

Business Traveller Poland

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TOP 10 HOTEL GYMS

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HOLIDAYS IN THE HOTEL AND AT THE AIRPORT

Not everyone associates summer with relaxation on the beach, trekking in the mountains or a sea expedition. For a lot of us – business responsibilities are of utmost importance. That is why, we have prepared the summer issue of Business Traveller mainly for those who will spend the next few months travelling – especially for business. We have selected for you 10 top hotels with best fitness centres, which stand out from the rest with modern equipment, professional service, design, and a view from the windows, which is not without significance for those who are constantly on the go. The hotels include Four Seasons Canary Wharf in London, which was a location for James Bond “Skyfall” movie, a giant 6,000 sq m sports, wellness and adventure centre of Kerry Hotel Pudong in Shanghai with its ten-metre-high floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Century Park, a fitness facility of The Landmar Mandarin Oriental in Hong Kong, as well as Hilton in Warsaw. In our opinion, there is no better way to beat jet lag than a hardcore cardio session. For those who will spend a lot of their summer holidays at airports, we have an article on the new Terminal 2 at London Heathrow, which was opened in June by Queen Elizabeth II herself. We also explore Madrid at express pace, and invite you for a weekend to Rio de Janeiro and Mexico. I wish you wonderful holidays. Enjoy your reading.



Marzena Mróz

Marzena Mróz
Editor-in-Chief



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TUSZE, TONERY



Hotel

Radisson Blu

RENOVATED RADISSON BLU HOTEL KRAKOW

The first stage of renovation work at Radisson Blu Hotel Krakow has been completed. The new interior design has been applied to refurbished conference rooms, foyer, as well as guest rooms on four of the six floors of the hotel.

Radisson Blue Hotel Krakow has always followed the latest trends and takes utmost care for the comfort and convenience of its guests. The new rooms, which have been designed in two colour styles (City and Modern), are now a perfect place to rest, and offer appropriate working space. All rooms have now LCD TVs with a user-friendly in-room entertainment providing information about the hotel and its facilities, restaurants, meeting rooms, the Beauty Studio, as well as other info related to their travel and stay.

Radisson Blu Hotel Krakow offers 196 rooms, including those with views of the Planty Park, the Main Square, and Wawel Castle. Apart from the rooms located on the four floors, the renovation work also included complete refurbishment of the conference floor with its spacious foyer and eight conference rooms. The space has new carpeting, and walls in some of the rooms are now covered with a special washable paint. This enables meeting organizers to use the walls for writing, which promotes creative work. The new conference floor along with the unique Experience Meetings concept is an excellent solution for those looking for the right venue for a conference, a show, or a business meeting.

In the near future the hotel plans to renovate the other floors, as well as refurbish the lobby of Salt & Co bar and Solfeż restaurant.

Premiere

Book

BACK TO MAJORCA

Life without a man is, of course, possible, can be enjoyable and it's worth it to give it a try, but why not intertwine it with affairs, marriages, or at least dating? "Back to Majorca" is the second (after "The Year in Majorca") novel about the adventures of Magda, an architect who is trying to sort out her life again. It's been four books years since we parted with the main character, who at the time has turned forty, but still is full of life and energy.



After several months of idyllic life in Poland, alongside her beloved Marek, Magda begins to long for the hot beaches of Majorca. In addition, it turns out that her friends need help. Ivanka, who has stayed on the island to watch over their business, is having love-related problems and can't concentrate on running the café, while Paco dreams of meeting a sexy lady from the Eastern Europe. Magda rushes to help her Majorcan friends... and herself. The very first sunrays evoke warm memories. What's more, the distant Warsaw with long-ing Marek seems even more remote thanks to a very alluring blond guy...



Airline

Air France

BY AIRBUS TO HONG KONG

During the summer 2014 season, Air France will serve Hong Kong with a daily flight, operated by the largest passenger aircraft-Airbus A380. The modern machines dubbed "superjumbo" can seat up to 516 passengers. Hong Kong is the second destination in China for the French carrier served by the A380 after Shanghai.

From 23 June to 25 October the Paris-Hong Kong flight will be operated daily only by the A380 aircraft. Flight AF188 leaves Paris Charles de Gaulle at 11.25 pm and arrives in Hong Kong at 5.20 pm local time the following day. Return service AF187 departs Hong Kong at 00.50 am and arrives at Paris CDG at 8.00 am local time the same day.

The impressive size of the aircraft will provide travellers with very high comfort of travel. The passenger cabin is a truly cosy space. High performance and the aerodynamic shape of the aircraft allowed to reduce noise level by 50% compared to the standard aircraft. "Superjumbo" is presently the quietest machine in its class. This contributes to soothing atmosphere on board, which helps passengers rest and unwind during the flight.

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Fashion

Betelli.pl

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Airline

Qatar Airways

TWICE DAILY TO TOKYO

Qatar Airways is fully ready for further expansion in the Far East. On 18 June the carrier began regular flights to Tokyo's Haneda Airport (HND). The connection is operated by Boeing 787 Dreamliner, and the number of the airline's flight to Tokyo has increased to two daily.

Haneda International Airport is one of the two major airports that serve the Greater Tokyo area. In 2012, Haneda was the second busiest airport in Asia with more than 66 million passengers.

"The airline has pursued aggressive growth in the Asian market to cater to the demand of our business and leisure passengers," said Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker.

"Haneda is a key gateway into the city of Tokyo that will offer passengers a second option to arrive into making it more convenient."



Airline

Finnair

NEW FLIGHTS

This summer Finnair will open new routes to Samara, Kazan and Nizhny Novgorod, three prominent and historic regional centres on the Volga River in the Russian Federation. Services to Nizhny Novgorod International Airport (airport code GOJ) begin from July 25, while Samara's Kurumoch International Airport (KUF) is served from August 7 and Kazan International Airport (KZN) from August 18. Flights run three times per week. Timetables for the routes connect well with flights to various European destinations. "Our new routes and frequencies will help meet demand for outbound Russian travel not only to Finland, but to other destinations throughout Finnair's European network thanks to our compact and efficient hub in Helsinki", says Juhani Nuoramo, Finnair's Sales Director for Europe East. "All three destinations have excellent connections from Warsaw. We hope the new routes prompt also Polish and other Europeans travellers to discover three historic cities on the Volga, each growing in commercial importance", Nuoramo continues.

