global route network, but they also collect points in the programme. The points can later be redeemed for a ticket for a trip with one of

Lufthansa's partner airlines, an upgrade from Economy Class to Business Class or from Business Class to First Class, articles from the Lufthansa World-Shop, or a cash bonus. "It's just enough to make 14 return trips in economy class from Poland to Athens, for a company to receive so many points to obtain a free reward ticket on the same route," explains Bart Buyse, General Manager Poland at Lufthansa German Airlines.



You can check the number of points you've collected in the programme online. Corporate clients also have access to a dedicated customer online centre for PartnerPlusBenefit. The partners of PartnerPlusBenefit have also prepared a welcome bonus of 1,000 points for the new members of the programme. After joining the programme, a new member may ask for any flown sectors made by him within the last three months to be retroactively credited to his account. Programme participants are also able to benefit from numerous promotions to collect points quicker, thanks to which they can receive their selected prize much faster. Triple points can now be obtained for flights with Lufthansa from Cracow or Poznań to Dusseldorf. Further possibilities for collection and redeeming promotional points will appear in June when the new airport in Berlin is launched. "We have recorded a significant increase of interest in our programme among companies located in Western Poland," emphasizes Bart Buyse. "Some of them are major exporters to the markets of Western Europe. The new flight network from

Berlin will allow their employees to reach major European financial and business centre much faster than now," he explains. It's worth noting that PartnerPlusBenefit is Poland's only bonus programme for small and

medium businesses, in which companies have the opportunity to collect points for flying with several airlines. You can still collect you miles on your account of Miles & More loyalty programme. In this way, you benefit twice.



Programme participants are able to benefit from numerous promotions to collect points quicker, so they can receive their selected prizes much faster.



PERSONAL SERVICE AT PARIS AIRPORT

Do you need to have your luggage collected and delivered? Would you like to be transported to and from the airport, be arranged breakfast and shower, as well as access to airport lounges? Now travellers can take advantage of personalized service at Paris CDG2 airport before departure, on arrival and during stopovers.



Not all passengers flying with Air France and KLM know that it's now possible to purchase a complementary service package (Personal Airport Services) at CDG2 Airport in Paris. Those who wish to receive extra assistance or simply feel more comfortable in the French capital, can choose among several options of service. The offer is aimed at both individual passengers and groups. Why is it so unique? Perhaps because it includes assistance of Air France's personal agent during all procedures at the airport, including collection and delivery of baggage, transportation to and from the airport, as well as providing access to shower facilities, the airport lounges, and breakfast. Importantly, the new service, which has been created to provide extra comfort on your arrival, departure or during your stopover at Paris-Charles de Gaulle, is available for every passenger, without exception.

WHO CAN HAVE IT?

Business passengers: assistance at the airport in order to optimize the time of travel.
Tourists: additional comfort and assistance at one of the world's largest airports.

OPTIONS

Standard offer - assistance of an Air France agent during all airport procedures: from



check-in procedure to boarding an aircraft, as well as from disembarking an aircraft to a next boarding gate or to transfer to the city. Additional options include: transfer between CDG2 airport and Paris, shower and breakfast in one of airport hotels (for passengers who arrive in Paris in the morning), as well as collection and delivery of luggage.

ADDITIONAL INFO

For further details, please contact ticketing offices: FKL Per-

sonal Airport Service Centre - Booking & Sales: by phone + 33 (0) 1 72 95 00 77, daily from 7.00 am to 9.00 pm local time (24/7 service will be available soon). The order form is also available on the website when booking tickets on-line, or under the "Manage Booking" tab. Payment: credit card, cash (€). The service is subject to availability at CDG2 airport (we are planning to expand the service to other Paris airports). Meet & Assist: service operated by an Air France agent (up to

4 people for one agent). Available to: passengers with tickets issued on flights with AF/KL codes. Changes: available free of charge, subject to time and availability restrictions. Returns: not allowed, except for delays/cancellations or due to improper service. Flying Blue points: 400 for every purchase. Complaints: can be submitted via Air France or KLM website. General conditions of sale and offer details are available at www.airfrance.pl on "Assistance at the airport" tab.

Personal agent assistance during all procedures at the airport will definitely optimize the travelling time of business passengers. Tourists, on the other hand, can enjoy additional comfort and assistance at one of the world's largest airports

Personal service at the airport CDG2	Prices in EUR (including taxes)
Agent assistance on departure/arrival/during stopover (up to 4 people per 1 agent)	€200
CDG2 - Paris - transfer (by bus, scooter, taxi or car with a chauffeur)	from €25 per person
Shower & Breakfast at an airport hotel (for passengers arriving before 10.00 am and not waiting for a connecting flight)	€56 per person
OBaggage collection (prior to departure or after arrival))	€50 for 5 pieces
Special service for groups (price offer within 24 hrs)	
Agent assistance on departure/arrival/during stopover (up to 10 people per 1 agent)	€200
Separate check -in desk (with the name of the group or company displayed on the screen)	€200 per one desk
Access to an airport lounge (passengers without Flying Blue card or First/Business class tickets)	€ 50 per person
Access to an airport lounge (passengers with Flying Blue Basic/Silver card travelling in First/Business class	€ 35 per person
Personal space in the lounge	€10 per person

NEW INTERIORS OF NOVOTEL HOTELS

The contemporary design is primarily about merging spaces, where the form is as functional as possible - say the designers of Novotel hotels in Poland.



Novotel Warszawa Airport

www.novotel.com
www.accorhotels.com

Novotel hotel chain, which has always put an emphasis on modernity and innovation in the design, is planning to introduce a number of upgrades to its hotels in Poland. Their new décor was created by well-known, young architects, who followed the latest trends when adjusting the hotels to

global standards.

Hotel renovation is an interesting challenge for a designer. The décor of such a place is a factor that often determines whether hotel guests are satisfied with their stay or not. Hotel interiors are designed to provide comfort and safety, but they should also maintain a formal and elegant character. The décor of Polish Novotel ho-

tels was created by recognized national architectural firms: Kaczmarek Studio, CUBE 27, Tremend and Studio Virgo. The changes will be made both to rooms and public spaces such as the lobby, reception area, as well as bars and restaurants. The largest investments in the upcoming months will be made in hotels: Novotel Warszawa Airport, Novotel Gdańsk Centrum, Novotel Wrocław and Novotel Katowice Centrum.

MODERNITY

The projects are very diverse, reflect the character of the cities in which the hotels are situated, and highlight the spaces with vivid colours. The décor of Novotel Gdańsk Centrum will allude to the hotel's coastal character.

Dominant colours are blue and white. Silver and glass fittings expand the space visually and cutting-edge technologies add to its modern character, with dynamic labelling of the reception desk, as well as moving digital images (Digital Art) displayed in the lobby.

„Hotel interiors excellently adapt good décor, making it a new quality in the public space and the beauty in the eyes of the guests. I think that Novotel is open to modern design. The great advantage of this hotel chain is its ability to change together with the development of the civilization, which can be seen through the décor and the functionality of the interiors tailored to the demands and the pace of life,” says Iwona Kaczmarek, from Kaczmarek Studio, which is responsible for

renovation of Novotel Gdańsk Centrum.

THE SPACE

After a busy day, you will appreciate the peacefulness and good energy of Novotel Warszawa Airport. The newly renovated Executive rooms apart from pleasant décor also feature such amenities as coffee machines or docking stations for Apple devices. The reception, the restaurant and the bar will also undergo renovation.

„The décor of the public spaces is based on geometric shapes and overall functionality. Another interesting addition are the details which are inspired by nature and which fit into the modern, simple spaces, adding to their warmth. There will also be large sculptures in the lobby,” explains Agnieszka Kowalska, an architect from the Tremend design office.

COLOUR

Colours around us affect how we perceive the surrounding space. The modern styling with warm red accents can be found also in the décor of the lobby, the restaurant and the bar. „The new form of public spaces at Novotel Wrocław were developed for people who are open to global trends. We focused on



Novotel Gdańsk Centrum



Novotel Warszawa Airport



Novotel Wrocław



Novotel Katowice Centrum

bright colours, bold shapes and minimal furnishing. Thanks to this the open space encourages guests to relax,” says Edgar Kaszubski, an architect from Studio Virgo.

The game of colours and forms will also be noticeable at Novotel

Katowice Centrum. The dominant colours in this hotel are red, brown, and beige.

„Interiors of Novotel hotels are designed to attract with harmony and unusual solutions,” sums up Barbara Liber-Skarbek, an architect from CUBE 27.



Novotel Gdańsk Centrum

DISCOVER SOMEPLACE ELSE

There's a certain place in Warsaw which in the evening attracts with the sound of live music and the aroma of original cocktails as well as unique atmosphere. The interiors of SomePlace Else, are decorated with furniture by renowned designers and everyone who appreciates a good fun has here their favourite table.



CONTACT
SomePlace Else
ul. B. Prusa 2
tel.: 48 (22) 450 67 10
www.warszawa.someplace-else.pl

It's easy to get to SomePlaceElse, because it's located in the building of Sheraton Hotel, on the lively Three Crosses Square, which has been changing into a centre of luxury. During the day it's a popular meeting place, so it's easy to come across here a well-known artist, and journalist savouring real delicacies prepared by the chef. The dishes are inspired by Tex-Mex cuisine and combine the energy of South America and

the sublime taste of Europe. If you are on a diet and watch every calorie, you won't be disappointed, either. The Light Menu contains a wide selection of salads, delicate fish and meat. Add to this excellent juices from freshly squeezed fruit and vegetables.

FOR THE BODY

The signature dishes of Else SomePlace include snacks which chef Arthur Grajber designed for several months, look-

ing for the perfect ingredients worldwide. He imported sauces from Mexico and by adding local ingredients, he gave them an original character. They also say that for three months he cooperated with a local bakery trying to refine the taste of Belgian bread for one of the starters. Especially worth recommendation are steaks, fish, fajitas, spicy Thai Fire, as well as red Thai curry with chicken, eggplant and jasmine rice. Let's not forget the range of



cocktails offered in SomePlace Else. They are colourful, flavourful, creative and you could spend long hours observing how skilfully they are prepared by the bartenders. If you want to try original drinks, which you won't find anywhere else, then SomePlace Else is the place to go. Fruity Safari, Very Berry and Green for Go tempt with fruit juiciness and colours. There's really plenty to choose from.

STARS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

Sophisticated cocktails and food are one thing, but what really sets this place on the partying map of Warsaw is the entertainment at the highest level. From Tuesday to Saturday SomePlace

Else hosts bands from all over the world, presenting their own songs as well as well-known hits. The bar is also involved in the promotion of Polish artists who perform here at themed events. SomePlace Else has already hosted such artists as Patricia Kazadi, Sławek Uniatowski, Rafał Brzozowski, Me Myself & I, and many other musicians.

A FEAST FOR THE EYES

SomePlace Else is also an ideal place for lovers of beautiful objects. Only the highest quality materials were used to create the décor of the place, including designer furniture and original lighting. The bar is the central point of SomePlace Else and it's made in the form of a steel construc-

tion with metal mosaic and the illuminated glass counter. In the middle of the bar there's pyramid with alcohols. Shiny aluminium hocker stools by Starck, huge Santa Cole chandeliers Santa Cole (150 cm in diameter), and mirror balls designed by Tom Dixon, further add to the overall impressive effect.

ALL YOU WANT

Delicious cuisine, original cocktails, funky interior, industrial and furniture design details are the perfect setting which highlights the most important advantage of SomePlace Else. For it's a place where music and light come to the fore, and which is an absolute "must-go" for fun lovers ...



From Tuesday
to Saturday
SomePlace Else hosts
bands from all over the
world, presenting their
own songs as well
as well-known hits.

AUTO NOSTALGIA

From 1 to 3 June 2012 Trade Fair and Congress Centre MT Polska invites fans of vintage cars to attend the second edition of Nationwide Trade Fair for Historical Vehicles. We offer you a nostalgic trip into the past - full of emotions, dreams and memories. All of this on the area of 10,000 sq m.



The idea to organize the first professional trade fair for historical vehicles in Poland, has been discussed for a long time. However since the beginning of the 1990s all such efforts were rather unsuccessful.

FROM PRL TO PRESLEY

This, however, changed in May 2011, when Mirosław Bugajski organized the first truly professional event of this type in the exhibition halls of MT Polska. The exhibits presented included a collection of racing cars from the era of People's Republic of Poland, beautifully restored Alfa Romeos, BMWs, Jaguars, Ferraris, Mercedes, American „cruisers” from the days of Elvis Presley, as well as Star 660 which carried Pope John Paul II during his first pilgrimage to Poland in 1979.

The absolute highlight of the exhibition was the only Lancia Stratos (1974) in Poland – a model which is eagerly sought after by car collectors. In the 1970s the rally version of the car won everything there was to win, and there was also a road (Stradale)

version available. The value of the car is estimated to be around €400,000 and it's still rising. Other popular stand at the trade show were those of Porsche Club Poland which presented the legendary 911s.

In addition to high-end cars, there were also perfectly restored Fiats 125p, as well as Mikrus and Warszawa models. Fans of motorcycles had the chance to see restored Komar mopeds, as well as Harley Davidsons. Following the success of the first event, which received wide coverage in the automotive industry, as well as among car lovers and collectors, this year's edition was extended to three days.

THREE DAYS WITH HISTORY

The first day, 1 June is the day of the industry – open only for exhibitors, journalists and invited guests. We plan thematic presentations, speeches by representatives of the automotive industry, as well as a banquet. This day will be an opportunity to meet and talk to representatives of companies, clubs, as well as private collectors and the media.

The following days will be open to everybody. The fair is an opportunity not only to get acquainted with the market of vintage cars in Poland, but also a great way to spend an unforgettable weekend with the family and friends.

The organizer has prepared numerous attractions. One is the exhibition of 8 Polish cars which are over 100 years old and still drive! Each of them has its own fascinating history. In 2011 Rambler Runabout Type E (1903), was the only vehicle from Poland which took part in the world's most famous rally of historic cars London-Brighton. What's more, it reached the finish line. REO Gentlemen's Roadster (1908) was purchased in Canada as a wreck following a hard crash. After years of restoration the car looks now like it did 104 years ago. Stories of other vehicles are not less fascinating.

The fair is a perfect opportunity to see up close legendary vehicles, but also to get acquainted with a wider choice of services and products.

Maciej Replewicz

The exhibitors at Auto Nostalgia trade fair include car manufacturers and fan clubs of various car makes, oil companies, manufacturers and distributors of spare parts, accessories and car cosmetics, as well as specialized workshops and service companies and automobile clubs.

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I'M STILL FASCINATED WITH FLYING



Joanna Krzyczkowska talks to **Leszek Sieluk**, the CEO of Aelis Poland

How does an economist land a position in the airline industry?

I guess like everyone else in the industry – because of his passion. I believe that once you get bitten by the aviation bug, it stays with you forever. I have always been fond of airplanes. It may run in the family, as my dad worked at Okęcie airport. I even have his photo taken in the 1950s in which he's standing in front of a British aircraft. I think that I took after him this fascination with aviation. When I was a student at Warsaw School of Economics (which is today's SGH), I managed to secure my internship at LOT, and after my graduation I managed to get a job there. I must say that this was a really fascinating period of my life. At that time LOT was in the process of replacing old Soviet planes with new Boeing aircraft, as well as Italian-French ATRs ... A feeling of „Le Grande Monde” could be sensed in the air.

Was that job a sort of a challenge to you?

Of course, it was. I often talk to people who are certain that my generation was privileged to witness the most exciting period in the development of Polish aviation. At one point in time LOT Polish Airlines had one of the world's youngest fleets. I participated in the whole process, and I'm still very proud of it.

But every challenge comes to an end ...

Then there is another one. I have gone through almost all stages. When refuelling services were separated from LOT's other activities (as it's done elsewhere in the world) and a new company called Petrolot was established, I became its vice president for finance. We made a number of really serious investments - we introduced double shell tanks, dual security systems and electronic monitoring. Then I took the same position, but this time at EuroLOT, the company which serves domestic and regional flights. There we went through a similar process - we built a new company, and quality as well as safety were our top priorities. After some time I was promoted and became the general president of the company. Once again, I was lucky, because I participated in major

changes there. The goal was to introduce on domestic routes services which would be comparable with those offered on international flights. I think that we managed then to make a genuine leap forward regarding the quality of our services.

But you decided to leave.

I did what I had to do, and there were already new challenges on the horizon. Aelis Group, an international private company backed by French capital has decided to extend its business activities. This is how Aelis Poland was established, where I am happy to be the chairman of the board.

What exactly is the scope of your business?

We are neither an airline nor a shipping company, but if some-



First, we recognize the needs of the client – where, with whom and how often he travels. Then we search for an airplane or helicopter which will best suit his needs.



one considers purchasing their own plane or helicopter they can absolutely count on our comprehensive support and assistance. It doesn't mean that we only act as an agent in the process of the purchase of aircraft. We also want to assist our clients throughout the whole transaction, which we understand as a long-term process that doesn't finish until the client sells his existing aircraft or helicopter with no intention of buying a new one.

Could you explain what such assistance involves?

First, we recognize the needs of the client – where and how often he travels, as well as how many people accompany him. This enables us to choose for him the type of an airplane or a helicopter which will suit him best. Then we start searching for such a model on the market. We don't represent any manufacturer, and we also know well the second-hand plane market, so we can be very flexible. We also provide other complex services such as assembling the cabin crew, technical servicing, arranging for service operations, as well as managing documentation. And if the client wishes to do so, we help him sell his aircraft and buy another one.