Airline

SilkAir

MANDALAY - A NEW CHAPTER

SilkAir is one of the most popular carriers in Asia. Marking a new chapter in SilkAir's history, the regional wing of Singapore Airlines saw its inaugural flight to Mandalay, Myanmar depart on 10 June at 11,35 am, from Singapore Changi Airport. The flight arrived at Mandalay International Airport at 3 pm local time. The return flight departed at 4.35 pm and landed in Singapore at 9.30 pm (all times local). Mandalay is SilkAir's second destination in Myanmar after Yangon, increasing the number of destinations in SilkAir's route network to 47 in 12 countries.

Flights to Mandalay are operated on a thrice weekly basis, through a circular routing with Yangon, departing Singapore on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The flights are operated by Airbus A319 and A320 aircraft, featuring both Business and Economy Class cabins.

The second-largest city in Myanmar today, Mandalay has remained throughout its history the capital of culture and religion of the country. The city can also be used as the gateway to the ancient city of Bagan, one of the world's greatest archaeological sites, as well as to the picturesque Inle Lake.

In celebration of this special occasion, customers travelling on the inaugural flight from Singapore received miniature replicas of the traditional Burmese boat-shaped harp as well as inaugural flight certificates personally signed by Chief Executive SilkAir, Mr. Leslie Thng, and the flight commander. Mr. Thng said: "As Myanmar continues to open up, we see significant potential for air travel to the country. We have seen increased demand for both leisure and business travel to Myanmar over the past few years and are excited to be developing this new market."

The new service will connect Mandalay with the joint Singapore Airlines – SilkAir network of over 90 cities worldwide via the Singapore hub.



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Airline

Lufthansa

LUFTHANSA FIRST CLASS DUCK IN WORLD CUP OUTFIT

In honour of the World Cup in Brazil, this year the Lufthansa duck will be wearing a green jersey and headband and carrying a football in its arm. "I've slipped into many costumes during my long career as a Lufthansa mascot, but the jersey is one of my highlights. As a big football fan, there's no chance I'll miss a single match and I'll be rooting for Jogi's boys!" says the duck confidently.

For ten years, guests in the bathing and spa areas of the Frankfurt First Class Terminal have been greeted by a rubber duck. "Back then, we wanted to accentuate the sophisticated ambience of the newly opened terminal with an eye-catching detail," explains Jörg Holtschneider, Head of First Class and VIP Services in Frankfurt. The rubber duck with the Lufthansa logo has since gone on to become an exclusive collectable, he adds. "We didn't expect there to be so much hype over it," says Holtschneider. In the meantime, the rubber duck has also found a home in the First Class Lounges in Frankfurt and Munich.

To date, around 25 special editions have been brought out – with a diverse range of costumes, including the traditional garb duck for Munich's Oktoberfest, the spa duck complete with cucumber mask, and even the Easter duck. "These special editions are naturally in hot demand," explains Holtschneider. So which of the costumes was the duck's own favourite? "My dirndl for Oktoberfest was definitely an eye-catcher – popular among duck fans worldwide. But the football kit looks very good on me too."

The First Class Terminal offers its guests exceptional service – apart from the personal assistant and a valet parking service, a cigar lounge is also available for First Class passengers. For many people, however, there is – and always will be – only one true highlight: the little yellow rubber duck. And since guests are free to take the duck with them, the good mood created by the mascot in the First Class Terminal can be enjoyed by them at home in their own bathtubs. Indeed, many First Class passengers do just that, with the result that around 12,000 ducks become fledglings every year and leave the Lufthansa nest.

The popular collectables are not available for purchase. "However, an exclusive king duck can be won via the First Class Terminal's Twitter account (@Lufthansa_FCT)," says Holtschneider. As well as numerous competitions, a promotion has now been launched, allowing visitors to send photos with the duck to the FCT. "And it goes without saying that I personally comment on every tweet," reveals the mascot proudly. The duck will be available in its green jersey in time for the start of the World Cup this month.

Tourism

Austria

BREGENZ FESTIVAL

Performances given in the open air at the Bregenzer Festspiele leave a lasting impression not only because of the music. Mood is also created by Lake Constance itself. In 2008, the scenery prepared to Puccini's "Tosca" was also used as a filming location for one of James Bond movies. It's here where in "Quantum of Solace" James Bond confronts his enemy. This year from 23 July to 25 August the floating stage will be the venue for the performance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute". More information at www.bregenzerfestspiele.com



HIKING WITH HUSKY DOGS

Vorarlberg is the perfect place for a family. Its mountains, forests, rustic atmosphere, thematic paths, playgrounds, rope courses, museums and many other attractions will satisfy both young and older holidaymakers. The "Trapper's Day" organized in Brand valley for kids, is a good opportunity to spend an interesting day in the company of other parents and... dogs. Anton Kuttner, better known as "Toni-Husky" invites you to a family hike with husky dogs. More information at www.husky-toni.at



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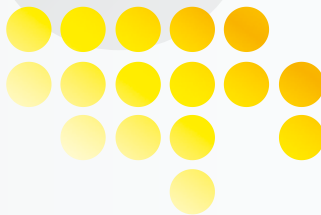
Good journey is like a good suit - it must fit perfectly to your individual needs and preferences. The newly established LOT Travel is, indeed, such a personal travel agency. With its help a customer can choose a convenient flight, class, transfer, hotel and the sightseeing programme without browsing dozens of websites. It's all there in one place, at lottravel.com. Simply fill out a short form, and the rest will be taken care of by consultants of LOT Travel.

"Yes, it's faster, easier, and cheaper! Our consultants have necessary knowledge and access to all the necessary booking tools," says David Garcia, the President of LOT Travel. "Our cooperation with LOT Polish Airlines only makes our offer more attractive, as we are able to guarantee competitive prices for flights and best on-board service regardless of travel class," he adds. Travel packages include everything you need - from booking air ticket, hotel transfers or train tickets, to booking accommodation in a hotel of your choice, as well as admission tickets to tourist attractions.