Are there many private planes in Poland?

Quite a lot, but most of them are small aircraft, which are used for hobby, or which belong to flying clubs and flight schools. There are only several dozen aircraft which are used strictly for business purposes. It's not much and hence our presence in this part of Europe. We see huge opportunities for the development of this industry in Poland.

Possessing one's own airplane certainly adds to one's prestige, but is it really something that a Polish businessperson needs?

You are right, but those who do serious business know how valuable time can be. Usually it's difficult to predict whether the meeting at which you've just arrived, will finish in two or perhaps four hours. Not to mention foreign flights. Many Poles do business in Moldova, which doesn't have any direct air connection with Poland. You need to fly there indirect and in consequence waste even 3-4 days in order to have a business meeting. Having your own plane solves this problem. In May in Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Gdańsk and Cracow or Katowice we will organize

a presentation of one of the most modern business aircraft, Learjet 60 XR. It really is worth seeing ...

You have taken your passion for aviation after your dad. Have you passed this bug onto your children?

I think so. I like flying and wherever I go, I first check if there are any air connections to my destination. Unfortunately, I never became a pilot. I'm glad that my eldest son fulfilled my dream. He started as a teenager from gliding, now he has a professional pilot license and permission to receive training on Airbus 320. My younger son and daughter want to pursue careers in medicine. Jan studies pharmacy and Maria, who will graduate from high school this year, is planning to study dentistry.

Do they like flying?

Of course, they do. Jan does his last semester in Budapest and at Easter we bought him a plane ticket home. He was delighted, because usually he came home by car, and now the whole journey took him only two hours. Maria also loves our air trips. She keeps telling me that when she has done all her final exams, we must fly somewhere.

Learjet 60 XR is an extremely comfortable aircraft – it's luxurious and very modern. When taking off from Warsaw, it can reach destinations across Europe, Middle East and North Africa.

TOP CLASS TORONTO

Other cities may get the glory but Canada's financial capital is rich in culture, teeming with entertainment options and blessed with natural beauty, discovers **Agata Janicka**.

Toronto is that quintessentially Canuck phenomenon – full of accomplishments that go comparatively unnoticed. The fifth-largest city in North America, it’s Canada’s financial and corporate headquarters, and seat of the world’s seventh-biggest stock market. That’s not all. It’s the third most significant English-speaking theatre capital, after New York and London, has a film festival almost as prestigious as Cannes’, and boasts more than 50 dance companies. The United Nations, says it’s one of the most multicultural cities on earth, with more than half of its citizens born overseas.

LIVELY DIVERSITY

Yet Toronto isn’t seen as exotic and up-and-coming like Beijing, avant-garde like New York, or chic like Paris. People have lived along Lake Ontario at the mouth of the Don and Humber rivers since the end of the last Ice Age, and still Toronto lacks the gravitas of Rome or St Petersburg. Hollywood shoots numerous films and television shows here annually, but as a sort of geographic body double – a stand-in for other US capitals. That actually makes sense, for as James Howard Kunstler, author of The Geography of Nowhere, once wrote: “Toronto is what many American cities wish they could be.” The city is alive – nowhere more so than in its cheek-by-jowl entertainment and financial districts, where office towers stand steps from theatres and opera houses, sports stadiums, galleries, and restaurants of every ethnicity. The city is alive – nowhere more so than in its cheek-by-jowl entertainment and financial districts, where office towers stand steps from theatres and opera houses, sports stadiums, galleries, and restaurants of every ethnicity. This is the “exuberant diversity” of a densely packed downtown – the kind that US urban philosopher Jane Jacobs envisaged in 1961’s The Death and Life of Great American Cities, years before she moved to Toronto and became a champion of the city. Among more recent high-profile supporters, Richard Florida, a US émigré and author of The Rise of the Creative Class, calls it a blueprint for culturally vibrant cities. And with high-calibre five-star hotels opening, a new C\$140 (L89) million film festival

HQ, and head-turning gallery additions in the past few years by Frank Gehry and Daniel Libeskind, Toronto may yet draw the world in for a closer look.

THE ART BIG AND SMALL

There’s perhaps no better gauge for Toronto’s rising arts and culture scene than the TIFF Bell Lightbox on King Street West. This is the Toronto International Film Festival’s complex of five cinemas, restaurants and event and gallery space, which takes up a full city block. The venue opened in September 2010, and has already attracted European royalty (Prince Albert of Monaco and his wife visited for the opening of a Grace Kelly exhibit) and members of Hollywood’s A-list – not to mention a continuous stream of tourists and local film buffs. In September, Jesse Wenthe, head of film programmes, wrapped up one of the busiest festivals on record – 336 films screened, 90 per cent of them North American or world



Luxury hotels, the festival centre and several projects by famous architects, are the key to understand the secret of Toronto’s success. Free artistic atmosphere also contributes to the overall charm of the city.

premieres, including Moneyball, starring Brad Pitt. Then it was back to work organising year-round exhibitions and film retrospectives at the Lightbox. It’s easy enough to get one’s bearings downtown. Toronto streets line up in a fairly tidy grid, with the corner of Bloor and Yonge acting as an unofficial centre point. Downtown extends roughly from Bloor Street south to Lake Ontario, and either side of Yonge Street for several blocks, west to Bathurst and east to Parliament. If I left the Lightbox walking west on King, my first choice of cultural pit stop might be Spin Toronto – a “ping pong social club”, it’s the new Canadian outpost of a hip New York chain co-owned by actress Susan Sarandon. Or I could take the next major east-west thoroughfare, Queen Street, to discover the boho-chic restaurants and avant-garde fashion of Queen West neighbourhood. This is where UK designer Oliver Spencer opened his first Canadian shop, next to the country’s flagship Fred Perry store. It’s also a hub for live music, with venues including the Cameron House, the Rivoli, Horseshoe Tavern and Velvet Underground. Past Trinity Bellwoods Park, Queen Street morphs into an art and design district dotted with private galleries, antique shops and the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art. Eventually you reach the Drake hotel, which has a popular alternative performance venue in its basement.

HOTEL PARADISE

But I need to venture east on King Street for my next meeting. Walking past celebrity handprints pressed into concrete on Canada’s Walk of Fame, the theatre row and Roy Thomson Hall – home of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra – I soon reach the financial district for a tour of the new Trump International Hotel and Tower. Toronto’s downtown business hotels are undergoing an ambitious makeover. The new Ritz-Carlton received the city’s first five-diamond AAA rating last year. Trump Toronto became its main rival when it opened on January 31, and new Shangri-La and Four Seasons properties are expected this year. Thompson Toronto and Hôtel le Germain Maple Leaf Square are two recently opened boutique options.



Aside from the Four Seasons, all are situated near the Lightbox – and not by chance. “You’re in the heart of the emergent downtown,” says Donald Trump Junior, executive vice-president of the Trump Organisation. “In other major financial capitals such as New York City, business and arts districts are separate from each other – here, they’re intermixed, and there are plenty of leisure options for the weekend.

PARTIES PARTIES PARTIES

Shows and sports events are on the doorstep of offices around the Toronto Stock Exchange at King and York streets. There’s the Air Canada Centre, hosting rock concerts, basketball and hockey; Rogers Centre for football, baseball and music; and the Second City, a sketch comedy theatre that launched John Candy and Mike Myers’ careers. The Four Seasons Performing Arts Centre showcases opera and ballet, and the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts is an off-Broadway-style theatre. Even if you’ve lived here all your life, there’s always something to learn about Toronto’s cultural landmarks. Like the fact that after the Second City’s final performance every Saturday, you can watch the cast rehearse future shows. Or that the walls and ceilings of the Princess of Wales Theatre feature the world’s largest collection of mural art by US abstract expressionist Frank Stella. They’re worth a peek at any hour. At Bloor Street, there are two major attractions – the Bata Shoe Museum, exhibiting international footwear, and the Royal Ontario Museum. This courted controversy in 2007 with its Michael Lee-Chin Crystal

addition, a vision of jagged aluminium and glass by Daniel Libeskind that burst through the original structure. Midway between the Lightbox and the museum is the Art Gallery of Ontario, which has its own “starchitect” addition. Frank Gehry grew up on Beverly Street, close to the gallery, where he took art classes in the 1930s. In 2008, he delivered an undulating series of gallery spaces pulled together by a main spiral staircase in blond wood. Some of the classes Gehry attended were taught by Lawren Harris. One of Canada’s Group of Seven, a depression-era collective of iconic landscape painters, his works are well represented in the gallery’s Canadian Collection. You could easily spend an afternoon here, but it’s gorgeous outside, so I stroll to the waterfront. Toronto has 8,000 hectares of parkland, beaches, bicycle and hiking trails, and rivers that bend and twist towards Lake Ontario. It’s an expansive, natural-feeling city, a realisation that hits as you reach the water’s edge. This is the smallest of the five Great Lakes that form a freshwater boundary between Canada and the eastern US, though, in relative terms, it’s almost the same size as Wales, at nearly 20,000 sq km. At Queen’s Quay Terminal – a refurbished port building housing craft stalls, boutiques and art space – I pause at the Museum of Inuit Art to browse antique carvings and sculptures. On a day like this, from the top of the CN Tower, you can sometimes make out the fuzzy outline of Buffalo, New York, in the distance. But my view through the gallery’s sunlit window is of seemingly endless water, and wide-open possibility.