At the website of the company you will find a number of travel inspirations – from trips overseas to shopping in Madrid.

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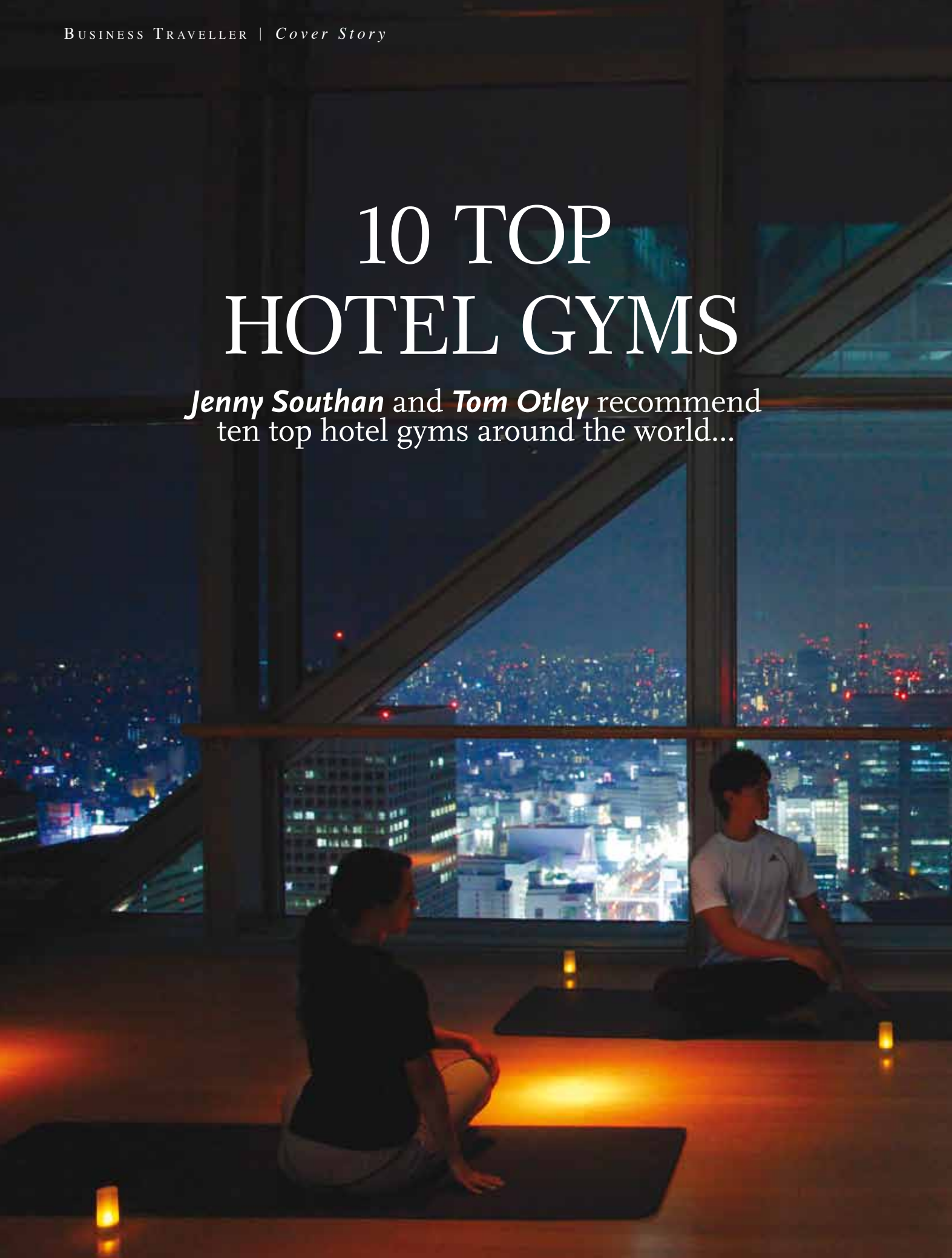
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BIOCODEX

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10 TOP HOTEL GYMS

Jenny Southan and *Tom Otley* recommend
ten top hotel gyms around the world...





When travelling, finding the time and motivation to work on your fitness can be tough. The change in routine, lack of sleep and packed itineraries are just a few of the hurdles that can keep us from the gym, but there is nothing worse than actually going to the effort of putting on your shorts and trainers, only to find the “fitness centre” is a depressing room in the basement with no natural light and a couple of old treadmills. However, when you check into a hotel that offers an inspiring array of classes, cutting-edge equipment and views of the city, you can start or end your day feeling good about yourself. And, at least in our opinion, there is no better way to beat jet lag than a hardcore cardio session.

FOUR SEASONS CANARY WHARF, London

A five-star hotel offering not one gym, but two, the Four Seasons has a 75 sqm on-site fitness zone open 24 hours on the second floor, with cardio machines and free weights, as well as the 3,344 sqm Virgin Active Canary Riverside Health Club (times vary) within its grounds - ask at reception and you will be given a pass.

The highlight of the latter facility is undoubtedly the infinity swimming pool with views across the River Thames. You might recognise it as the pool from *Skyfall* - and if it's good enough for Bond, it's good enough for us.

The gym has one of the largest selections of equipment in the City, including Core-Tex, Freedom Climber, Power Plate Pro6, Kinesis stations and In-Body Tracker, as well as Technogym's Artis range. There is also a large spinning studio and more than 90 weekly classes. Towels and robes are provided. fourseasons.com

THE BERKELEY, London

Located in Knightsbridge, the recently revamped Bamford Haybarn spa and gym are open to members at a fee, and hotel guests at no cost. The changing rooms are luxurious with thick robes and towels, while the 75 sqm fitness space, on the top floor, overlooks Hyde Park.

The three cutting-edge Life Fitness treadmills have TV consoles that create interactive workouts whereby you can see yourself running along roads in New Zealand or Germany, and the resistance gets tougher the higher and steeper the terrain. There

are also free weights, cross trainers, a rowing machine, bikes and variable resistance machines.

For personal training, you can pair up with the Maybourne Group's in-house expert, Norbert Konja. You can even learn how to box or improve your stroke in the adjacent pool, the roof of which comes off in summer. Gym open 6am-10pm weekdays, 7am-9pm weekends, the-berkeley.co.uk



When travelling, finding the time and motivation to work on your fitness can be tough. In our opinion, there is no better way to beat jet lag than a hardcore cardio session.

HILTON WARSAW HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTRE Warsaw

This modern Holmes Place gym, located on the second floor of the Hilton, is huge, spread across 3,800 sqm, with glass walls letting in lots of light and with views down on to the 25-metre heated pool below.

Although open to the public, it is free for hotel guests and has 80 Precor and Technogym cardiovascular machines (some with internet connection), plus free weights, Power Plates, a Kinesis system and a TRX suspension station, which helps you use your own bodyweight to train.

There are about 100 classes a week including power yoga, pilates, zumba, krav maga (a martial art for self-defence) and spinning in stylish studios. Personal trainers are on hand and there are private showers and free towels, along with onsite nutritionists, dry saunas, steam rooms and a tanning booth. Open 6am-10pm weekdays, 9am-9pm weekends. holmesplace.pl, hilton.com

KERRY HOTEL, PUDONG, Shanghai

This giant 6,000 sqm “sports, wellness and adventure” centre is one of the largest in the city, with its ten-metre-high floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Century Park. It is organised into four activity zones, including “Iron Man”, which allows prospective triathletes to complete their training needs in one place, with spinning bikes and treadmills, a Vasa kayak and swim trainer bench. The Cardio Zone features more than 40 Star Trac machines, while Strength Circuit Training provides a 30-minute full body workout with weight resistant machines and ten TRX suspension set-ups. The Personal Training Zone, including a body combat area, is ideal for one-on-one workouts with Kerry Sports' certified personal trainers. Four studios host aerobics, yoga (including hot yoga), spinning and Pilates, with eight Reformer beds. Open 24 hours. thekerryhotels.com

THE LANDMARK MANDARIN ORIENTAL, Hong Kong

Hong Kong has many five-star hotels with outstanding fitness facilities, many with great views (the 118th-floor Ritz-Carlton pool being uppermost, in every sense). But the Landmark offers a 260 sqm fitness facility on the fifth level that caters to a va-



When you check into a hotel that offers an inspiring array of classes, cutting-edge equipment and views of the city, you can start or end your day feeling good about yourself.



riety of needs. There is a full-size yoga studio (up to 18 students per class) teaching techniques including hatha and ashtanga, and an extensively equipped pilates studio with body trapeze/table, ladder barrel, combo chair, baby arc and gyrotonic pulley tower. Throw in a fleet of the latest cardio machines and weights, an 18-metre indoor pod and a full Oriental spa. and you can see why the Landmark is a benchmark for hotel gyms. Open 24 hours for hotel guests, mandarinoriental.com

PARK HYATT, Tokyo

When it comes to gyms with a view, they don't come much better than this. Located on the 47th level of the 52-floor Shinjuku Park Tower (the hotel occupies the top 14 storeys), not only can you take yoga classes after dark by the floor-to-ceiling windows, allowing you to take in the gently pulsing lights of the metropolis far below, but in the day you can see Mount Fuji from your treadmill.

The luxurious 2,100 sqm fitness space has "body sonic flooring", mats for floor work, and an extensive range of Life Fitness weights and cardio machines.

In addition, a wide variety of classes are scheduled throughout the day - from t'ai chi and "good night sleep" stretching, to "Eazy dancercise". Personal trainers can be booked too. Separating the gym from an aerobics studio on the other side is a 20-metre pool (note that tattoos are not allowed). Open 6am-10pm. tokyo.park.hyatt.com

W SEOUL WALKERHILL, Seoul

As well as a stunning 1,524 sqm spa featuring a 20-metre mood-lit indoor pool with panoramic views across the Han river and city beyond, the W Seoul has a well-equipped 545 sqm gym on the third floor. This has lots of natural light and more than 30 cardiovascular machines (treadmills and bikes) with TVs and facing out of the floor-to-ceiling windows.

There are also free weights, a spinning studio, yoga and pilates classes, and a rooftop chill-out area. Joggers can escape to the 2km course that runs through Mount Acha's forest, within the grounds of the hotel. If you need to ease your aching muscles, there are also funky "thematic bath tubs" illuminated in different colours in the 1.524 sqm Away spa. Open 24 hours, starwoodhotels.com

RITZ-CARLTON ABU DHABI GRAND CANAL, Abu Dhabi

Both guests and members can use the Ritz-Carlton's 24-hour, 400 sqm gym which is located on the ground floor and has lots of natural light and views on to the gardens. The facility is equipped with 18 Technogym cardio machines (with iPod docks, heart rate sensors and exercise programmes), 11 strength and resistance training systems, five pull-up/back/abs machines and a Kinesis One station.

There are also two Concept II rowers and Technogym's "Arke Core Centric" training system, which involves the use of Swiss balls, foam rollers and kettle bells, among other things, in pre-designed routines.

Modern gyms in top hotels offer both specialized training and lighter, relaxation classes – everyone will find there something for themselves.

Looking to work your arms? There is a Smith machine for weight training and a bench press, with barbells up to 35kg and dumbbells up to 26kg.

For a more holistic approach, personal trainers can be booked for one-on-one sessions, while group classes include spinning, circuit training and yoga. There is also a 1.600 sqm outdoor pool, a spa and two jogging tracks that run through the 23-hectare grounds. Open 24 hours. ritzcarlton.com

THE COSMOPOLITAN, Las Vegas

This huge 3,000-room hotel on the Las Vegas Strip (part of Marriott's Autograph Collection) has two fitness centres, one in the Eastside Tower on the 15th floor, and one in the West End on the 14th. Both are free for hotel guests. The 194 sqm East Tower is open 24 hours and has seven Technogym treadmills, five ellipticals, two upright and two recumbent fitness bikes, a free-weight zone, resistance and strength equipment and an area for stretching.