Useful addresses

WHERE TO STAY

Ritz-Carlton Toronto The 267-room property opened a year ago and is the closest luxury hotel to the TIFF Bell Lightbox and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Restaurant TOCA by Tom Brodi is a favoured quiet nook for the business crowd, while the hotel’s 2,137 sqm spa is similarly popular. Past the lobby and featuring views of the CN Tower, DEQ lounge is another local hotspot. 181 Wellington Street West; tel. +1 416 585 2500; ritzcarlton.com Rooms from C\$ 616

Trump International Hotel AND Tower Toronto On the 31st floor, Stock Restaurant has a balcony for al fresco dining, while Quartz spa offers two floors of treatment rooms, a saltwater pool and a hair salon. 325 Bay Street; tel. +1 416 306 5800; trumptorontohotel.com Rooms from C\$ 672

Thompson Toronto The glass-walled rooftop lounge of this 102-room hotel is hugely popular for post-closing-time schmoozing. Only guests and “VIP cardholders” get in, so the word is people are resorting to taking rooms for the night just to secure that all-important seat at the bar. Facilities include a yoga and wellness spa and the Thompson Diner. 550 Wellington Street West; tel. +1 416 640 7778; thompsonhotels.com Rooms from C\$ 338

Metropolitan Hotel Toronto With 427 rooms, its standout feature is Lai Wah Heen, a Cantonese fine-dining restaurant whose dim sum master, Terrence Chan, draws A-listers to its tables. 108 Chestnut Street; tel. +1 416 977 5000; metropolitan.com Rooms from C\$ 177

SoHo Metropolitan Hotel and Residences The 92-room Soho Met is a home from home for travelling hockey players, rap moguls and visitors to Hollywood North film sets. There is a restaurant, a café/bakery and a Met club gym. The star-studded lobby connects by keycard access to an attached condo building with weekly and longer-term rentals. 318 Wellington Street West; tel. +1 416 599 8800; metropolitan.com Rooms from C\$ 265

The Drake Hotel This 19-room property is a firm fixture of the local arts scene. The Underground, a basement venue, is where talented indie bands gain early recognition. 1,150 Queen Street West; tel. +1 416 531 5042; thedrakehotel.ca Rooms from C\$ 225



LET’S MEET IN... ZURICH

Zurich, which was for long regarded as a dull city of workaholics, in recent years has become a truly fashionable metropolis. Today, it’s one of the most dynamic financial centre which houses the world’s fourth-largest stock exchange. **Siegfried Peyer** invites you to visit his city.

Today’s Zurich is famous for its cosmopolitan society, intensive nightlife and a dynamic art scene. Siegfried Peyer, CEO Hyposwiss Private Bank, talks about his hometown, its advantages which attract financiers, and explains why Zurich will always be an important player in international financial markets.

THE FINANCIAL CENTRE

The financial crisis of recent years brought about major changes around the world, also in Zurich. However, thanks to its extraordinary resilience, this Swiss metropolis has managed to face the trouble and is now looking with hope into the future. The political situation of Switzerland is very stable and the market open to domestic as well as foreign companies and investors. The political ground seems to be very attractive - Switzerland is a state under the rule of law, which respects freedom of information and protects the privacy of individuals. It can also boast its excellent economic condition. It has a strong domestic economy, an attractive tax system, modern infrastructure and well-educated society.

TRUST IS WHAT COUNTS

According to Siegfried Peyer the political and economic situation is a meaningful factor for the creation and maintenance of a modern and stable banking system. This experienced financier knows that a long-term success also depends on other important details. “As a private bank we take advantage of the reputation that Zurich has as a global financial centre,” explains the President of Hyposwiss Private Bank. “Whether a client chooses our bank or not depends critically on the experience they have had with our advisors. In Zurich discretion is a priority. You also need to be able to listen to the customer, understand his needs, and find solutions which he will find satisfactory. Over the past century, little has changed in this area. Good relations between the client and his advisor have always been the essence of high-quality banking and Hyposwiss Private Bank cherishes these values. We want to be faithful trustees who manage assets of our clients and who don’t gamble with their money. We know that in personal banking trust is a decisive factor.

SIEGFRIED PEYER RECOMMENDS

● **Culture** My favorite is the Rietberg, the only museum in Switzerland, which features art of Asia, Africa and Oceania. Villa



Bank of tradition

Hyposwiss Private Bank is a company which boasts over 120 years of tradition and a clear vision for the future. It specializes in private wealth management of individual customers, being a key pillar in this area for St. Galler Kantonalbank, which is one of the strongest banking groups of Switzerland. Hyposwiss Private Bank offers its customer their own investment strategies and financial instruments with a clear aim and unlimited access to the best investment products in the world. Many satisfied customers and the managed assets of 11.4 billion Swiss francs are the best proof how the strong position of the bank is.

Wesendonck, which is the main building of the museum is definitely worth visiting as is as the beautiful park which surrounds the place, but the real highlight are the exhibitions, which regularly attract me to visit the Rietberg. I encourage my foreign guests to see the collection of E.G. Bührle and visit the opera. Emil Georg Bührle (1890-1956) was a businessman from Zurich who gathered one of the largest private collections of works of art. Among them you can find the pieces by top notch painters such as Modigliani, Matisse, Cézanne, Picasso and Van Gogh. Zurich Opera, in turn, is one of the most prestigious opera scenes in Europe thanks to its original repertoire (including ballet performances).

● **Architecture** Enthusiasts of modern architecture will be happy to see here numerous masterpieces by world-famous Swiss architects. Some of the most interesting ones are Amtshäuser (office) designed by Gustav Gull, Stadelhofen Calatravy station, Corbusier Haus by lake Zurich, the Sihlcity mall, and obviously the trendy Züri-West

district with numerous shops hidden under the arches. Then you can go for a nice drink served at Nietturm Bar at Schiffbaustrasse.

● **Apollo Haus** The new offices of Hyposwiss Private Bank are located in a renowned building called Apollo Haus. It was designed by architect Theo Hotz, whose works can also be seen in the Sihlcity and many other places across the city. Apollo Haus has been awarded the title of a Friendly Building by the city of Zurich. Its special features, such as transparency, logical consistency and determination – can also be seen in all activities of Hyposwiss Private Bank.

● **Trips** There are also numerous places around Zurich which are worth visiting. Beautiful views extend from the top Uetliberg mountain which you conquer on a bike.

One of the examples of a long-lasting friendship between Poland and Switzerland is the Polish Museum in Rapperswil, which is most conveniently reached by boat from Bürkliplatz. The Polish Museum is located on a peninsula located on Lake Zurich in a 13th century castle overlooking Rapperswil. The place boasts over 140 years of tradition and has an exhibition presenting Polish culture and history, with artefacts associated with famous Poles such as Ignacy Paderewski or Maria Curie-Skłodowska.

● **Shopping** The best shops can be found in Bahnhofstrasse and Storchengasse. For those who look for unique souvenirs I recommend products which combine Swiss quality and luxury. Bankers are very fond of watches by Maurice de Mauriac, with details of each watch chosen according to the customer’s own taste. Fans of fast boats and a unique design should visit Boeschboote in Kilchberg and Pedrazzini in Bach, while chocolate lovers will definitely be interested in Lindt & Sprüngli outlet in Kilchberg.

● **Restaurants** I usually invite my friends to Il Giglio which, in my opinion, is the best „Italian” restaurant in Zurich. Italian dishes are prepared here according to original recipes with the freshest ingredients. All cooked and served in an especially pleasant atmosphere.

● **Hotels** Alden and Florhof are my favourite hotels. Alden Hotel Splügenschloss is a beautiful 5-star boutique hotel. The historic building was built in 1895. 8 years ago it was completely renovated and equipped with modern technology. It’s an extremely comfortable place. Romantik Hotel Florhof is located in a 16th century building which once was a house of a patrician. You must also visit the local restaurant, whose cooking personnel was awarded 14 Gault Millau points.

ZDJEĆA DZIĘKI UPRIEMOŚCI ZÜRICH TOURISMUS



THE AIRPORT WITH A LAGOON

Marco Polo in Venice is one of the most spectacularly located airports in the world. While landing there you can admire the city's skyline with the overwhelming Basilica of St. Mark, the dome of the church of Santa Maria delle Salute, and the winding Grand Canal of Venice.

To see Venice in all its glory, you have to admire it either from the side of the sea or from the air. There's an undeniable advantage to arriving there by plane – landing at Marco Polo airport, which is close to the city centre, provides you with an opportunity to see the whole city of Venice in miniature. It's very difficult to describe how impressive this sight is and when the weather is fine, among numerous monuments and unique palaces you may be able to see several tiny black dots – these are Venetian gondolas.

66,000 PLANES

The international airport, located just 12 miles north of the centre of Venice, lies in

Tessera on the mainland. It's just 15 minutes away from Venezia-Mestre motorway, and you can get there easily via a well-marked route SS14.

Each year over 66,000 aircraft land here, carrying over 7 million passengers. There's only one but large and spacious terminal with the arrivals hall located on the ground floor, while the first floor houses the departures hall, the check-in area, as well as numerous shops, bars and restaurants. The second floor houses offices and VIP rooms. It's worth noting that all services and facilities for passengers are available primarily on the ground and first floors. This popular and a truly beautiful airport

is served by more than 40 international airlines and 20 other operators.

GETTING TO THE CITY CENTRE

There are several ways to get the city centre from the airport. First of all, by taxi - a taxi rank is located at the entrance to the terminal. Such a trip to the centre of Venice takes around 20 minutes and costs about €20-25. You can also opt for a more luxurious transportation, as there are several limousine rental companies at the airport where you can rent a car with a driver.

A much less romantic option (but also much cheaper and still quite comfortable) is to take a trip to the city centre by ACTIV or ATVO buses which run frequently between

the airport and the most important spots in Venice. They stop at the nearby train station and at Piazzale Roma, from where water buses depart. ACTIV buses no. 4 and 5 reach the Roman Square, bus no. 15 runs to Marghera borough, while ATVO Venezia Air Terminal bus and ATVO Navetta Flybus run between Marco Polo Airport and Mestre underground station. The buses run every 20-30 minutes. The price of a ticket to the centre of Venice is about €2.50 and the journey takes approximately half an hour. Buses run also to other Italian cities and connect the airport with the coast of the

Adriatic. There are also free shuttle buses connecting the car parks, the terminal and the docks.

BY WATER AND AIR

Water transport is extremely popular in Venice, adding to the overall charm of the place. Passengers can leave Marco Polo airport by special water taxis and speedboats. Alilaguna runs to the Venetian docks as well as to islands of Lido and Murano and the tickets can be purchased in the arrivals hall. A trip to Murano will cost you €6.50, while a ticket to San Marco is twice as much. The motorboats are available around the clock. You can also choose to reach the centre by an ACTIV water bus which will cost you around €6.50 and will take from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

You can also rent a helicopter with a pilot and fly to virtually any place in the lagoon, provided that the pilot will find a place to land, and the trip won't be longer than 1,000 km. The helicopters fly at a speed of 250km/h, which means that a flight to the centre of Venice will take only a few minutes. This will, however, be the most expensive option – with prices around €99 per person. A trip to Lido will take approximately the same time. The helicopters also fly to Treviso, Vicenza and Padua.



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Official website of the airport:

www.veniceairport.it

All travel information and the airport can be obtained by phone at +39 041 2609260.

The airport Information Service Point is located in the departure area tel: +39 041 260 9260. The automatic information is available in the arrivals area tel: +39 0 41 260 9240 as well as in the departure area tel 39 0 41 260 9250.

Major carriers Venice Airport is served by such airlines as Aeroflot, Air Dolomiti, Air France, Aer Lingus, Alitalia, Alpi Eagles, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, British Midland, Czech Airlines, easyJet, Iberia, KLM, LOT, Lufthansa, Norwegian, Ryanair, SAS .

Car rental AutoEuropa, Avis, Budget, Easy Car, Europcar, Hertz, Travelcar.

Car parks Car parks at the airport are managed by Marco Polo Park company, tel: +39 041 5415913, e-mail: park@veniceairport.it.

Multi-storey car parks (P1 and P4) are located in front of the old terminal building, the outdoor park (P2) is situated at the back of the multi-level building complex. Short-term car parks (P5 and P6) are located in front of the new terminal and the lane for cars picking and delivering passengers to the airport. A long-term car park (P7) is located slightly further from the new terminal and can be reached by the airport shuttle bus.

Transportation Water taxis can be ordered by phone at +39 041 541 5084.

Motorboats are available around the clock. Tel: +39 04 1522 2303.

Limousines can be rented from the following companies: Air Service (tel. 049 8704425), Airport Transfer Service (tel. + 39 165 239 234), Associazione Noleggiatori Marco Polo (tel. 041 5346693), Belt System Srl Limousine (tel. + 39 041 9263 03), Blitz Exclusive Luciano di Cosmo & Co. (tel. 041 5227251), International Rent a Car (tel 041 5206565, 041 277058), Krono Snc (tel: 0438 403 123) or Limousine & Coach Company (tel: 041 5220884 .)

You can rent a helicopter with a pilot from HeliAir Venice which operates from the airport. Detailed information can be found at the company's website: www.heli-air.it or call +39 335 6833330.



PASTA AND PASSION

The Sicilians, the inventors of the dish, called it *maccaruni*. That's where the Polish term „*makaron*”, Portuguese „*macarrão*” or Turkish „*makarna*” come from. What's ironic in Italy, and most other countries, the term „*pasta*” is widely used - it probably comes from an Italian word '*pasto*', which means a meal. But it's also evidence for pasta's popularity.

Who invented pasta? It is said that the Chinese ate cooked dough in a form of threads already 4 thousand years ago in the area of Lajia. Then it first appeared in Europe in 1292 thanks to Marco Polo, but apparently he only preached to the converted, as pasta was already known to the ancient Romans and Greek. In the 5th century, dried noodles are mentioned in Talmud, while an Arabic scholar Al Idrisi wrote that the people of Sicily made threads from flour and water. It seems that, although the Chinese might have been the first, pasta was independently invented in Sicily as well. Either way, around 1000 pasta recipe was first published. The patriarch of Aquileia's cook first gave details on how to make pasta in his work „De arte Coquinaria per vermicelli e macaroni siciliani”. Since then, pasta have been gaining popularity all over Europe. Various types of pasta were mentioned in some monastery documents from 15th century, and in 16th Giordano Bruno also wrote about it. During that time the first pasta manufacturers guilds came into existence, As well as documents like "Rules for the Pasta-Masters' Art Corporation" issued in 1577 in Savona.

HOW DO YOU MAKE PASTA?

The Sicilian quickly realized that it is best made from a specific variety of flour - a hard wheat species. But to knead such dough you need to do it firmly. No wonder the product was called 'macaroni' which means 'requiring strength' in Sicilian dialect. The dough was kneaded with the feet which was so uncomfortable, that the King of Naples, Ferdinand II took interest in the problem and gave Cesar Spadaccini, an engineer, to construct a pasta machine.



Through many centuries, pasta was a meal in its own right. Only at the beginning of the 19th century some of the street merchants in the south of Italy started selling pasta with toppings, in order to be competitive.

NOT FATTENING AT ALL

The popular belief that pasta is fattening is absolutely undeserved. On average 100g of dry pasta has 330 calories - less than a single donut, and, what is more, you have to remember that after boiling, pasta triples in volume. Furthermore, pasta made from wholemeal wheat, boiled al dente is rich in fibre, and so easily digestible and very filling. It is because high content of

carbohydrates of high glycaemic index. It means that after eating it, the level of glucose in blood rises gradually, and remains for long, thanks to which you feel replete. 100g of dry pasta is enough to satisfy two hungry people. Therefore, it seems that the dieticians are right when they say the pasta alone is not fattening, it is the toppings - creamy sauces with meat and cheese - that is responsible for gaining weight.

HOW TO BUY PASTA?

Although pasta is suitable for long storage, it doesn't mean it can be stored forever. That's why you should not only check the expiry date, but also take a look at the product itself. The surface of pasta should be of the same colour, with no stains, and it shouldn't crumble easily. If there is a lot of crumble in the packet, it means the pasta was either improperly transported or - that it is old.

You should also check the list of ingredients. Semolina is flour made from durum wheat - the best and most healthy ingredient of pasta. It contains much gluten, thanks to which the pasta is firm and is not sticky after boiling. The pasta made from regular wheat may look more attractive (it has creamy colour) but it's easier to overcook.

Two-egg- and four-egg pasta indicates the number of eggs that were used to produce pasta from 1 kg of flour. While colourful pasta owes its colour to the dyes - usually herbal ones. Green pasta is made with by adding ground spinach, red colour is obtained thanks to beetroots, orange - thanks to carrot, and black - thanks to ink - a secretion of some cuttlefish species. Brown pasta is not dyed - the colour indicates it was made from rye flour.