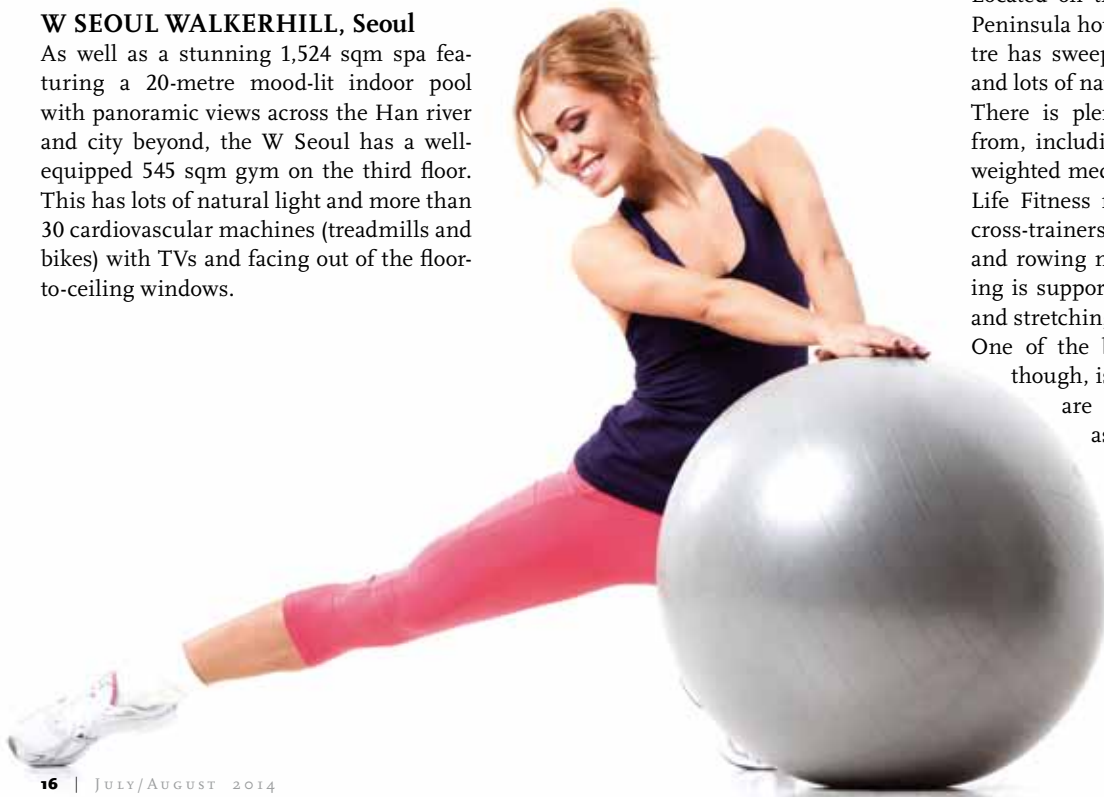
The gym in the West End Tower is bigger, at 488 sqm, allowing for ten treadmills and six ellipticals, plus a "movement" studio, spinning bikes, a Technogym Wave cardio machine for toning glute, core and lower body muscles, and a Kinesis machine for zero-impact exercise. Personal training sessions can be booked and guests can also access the property's three outdoor pools. Open 5am-8pm. cosmopolitanlasvegas.com

THE PENINSULA, New York

Located on the 22nd floor of the top-end Peninsula hotel, this 1,128 sqm fitness centre has sweeping views across Manhattan and lots of natural light.

There is plenty of equipment to choose from, including free weights, Swiss balls, weighted medicine balls and more than 30 Life Fitness machines (think pectoral fly, cross-trainers, chest press, shoulder press and rowing machines). The bamboo flooring is supportive yet springy for mat work and stretching.

One of the best things about this gym, though, is the array of free classes that are scheduled (36 weekly) from as early as 7am to as late as 7.30pm. There are many different types of yoga to try (such as vinyasa, slow flow, basics, restorative, hatha and yugalates), as well as the likes of "cardio sculpt" and "pulse fit". Personal trainers are also available. Open 5.30am-9.30pm. new-york.peninsula.com





The change in routine, lack of sleep and packed itineraries are just a few of the hurdles that can keep us from the gym. So, if you finally get there, it's good to know that you can spend time there in a friendly atmosphere.



MODA NA HYBRYDY

Samochody hybrydowe to symbol dobrej inwestycji. Są luksusowe i wygodne, a przy tym przynoszą oszczędności liczone w tysiącach złotych. Dlatego stają się coraz bardziej modne.



W całej Europie sprzedaż hybryd wzrosła w ciągu roku o 50%, w Polsce – trzykrotnie. Na Starym Kontynencie co druga kupowana Toyota Auris jest właśnie hybrydą. Na świecie hybrydy mają miliony wiernych użytkowników – ostatni milion przybył zaledwie w ciągu 9 miesięcy. Hybrydy Toyoty zdobyły serca swoich właścicieli niezawodnością, wygodą prowadzenia, jakiej nie zapewni żaden inny napęd, oraz bogatym wyposażeniem w standardzie.

➤ Trwałość akumulatorów

Konstrukcja akumulatorów hybrydowych jest inna niż tych znanych z laptopów czy telefonów. W Toyocie wykorzystano bardzo wytrzymałe akumulatory metalowo-wodorkowe. Do tego system dba o nie, powoli je ładując i rozładowując (nigdy do skrajnych sytuacji – maksymalnego naładowania i rozładowania). Są masowo produkowane od 1997 r., działają bezawaryjnie w ponad 6 mln hybryd, a Toyota daje na nie do 10 lat gwarancji.

➤ Powszechność

Na całym świecie jeździ już ponad 6 mln hybryd i są one coraz chętniej kupowane. Co druga Toyota Auris sprzedawana jest w Europie w wersji hybrydowej. Niezawodność, niskie zużycie paliwa i cena bliska dieslom spowodowały lawinowy wzrost sprzedaży hybryd.

➤ Przyjemność

Poruszanie się samochodem hybrydowym jest ciche, płynne, elastyczne i oszczędne. Może być też bardzo dynamiczne, wystarczy włączyć tryb Power. Jazda relaksuje kierowcę, konstrukcja nie przenosi wibracji znanych z klasycznych silników Diesla, no i nic nie „klekocze”. Cały napęd jest sterowany komputerem, nie wymaga dodatkowej uwagi. Auto prowadzi się jak każdy konwencjonalny samochód.