Joanna Krzyckowska

Secrets of pasta boiling

1. You need one litre of water for every 100g of dry pasta, and a spoonful of oil. If you're boiling a big portion, you should increase the volume of water to vary in direct proportion, but you need only 3 spoonfuls of oil for 5 litres of water.
2. When the water starts boiling, slowly add the pasta, so that not to stop the boiling and stir in from time to time. When the water starts boiling again, add salt and turn down the flame.
3. Boil it, stirring twice or three times for as long it is stated on the package - the label usually gives boiling times for soft and al dente pasta.
4. Al dente (in Italian: to the bite) describes pasta cooked to be firm. It should be firm and offer resistance to the bite. If you have any doubts, you can cut the pasta to see what it looks like inside - the surface should be of the same colour, the inside shouldn't be undercooked.
5. If the pasta is to be served after cooled down, e.g. in salad, you should drain it, pour cold water onto it, stir it, and drain it again. Thanks to which, the boiling process is stopped and the pasta stayed al dente. It is also less sticky as a result.

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EASILY A MARVELLOUS WINE

Every big fish in the wine business we have talked to emphasized the importance of vineyards. The ability to sense the slightest changes in its mood. It also turns out that a superb wine is produced without much participation on the part of winemakers. And thus it irritates all those who devote much of their energy to produce their wines.



Nowadays, the holiday book market is flooded with novels about people who, fed up with their big city lives and the pursue for money, decide to make a big change. They chuck it all. They collect their savings to buy a house in Tuscany, set up a vineyard and after struggling to adapt to the close-to-nature lifestyle for a while, they start living a happy and peaceful life. They produce wine and eat cheese on their patio. Forgive me, but I have to remove the gilding off these stories. As long as it stays in the realm of literary fiction it's nothing bad, but, unfortunately, the lifestyles described in books are often copied in reality. Suddenly everybody wants to escape from the city life and make wine, for what can be simpler and more pleasurable. Not to mention, that the number of neglected but picturesque villas in Tuscany is rather limited, and couldn't accommodate all the newcomers from Europe and the US. The important thing is, wine production is a difficult and expensive process. You can't learn it reading an instruction book on your flight to Florence. And after you've produced wine, you need to sell it, which is nearly as hard. Unless you've got money to burn and can afford getting rid of the wine or giving it away to friends or family - if it's of any decent quality.

Everyone who has ever been to a vineyard, or seen it on TV, must have been impressed by all the complicated machines and processes intended to change grape juice into wine. Especially that many producers keep their techniques under wraps in the spacious vineyards surrounding their residences. Yet the very wine making process, although very complicated, is very natural, and the whole point of all this technology is only to have a control over it. But you need to be a real genius working in the vineyard, especially that here, you can't rely on the technology that much. Here, you need intuition and something I call cross-species empathy. The qualities you cannot buy - you either have it, or learn to develop it for the most of your life.

Dedication Without it, all you can get is a mediocre or decent wine, but nothing more sophisticated. Almost never...

LAGGING BEHIND

When I look through the travel agency websites desperately trying to sell me a trip to one of the Greek islands, I always think about what is there to drink. But after I while I realize that once you get satiated with simple, local cuisine, aromatic fried squids and not too appetizing, but equally aromatic tomatoes, and would like to have a glass of good wine, it quickly dawns on you, that the country that once was a cradle of wine, has barely anything to offer nowadays. The wine you get is mostly anonymous. Served in copper goblet, often bland and too obviously alcoholic. Single bottles which make their way to seaside tavern menus are usually produced by large manufacturers and can't offer you more than acceptable decency. How this came to be that the culture, which once used to paint grapes on amphorae and whose mythology the word 'wine' is mentioned nearly as often as the name of Zeus, today has nothing to boast about? Is resin-flavoured Retsina all that you can expect when going on a Greek holiday?

What's typical, I managed to find an outstanding Greek wine outside Greece, when taking part in an international wine tasting event presenting the best wines from the Mediterranean area. That's how I heard about a Crete wine, which supposedly surpass all the other wines we tasted, including the legendary Chateau Musar from Lebanon. After going through all my sources and contacts,

The important thing is, wine production is a difficult and expensive process. You can't learn it reading an instruction book on your flight to Florence.

I managed to get a phone number to Yanis Economou, who produces "Sitia" wine in the eastern Crete mountains. And as I prefer experiencing Greek culture - especially that of the islands - that talking about wine over the phone, I decided to visit him.

POSTER-PAINTED MONET

The vineyards in Crete - except those belonging to large manufacturers - are very different from those in Italy or France. They resemble a raspberry brush rather than tidy and well-kept vineyards in Burgundy. No poles, no trimming, no grass mowing.

As we were getting closer to the village, where Yanis lived, I was looking out for a vineyard that would stick out from the other ones. All in vain. Looking at Yanis' house, you would also never tell that he was making wine of superb quality. Simple house white-washed with lime, huge and cosy veranda, a few barrels scattered around the yard. What made me expect something more was Yanis himself. He's very clever, unpretentious and natural, despite his mature and reserved perspective. The wines he gave me to taste were splendid. Not only because were old (Yanis starts distributing his wine only after he decides they are ready, which sometimes takes up even a decade), as that's not enough. I expected a very concentrated low-acidity wine, resembling preserve in character, like in the Spanish Priorat. I couldn't have been more wrong. Sitia turned out to be ethereal with an aroma of liquorice, the wild rose and an old smoking chamber. At first, it resembled very mature Barolo - wine from Piedmont, Italy - whose name, the wine enthusiasts pronounce with great deal of respect and awe, while here in this deserted part of an island, they have a wine, that could easily compete with the Italian product, adding much of its own smoky, mineral and turf matter. And all this is achieved in outwork conditions, with little effort and costs. Fermentation tanks were carelessly placed all over the basement. Its size was determined by the height of the

room, there were no machines, no laboratories - all the work was done by the owner himself. It would seem that, the secret to the superb quality of Yanis' wines is the vineyard - which would be in line with the idea of legendary winemakers - but no. The vineyard is nothing more than thick bushes surrounded with a rusty fence. The owner struggled with the entrance explaining that's why he hadn't visited the vineyard for quite a while. Apparently in Crete, the conditions are perfect for wine growing, which requires virtually no interference of the part of wine makers. The owner struggled with the entrance explaining that's why he hadn't visited the vineyard for quite a while. Apparently in Crete, the conditions are perfect for wine growing, which requires virtually no interference of the part of wine makers. At first, he experimented with a planting system he used while working in Piedmont or Bordeaux, but there was no point. What looks like thick bushes, perfectly fulfils its role: they keep the humidity in the ground and thus protect the grapes from the scorching sun in the summer. The soil and conditions are so poor, that the plant grows rather slowly, and does not require trimming, and the number of fruit is naturally small, which enables better concentration of sugars and aromas. Vinification is only an indispensable process, which enables the wine to show its character. And so Yanis Economou produces wine, which can compete with legendary European wines, but it just doesn't even feel like trying. However, it's a shame that even in Crete it's incredibly difficult to buy "Sitia". For a while you might feel disappointment that such exceptional wine is hidden amongst the hills and purple dust, but after some time I smile to myself thinking that stories like this one only promote this electrifying feeling that not everything needs to be promoted and conquer the markets all over the world. There are geniuses, who will engage in peeling potatoes while sitting at home, and the world will never hear of them. Very well then.



A LUGGAGE BOX ON WHEELS

A typical saloon car has certain drawbacks. It may have a spacious boot, but it's really hard to load anything there. That's why, estate cars were invented - cars which boast ultimate functionality.

A popular set of stereotypes about estate cars is that they are ugly, boring, suit only sales representatives, and handle like a tank. At least, that's what we thought of them merely 10-15 years ago. Luckily, it has changed recently. Estate cars have become more elegant and equipment-wise they lack nothing when compared to limousines. Nothing, except for the trunk, which changes the perspective of each driver, because an estate will hold any load.

THE LOWEST SHELF

Renault knows how to cut costs. Several years ago someone in the French company came up with an idea that proven technologies and components (not necessarily the most modern ones) are more than enough to build cars at a more affordable price. What does it exactly mean? Roughly speaking Renault engineers did a thorough inventory in their warehouses, and basing on those scraps decided to create an entirely new brand - that is Dacia.

The idea was controversial and widely criticized, but Logan – the very first model of dacia produced in the "new era" - somehow

became a market hit. Other Dacia models also followed the same scenario. Western Europe has warmly received the seven-seat Logan, the hatchback named Sandero, as well as the SUV called Duster. Another new model by Renault-Dacia is the Lodgy. Formally, the car is called a microvan, but in fact it's just a clever trick of marketing specialists, because Lodgy is just an overgrown estate. What will be the chief asset of this car? The technical details haven't yet been disclosed, but we know that Lodgy will be inexpensive, have a simple construction and will be able to seat up to 7 people! The car will be produced in Morocco, so it's a slight exaggeration to say that Dacia is a strictly Romanian make.