➤ Cena

Hybrydę możemy dziś kupić praktycznie w cenie podobnie wyposażonego diesla. Wersje benzynowe dzieli od hybryd zaledwie kilka tysięcy złotych. Ale niższe koszty używania aut hybrydowych zwrócą tę nadwyżkę już po około 2 latach użytkowania. A przecież hybrydy słyną z udokumentowanej niezawodności i trzymania wysokich cen na rynku aut używanych. Wniosek nasuwa się sam – zakup auta hybrydowego staje się dobrą inwestycją.



SOMA KERALA PALACE



CONTACT

Somatheeram Ayurveda
Group Resort
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tel. (+91) 4829 271350
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WHAT'S IT LIKE?

The airline with the widest choice of flights from Poland to India (via Doha) is Qatar Airways. This time I visited the port city of Cochin in the south-eastern Indian state of Kerala. Our perception of this region, which has been nicknamed “God’s Own Country” is that it’s all about palm groves, spices, and tea plantations on hills. However Kerala is also the cradle of the 5,000 year-old approach to physical, mental and spiritual health, known as Ayurveda. Last year I visited a wonderful Ayurvedic resort named Somatheeram, so now I was truly looking forward to my stay at Soma Kerala Palace.

We reached the place by boats, admiring lush vegetation along the way. From the very first moment I was captivated by the unique harmony of the place. Among coconut palms and

colourful crotons I noticed several interesting buildings which formed a coherent architectural whole. The view of the lake was stunning and the trill of birds as well as the sound of waves made me feel relaxed and joyful. It’s worth visiting this place if only for such sensations.

WHERE IS IT?

The resort is located 56 km away from Cochin airport, in the town of Chempu situated on an island of Lake Wembanadu. The area has a great deal of interesting places.

To reach the mainland from here you need to take a boat departing from the town of Vaikkon 4 km away from the resort. Then you go by road to Cochin where you simply must visit the Jewish Quarter with its beautiful boutiques and cafes, as well as the Santa Cruz church and the synagogue. 50

km away from Cochin there is a bird sanctuary with the well-known Soma Bird Lagoon, and the whole area is a true paradise with the famous Kerala Backwaters.

ARCHITECTURE

Soma Kerala Palace is a unique place dedicated to practising yoga and Ayurvedic treatments. The resort consists of nine buildings which are more than 250 years old and which were brought to the island and reconstructed according to old plans. I stayed in Chempulayil building which was constructed in 1890. It features a suite that is used seasonally by the royal family. Beautifully carved wooden ceilings and railings, old brass ornaments and large keys to wooden doors, perfectly reflect the atmosphere of those days. All rooms are equipped with fans, some have also air condi-

tioning. Sleeping on a big wooden bed covered with a mosquito net was extremely charming. I also liked the large wooden verandas with comfortable loungers and tables. On very hot days I cooled off in the swimming pool. The 24/7 room service is excellent, and Kerala cuisine simply delicious. At any time of the day and night you can order coffee, herbal tea, or water with ginger, lime juice and honey, which is a great thirst quencher.

AYURVEDA CLINIC

You enter the clinic barefoot, wearing a cotton robe. Before any treatment, physicians working for Somatheeram Ayurveda Group collect your medical history in order to determine you bioenergy or dosha. According to Ayurvedic medicine the human body was created from five elements, and it's based on three types of bioenergy: VATA (air and ether elements), PITTA (fire) and KAPHA (earth and water). Then the doctors recommend the patient an appropriate series of treatments.

Each patient is assigned a personal therapist. Patients also receive herbal preparations prescribed by doctors. Within three days of my stay I underwent body massages and Shirodhara body treatment. The latter consists of pouring warm oil onto the patient's forehead, which is regarded as the human's third eye. This provides great relaxation and calms you down. After each treatment you need to replenish fluids and rest. An inherent element of Ayurveda is meditation and yoga exercises allowing you to achieve a state of harmony, relieve stress, and get rid of negative thoughts. Ayurveda and yoga perfectly complement each other.

RESTAURANT

Dishes served in Kerala are an example of the highest skills, care for every detail and sophisticated flavours. It's a real treat for the body and soul. Apart from the set menu, the chefs

can also prepare any dish recommended by the doctors. I especially recommend local grilled fish, fish curry, lemon and carrot rice, rice soup with ginger, and spinach with coconut. After each meal the doctors also recommend drinking the so-called herbal water, which is herbal extract which cleans and cools the body.

SOMA HOUSEBOATS

Being in Kerala and not taking a trip through Kerala Backwaters is as if you were in Venice and didn't take a gondola ride. The whole area is a network of rivers, lakes, and channels spread over the area of 250 sq m. Soma Houseboats offers boats with sleeping cabins as well as dining and seating area for 4 peo-

ple. I went for a cruise with overnight stay, departing from Allepey to Kumarakom. During the trip I was able to observe the daily life of the inhabitants of the area, see the bird sanctuary in Kumarkarom, admire the remarkable buildings, churches, temples, paddy fields, countless coconut and mango trees, as well as experience the magical sunset and sunrise.

VERDICT

Kerala Palace is a place full of magical history of Kerala. The treatments provided at Ayurveda clinic are superb. It's an unusual place, perfect for weekend stays combining treatment with an unforgettable boat trip through the Backwaters.

Katarzyna Siekierzyńska

Soma Kerala Palace is a unique place dedicated to practising yoga and Ayurvedic treatments. The resort consists of nine buildings which are more than 250 years old and which were brought to the island and reconstructed according to old plans.



HOTEL BANYAN TREE



CONTACT
www.banyantree.com

The first complex of 135 private villas with pools, launched by the legendary Banyan Tree on the serene waters of Bang Tao Bay is renowned for its exceptional service, world-class cuisine and excellent spa.

Banyan Tree chain opened its first complex of 135 private villas with swimming pools in 1994 on the island of Phuket. Since then it has received more than 800 awards all over the world, including Best Luxury Brand in Asia, or Gold Hotel List by Conde Nast Traveller. Located on the serene waters of Bang Tao Bay it's known for its exceptional service, world-class cuisine and a renowned spa.

VILLAS AND SPA

The luxury 250-400 sq m villas are equipped with all possible amenities, including sun creams, natural cosmetics and a mini-bar that is refilled on a daily basis.

Spa enthusiasts can choose to stay at Banyan Spa Sanctuary – one of the fourteen “couples only” 550 sq m villas that float on lotus ponds. This part of the complex is wellness-oriented and offers morning yoga classes, Ayurvedic treatment, as well as organic meals.

DOUBLE POOL VILLA

You can also choose to stay in a Double Pool Villa, where apart from the 15-metre pool, there's another pool adjacent to a bed-

room with floor to ceiling windows. The whole property is 1,700-2,500 sq m and consists of a living room, a kitchen, a bathroom with sauna, a bedroom, and a large loggia overlooking the lake.

For the time of their stay, guests receive a personal Butler and a mobile phone to contact him at any time of the day. The price of the stay, apart from breakfasts which the personnel serves right to your bed, includes minibar, afternoon desserts, and evening drinks. The villas of guests who book a longer stay receive a golden plaque with the name of the guest on the wall.

JACUZZI WITH A VIEW

The infinity pool overlooking the lake features a glass-wall jacuzzi and a drink corner. Distances within the resort are quite large, but anytime you wish to visit the beach, go surfing, snorkelling, or play golf on a 18-hole course, you can simply call for an electric vehicle with a driver or use free bikes.

RAINFOREST RELAX

After an active day you must visit the spa. Phuket Banyan Tree has an academy which trains therapists from all Banyan resorts in the world. You should

try Thai and Balinese massages or the one and only Rainforest Relax massage performed in a special room with rain showers above beds.

RESTAURANTS

Meals can be ordered at any time to your villa or you can go to one of many atmospheric restaurants located in the resort. Tree restaurant specializes in Vietnamese-French cuisine, Saffron offers dishes served in a form of a buffet, Watercourt is popular with fans of Mediterranean dishes, while at Thai Sala you can try local fish and sea-food.

A DREAM COME TRUE

On the last evening before your departure, the personnel arranges a private ceremony called Comb Loy, with a lit lantern released into the sky, which supposedly makes your wishes to come true.

VERDICT

Spacious villas with private service and two private pools, a fantastic spa with a wide range of wellness treatments and individually selected massage oils. No to forget about the excellent 18-hole golf course and the charming beach.

Anna Drozdowska

Club Med Ψ

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WHERE WILL YOUR IMAGINATION TAKE YOU?

JULY/AUGUST 2014 | 23

NAKA ISLAND LUXURY COLLECTION



CONTACT

www.nakaislandphuket.com

It's an intimate resort located on a small island of Naka off the coast of Phuket. The villas have thatched roof, while walls and floors are made of polished stone and clay. The bedroom is air-conditioned, while other rooms are arranged in the open air. The resort is an eco-lodge, so it's friendly to nature and focuses to preserve the original character of this place.

VILLAS

The resort consists of 67 villas ranging from 450 to 1,600 sq m. Each of them has a view of the ocean or mangrove forests. The most prestigious and the largest is the Horizon Pool, which features a 14-metre infinity pool, as well as breath-taking views of Phang Nga Bay. It's one of the most favourite places of Thai royal family coming here for private retreat away from the hustle and bustle of the capital.

BAY OF JAMES BOND

During your stay in the resort you need to take a trip to the Phang

Nga Bay (a 20-minute speed-boat ride). The bay was used as a location for one of the James Bond movies. Those for whom the private swimming pool isn't enough, can use the main infinity pool, which goes down directly to the beach and the sea. Beach chairs and umbrellas are set in shallow water, where the heat is more tolerable and you can always cool your feet. There are also free kayaks, as well as windsurfing and sailing gear.

SPA

Another advantage of Naka Island is spa with a pool for special watsu massage performed in water. It's a rarity even among world-class spas. Watsu is known for its outstanding relaxing properties and it also reduces muscle tension. You can also take a 90-minute Naka Spa Signature Massage, and during a hot day cool off in a special room where the temperature is 14 degrees C.

The Kids Club, in turn, provides all-day care and fun activities for

children, including Thai boxing lessons, painting batiks, ceramics and flower arranging classes.

RESTAURANTS

Breakfasts at Naka Island are a real treat, because who doesn't dream of fresh mangoes and champagne on the seafront? You can also enjoy cool Kir Royal, Bellini or Bloody Mary. Add to this freshly-baked bread, fruit organic porridge, dishes with organica eggs, and Thai cuisine. This paradise setting wouldn't be complete without fresh coconuts and exotic fruits. For dinner you can try Tonsai restaurant specializing in Thai cuisine, or My Grill offering grilled dishes and seafood. If you wish to watch the sunset on the bay of Phang Nga, go to the terrace of Z-Bar.

VERDICT

The country-style luxury resort on the picturesque island of Naka is a perfect choice for anyone who craves heavenly relaxation. Great cuisine.

Anna Drozdowska



The Breathtaking views of Phang Nga Bay makes Naka Island of the most favourite of Thai royal family, coming here for private retreat away from the hustle and bustle of the capital.

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DELUXE SUITES



Located under the famous roof terrace Glorietta of Hotel Bristol, are five exceptional suites. The views that they offer are hard to describe – you simply have to see them by yourself.

Those who choose to stroll along the Royal Route often stop at the junction of Krakowskie Przedmieście and Karowa streets. This is because the historic building of Hotel Bristol is so distinctive. Heads go up and the eyes fly high to see the beautiful corner of the building topped with an intricately ornamented dome. It is the famous top roof terrace Glorietta. If only you could go up there to enjoy the views...

Well you can – and not only to enjoy the panorama of the city. Glorietta is a venue for private dinners, banquets, or engagement parties, and the plans of the hotel management related to this place are truly impressive, though still shrouded in mystery. However, event today you can enjoy almost the same view, if you book a room in the Bristol.

WHAT IS LUXURY?

Located right under the Glorietta, from the second to sixth floor, there are five wonderful Deluxe Suites. Each of them is about 92 sq m and has everything that you need for your stay to be luxurious. The spacious living room with three tall windows provides a view that no other hotel is able to offer. There is also a large bedroom with a walk-in wardrobe, a personal safe, floor to ceiling mirrors, an ironing board, and an umbrella. There are even cloth hangers covered with soft fabric to prevent creases on delicate items of guests' garment.