IN STYLE

Each body style of Mini is a real designer piece. You may not believe it, but it's true. Minis have always stood out of the crowd, especially as regards style, attention to details and the quality of build. Mini Countryman is no different in this aspect. It's a small, city estate (though some call it a SUV), seats 4 passengers and has 350 litres luggage space. In place of a conventional centre console be-

tween the seats, the MINI Countryman is fitted with an innovative rail system. The unique MINI Centre Rail allows personal items to be kept within easy reach at all times. Added to which, it creates a visual and functional link between the front and rear compartments. The car has all-wheel drive, low centre of gravity, and (for variety) a slightly raised suspension. It's suitable for any regular road, but it also handles surprisingly well off the beaten track.

NOT SO CASUAL

At first it may seem to you that the white car in the photos is just an ordinary Skoda Octavia. Well, you are wrong. The body has indeed been adapted from the typical version powered by internal combustion engines, but the components hidden underneath are utterly different, because this Skoda is an electric car. So far only a few of them have been produced and it's impossible to buy them, because the Czechs first want to test the car thoroughly before it enters mass production. Octavia Green E-line is the first such model made by the manufacturer based in Mlada Boleslav. Can you imagine? This is the first green estate car



Estate cars have become more elegant and equipment-wise they lack nothing when compared to limousines. Except for the capacity of the boot.



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Mini Countryman is an urban designer estate, while Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon is a real spitfire, which tempts you to put the pedal to the metal.



which will produce zero carbon emission and was made by our southern neighbours! "Green E-line" has about 120 BHP, 270 Nm of torque and the range of about 150 km with fully charged battery. It may not be suitable on larger trips, but seems ideal for the city, because electricity is much cheaper than petrol. The only drawback may be its low maximum speed. The manufacturer reports that the Skoda reaches only 135 km/h. Well, they sure need to work on it, since even the speed limit on Polish motorways is 140 km/h...

THE AMERICAN ATHLETE

Americans like extreme vehicles. That's why cars produced in the U.S. are not only large and well equipped, but also - paradoxically - very powerful. This is somewhat surprising, because American highway patrols are extremely efficient in catching and punishing reckless drivers. Therefore, a vast majority of US motorists drive within speed limits and even on highways they don't exceed 60-75 miles per hour. However, Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon is a real "spitfire" which almost provokes you to drive it much faster.

The estate "made in the USA" has an 8-cylindre, 6.2-litre engine under its bonnet, which produces 556 BHP! Add to this the boot which has 720-litre luggage capacity. That's more than the largest European estate based on Mercedes E-Class!

ESTATE FOR DEMANDING DRIVERS

Finally, an important question: what should you do when you wish to combine the pleasure of driving a sports car with the functionality of an estate? In theory, those two can't go together. In the past we saw some examples of estate cars with higher performance (e.g. Audi RS6), but so-called shooting brakes seem to be even better. Shooting brakes are vehicles which combine features of an estate and a coupé. Such quasi-estates can reach the speed of even 250 km/h.

Such cars have been produced by Ferrari (FF - the first Ferrari model that seats 4 people and has all-wheel drive), Bentley (custom made by Italian company Carozzeria Touring Leggera), and even Mercedes. The automaker from Stuttgart built only a prototype, but the German CLS Shooting Brake is one of the most beautiful estates made in the recent years. Do you play golf? The car is roomy enough to hold your set of clubs, and the balls can be stored in the rear wheel fairings. Nice, isn't it?

Rafał Jemielita,
is a journalist for Playboy magazine,
and a co-magazine Automaniak
on TVN Turbo

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GADGETS FOR EURO 2012

Will the upcoming Euro 2012 contribute to the development of technology?
The answer is yes! Here are some examples to prove this bold assertion.

E-Cicero never gets tired or bored. On your request it will sing, play a film, and even tell the same exciting story many times in several languages . In May, tourists choosing to visit Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań or Wrocław will be able to take advantage of its assistance. This 7-inch tablet which ideally fits in the hand, is a real guide, companion and a storyteller able to show tourists around the city they are visiting.

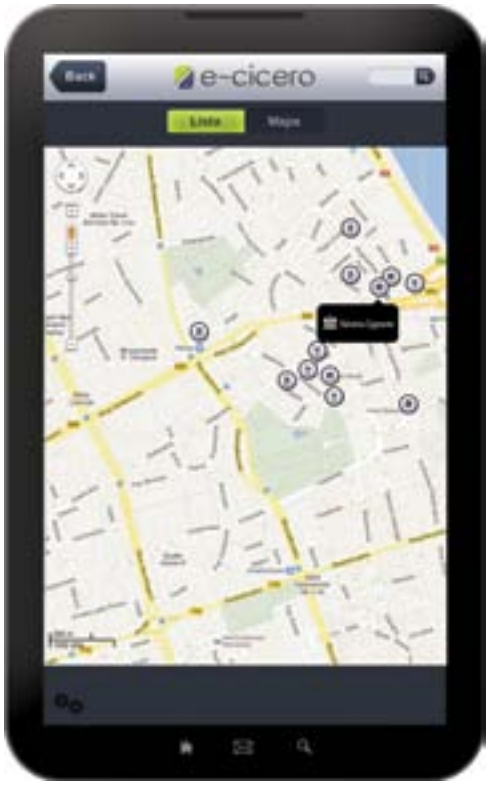
THE REAL OR VIRTUAL WORLD?

The new guide is a device equipped with a GPS module thanks to which it knows cities inside out. It will readily share its knowledge with anyone who decides to buy it. To

learn more about a city's picturesque nooks, unusual buildings, traces of its former glory as well as its innovative solutions, facts, gossip and legends, simply touch the display of the device and set off on a trip along a narrow path separating two worlds: the real one (what on your right and left) and virtual one (what in the past and in the future). The electronic guide takes care of every detail, recommends several touring routes, and those who value freedom and individualism can use it to help them create their own route. It also communicates with you in your native language, even if it's as exotic as Chinese. Those who prefer to focus on admiring the views rather than reading, can listen to the audio version of the guidebook.

TEASING YOUR SENSES

E-Cicero encourages you to explore the city at your own pace, adding to the plain text such media as video, photography or a piece of music. It will often tease your senses, drawing your attention to the finest details, distinctive sounds, as well as special flavours and aromas of dishes served at restaurants which are well known for their delicious specialties. Thanks to the Internet connection, it will provide comprehensive information to even the most inquisitive users. It will also allow you to send electronic greeting cards and share your experiences with friends on social networking sites and blogs. Too good to be true? Not at all! In May this mobile guide will be waiting for visitors to the largest Pol-



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ish cities in selected hotels. You will also be able to order it online. You can rent e-cicero for as little as €20 euros a day.

SIGHTSEEING ON THE SCREEN

The mobile tourist guide, e-cicero features:

- 7-inch capacitive screen with resolution of 800 x 480 pixels
- Qualcomm MSM7227 processor
- 4GB microSD memory card included in the set
- 3G module
- Wi-Fi 802.11 b/ g
- GPS
- microUSB connector, MSC, microSD slot
- built-in webcam, speaker, and microphone,
- accelerometer
- Bluetooth
- Android 2.3 Gingerbread operating system

Dimensions: 192 x 118 x 14.1 mm, weight: 490 grams.

STREET VIEW FOR POLAND

In connection with the upcoming Euro 2012, Google has decided to launch Street View service for Poland. Thanks to panoramic photographs, Internet users around

the world can now visit attractive tourist places around Poland, seeing them on their computers from a pedestrian's perspective. The Street View photos are available for most of the streets of Gdańsk, Poznań, Warsaw and Wrocław, that is the cities that will host the 2012 UEFA European Football Championship. You can also view the panoramas of Cracow and Łódź, as well as photos of tourist attractions across Poland, such as Hel peninsula, Chocłowska Valley, Malbork Castle, Graduation Towers in Ciechocinek, or Gdańsk Shipyard.

HOW DOES GOOGLE DO IT?

Street View images of places appear after zooming in beyond the highest zooming level in maps and satellite images, and also by dragging a "pegman" icon onto a location on a map. Thanks to the technology of combining images into a 360 degree panorama, you can look around or move along the street, admiring the view, just as you would see them while walking. In this way you can not only satisfy your curiosity, but also easily check the location of a restaurant, set a meeting spot, explore the area around a hotel we wish to book, learn the directions to your destina-

tion, or find tourist attractions in the area. Street View is also an extremely practical tool for Polish companies. Businesspeople can take advantage of the technology by placing the Street View Google Maps for free directly on their website, showing the view of their hotel, shop or restaurant.

PRIVACY

Preparing Street View is a huge logistical and technological undertaking. Photos are taken by cameras on cars moving along public roads and they don't differ from photos that can be done while going down the street. In case of special sites, such as selected tourist attractions, photos are taken based on individual arrangements, by means of three-wheeled bicycle. Google representatives assured at a press conference that the company makes every effort to protect privacy of individuals and it always consults local institutions regarding privacy protection in a given country. That's why faces of pedestrians and vehicle number plates in the pictures are blurred. Users can also easily identify images that for some reason they consider inappropriate by clicking "Feedback" button in the lower left corner of each picture.

4 HOURS IN... BEIJING

There are numerous reasons why you should go to Beijing, says Marzena Mróz. Apart from fascinating monuments from the ancient times, you will also see here modern skyscrapers, and the city itself is becoming a capital of the world.



It seems this dynamic metropolis never gets to sleep. The 18mln citizens go out on the wide streets of Beijing, which stay busy until the late evening hours. China changes its image and the capital undergoes the most dynamic transformation. The ancient buildings, the symbols of Middle Kingdom, seem to uphold the status quo.

TIANANMEN SQUARE - GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE

A symbolic place for both the locals and the tourists. This is a central spot in the city, where the most important events take place. Every tourists wants to see the huge - 880x500m - Tiananmen Square - the place of a tragic students massacre in 1989, Mausoleum of Mao Zedong and National Museum of China. The locals always fly kites here during the Spring Festival.

Under the rule of Ming and Qing dynasties, there were mostly official buildings, and the square was available only for a limited group of dignitaries. After the II World War, when the communists rose to power, the buildings of former imperial buildings were destroyed, and the streets on both sides of the square were widened and changed into one-way streets.

Tiananmen is surrounded with monumental buildings - the seat of the most important institutions. To the north there is Tiananmen Tower, from which the huge image of Mao Zedong have observed the passers-by for many years.

Gate of Heavenly Peace and National Museum of China can be visited daily from 8.30am - 4.30pm, and Mausoleum of Mao Zedong from 8.00am - 11.30am.

GUGONG - THE FORBIDDEN CITY

With its 999 chambers it is considered the world's biggest palace. It is a former seat of Ming and Qing dynasties, built by 100 thousand of artists, craftsmen and a million of workers. The gigantic palace complex

was designed in line with the cosmological theory believed in by the Chinese - the North-South and East-West axis are clearly visible. To be able to have a glance at all the complex, you would need to spend a whole day in the Forbidden city.

if you have less time than that, you should focus on its southern part, where there are a few beautiful buildings like the Hall of Supreme Harmony or The Hall of Preserving Harmony. Between them there is a river called Inner Golden Water, which you can cross by means of five bridges covered with ornaments depicting dragons and phoenixes. Remember to take a look at a marble bas-relief depicting nine dragons playing with a pearl. It is the biggest stone sculpture in the whole of the Forbidden City, and under the rule of Ming and Qing dynasties anyone who dared to even touch the stone, was sentenced to death.

If have time to spare, you should also visit Imperial Garden with Hall of Mental Cultivation protected by two golden unicorns, where there are two 400-years-old pine trees, which symbolize unity between the emperor and his wife.

The Forbidden City can be visited between 8.30am - 5.00pm. The ticket allows you to see all the buildings and gardens.

Where to go

Hotel Beijing Asia Hotel, 8 Xi Xinzhong Xijie Dongcheng District, tel +86 10 65007788

Restaurant XIHEYAJU Restaurant, the northern corner of Ri Tan Park Chao Yang, tel +86 10 85617643, www.xhyj.net

Cafe The Blue Lotus Cafe, 11 Qianhai Beiyan, Xicheng District, tel:+ 86 10 66182542

Teahouse Wufu Teahouse, Budynek B, COFCO Plaza 8 Jianguomennei Dajie, Dongcheng District, tel +86 1064041928

Performances Beijing Peking Opera Theatre, 30 Haihu Xili, Fengtai District, tel +86 10 67248222

Flea market The flea market of Panjiayuan Qiao, Chaoyang District

TIAN TAN

- THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN

It is the most important and most beautiful temple in Beijing, situated outside the Inner City. You should start visiting from the southern part, to see not only a blue-red-white building resembling a teapot, but also places considered by the Chinese to be the middle of the world, the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests or an acoustic spot called the

Echo Wall. The temple, intended to combine the Heaven and the Earth, represented by a square and a circle, was completed in 1420. It was believed that when the emperor entered it, he became the Son of Heaven, and had a right to ask for good harvest. It is best to visit it in the morning. It is because then you can see the citizens going out for a walk with... caged birds, observed those learning tai chi, or listen to some old romantic songs sung by the passers-by.

LIULICHANG STREET

Under the rule of Yuan and Ming dynasties, there was a tile factory, which were used for decorating palaces and temples. Under Qing dynasty, merchants used to sell old books and knick-knacks here. Today Liulichang is a place, where you can buy old and new china, calligraphed paintings, Buddha figures, jewellery or - considered the so called "Four Treasures of the Study" - a brush, ink stick, ink stone and paper. You should also go to Rongbaozhai bookstore, where you can buy both original or dittos of calligraphy volumes. You also need to spend some time in one of the tea houses and savour the ceremony of choosing, brewing and drinking the favourite drink of the Chinese - green tea.



China changes its image and the capital undergoes the most dynamic transformation. On the other hand, the ancient buildings, the symbols of Middle Kingdom, seem to uphold the status quo.



ASK PETER

Letters

Piotr Kalita is related with air transport market for almost 20 years.

He is specializing in corporate and diplomatic travel segment. Have a question? - ask Piotr.

Mail your question to: redakcja@businesstraveller.pl

Why are low-cost airlines so cheap?

What's behind the 'low-cost airline' name? My boss rarely travels. Recently, he has asked me to check the prices of no-frills airlines, as apparently a plane ticket cost there only 1PLN. Why are these airlines cheaper? Are they safe?

Marta

Dear Marta,

In Poland we refer to such airlines as „cheap airlines”, but it would be more appropriate to call them „low cost carriers”. By default, such airlines practise low-cost business model. It allows them for more dramatic changes in plane tickets when a flight is fully booked.

The cost might be reduced in various ways. Low cost carriers have only one type of airplane, thanks to which they don't have to invest in maintaining technical support base. The airplanes don't go to the main airports in a given city, but to minor ones, away from the city centre. As a result airport fees are much lower. Another thing is that you can't buy low budget plane tickets via traditional booking systems. They are available only through the website of a particular carrier, which lowers the distribution costs. Airport check-in is charged extra, but you can also check-in online for free. The luggage limit is also smaller, and each additional kilogram is charged extra. During the flights no free meals, drinks or newspapers are offered, but you can have them if you pay. Low-cost carriers are aimed mostly at tourists, so they don't have business class in their planes. The widely advertise tickets for 1PLN are a thing of the past now, but you can get nice special offers if you book a ticket in advance.

You shouldn't worry about safety though, as all the planes and carriers need to comply with strict regulations in order to get the aviation certificate. Civil Aviation Office doesn't divide airlines into low-budget and traditional ones. The passengers have exactly the same rights in case of overbooking, flight cancellation or delay.

What are the jet-lag-related problems?

I'm organizing a training for the accountants from foreign offices in my company. There are some people coming from the US and China. They asked for a shorter lecture on the first day, because of jet lag. Is it really such a big problem?

Anna

Dear Anna,

This subjects comes up regularly in the questions I get from the readers. Although not a medical condition, jet-lag causes considerable discomfort for the travellers. During long-haul flights, when crossing many time zones, our biological clock isn't able to adjust to the new time zone instantly. Generally travelling from east to west, when the day is getting longer are less tiring in this respect. It is much worse, though, if we travel the other way round, and we lose one night.

There are various symptoms of jet-lag. The most common ones include: tiredness, sleeping disorder, irritation, distraction, headaches, or digestive problems. Naturally, these symptoms remit after a few days.

In order to minimize the symptoms, you need to be well-prepared for the journey. First of all, even a few days before departure, you should start changing your waking-up and bed times. The same goes with the times you eat. This way, you will enable your organism to slowly adjust to the time zone change. On board try to avoid stodgy food and alcohol. Coffee drinking will keep you awake and might dehydrate you, and so is also to be avoided. It's better to drink still water and juice. You should adjust your watch to the new time as well. After reaching your destination, you'd also better switch to the local time yourself - especially when it comes to food times and sleep. Being outside and exposure to the daylight helps a lot to succeed in it. Those who take medicines at a specific time (like diabetic people) should consult the time zone change with their doctors. You should also consult if it is necessary to take sleep regulating medicines.

The training participants may suffer from the consequences of jet-lag after a long journey. That's why if it's possible, you should take into account their request to have shorter lectures on the first day.

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