Two bathrooms (private and for external guests) are lined with marble in various shades of grey, and feature Hermes and Luxury Collection toiletries.

If necessary, the suite can be extended by an additional bedroom or even two. This solution

is generally used by families with children or... stars, for example the members of the Rolling Stones band who opened all the doors wide.

RETURN TO GLORY

The history of Bristol is, in fact, the history of luxury in Poland. Ever since it was built in the early 20th century, there was no doubt that Warsaw had never seen so much splendour before. The crystal lift called "the White Carriage" was legendary, and the hotel even had its own power plant.

However, time is inexorable even for legendary places, so the first great post-war renovation of the hotel was done in 1992. Twenty years later Hotel Bristol fully returned to its former glory, joining (as Poland's only) the prestigious Luxury Collection Hotels & Resorts owned by Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

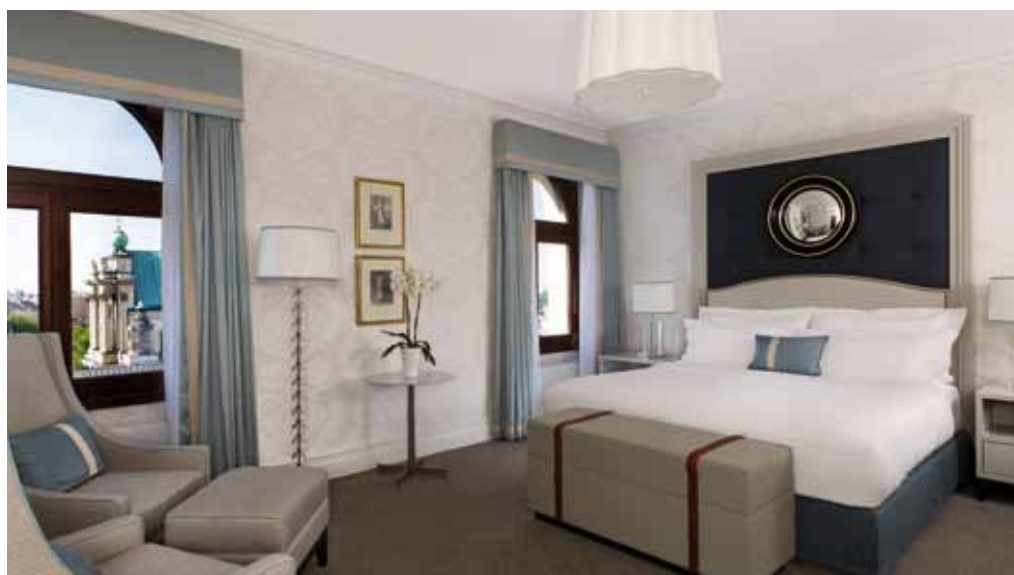
The interior was designed by a London-based designer Anita Rosato who was able to achieve the desired effect. Today Deluxe Suite reflect the modern idea of luxury, while retaining their unique atmosphere and alluding to the concept of décor by Otto Wagner Junior, which involved combining Art Deco and Art Nouveau styles.

PAST AND FUTURE

You will not find here any gilded ornaments, crystal chandeliers, or wallpapers with Baroque patterns. Instead, there are high quality materials, and attention to every detail including the colour of the trim on curtains. The décor of the suites, though modern, is still firmly rooted in the past. In fact, old cupboards, bookcases, and tables surrounded by modern furniture with geometric and slightly austere shapes, become even more beautiful and add more unmistakable modernity to the place. You have to look around to see the details alluding to the old style – brass door handles, electrical sockets made to look old, or almost imperceptible little things such as a



Unique suites offered by a unique hotel. Captivating design and subtle colours in soft shades of grey and blue.



lamp base made of glass balls – it is modern in form, but looking at it you cannot stop thinking about crystal chandeliers that hung here a century ago. You could write a book about the materials used here – they were imported from factories across Europe and meticulously processed by Polish craftsmen.

VERDICT

Unique suites offered by a unique hotel. Captivating design and subtle colours in soft

shades of grey and blue. It is worth noting that booking your stay in a Deluxe Suite, you will be taken care of even before you arrive at the hotel. The limousine will collect you from Okęcie Airport (and take it there on the day of your departure). Hotel Bristol also offers access to VOD and Internet, as well as a 60-minute massage. And with a discreet care by hotel concierge your stay in Warsaw will be flawless.

Joanna Kadej-Krzyczkowska

CONTACT

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Krakowskie Przedmieście 42/44
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bristol@luxurycollection.com
www.hotelbristolwarsaw.pl

PRICE

from PLN 3,399

COTTONINA



CONTACT

Cottonina Villa & Mineral Spa Resort
ul. Sanatoryjna 7
59-850 Świeradów Zdrój
tel. (+48) 75 78 45 500
info@cottonina.pl
www.cottonina.pl

PRICES

Double room with breakfast and access to the wellness zone from PLN 249 (about €60)

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

After a several hours' journey I was rewarded with a spectacular view over the stunning Jizera mountains, beautiful sun-drenched little towns covered in flowers and a unique place that is Cottonina hotel. One of the buildings, a historical "Proprietor's villa" from 19th century was reconstructed according to old designs and drawings. The guestrooms and suits are perfectly arranged - each comes with an individual interior design. Underground there is an atmospheric jazz "Cotton Club" and a billiards room.

There is a new, architecturally coherent building opposite to the hotel, where the guests have access to an indoor pool, saunas and a wellness zone. Outside there is a large car park, a playground, a bicycle rental and walking trails.

WHERE IS IT?

The Hotel is located in Świeradów-Zdrój in Czerniawa district, a few kilometres from the Czech border, 5 km from the famous Świeradów Zdrój spa, called Valley of Youth ("Dolina Młodości") with radon spring waters and 35 km from Jelenia Góra. The neighbourhood abounds in various

attractions. The most popular are Castle Czocha, Castle Frydlant, the Babylon entertainment complex in Liberec and Poland's one and only professional bicycle trail "Singltrek", which, together with the Czech part of the trail, is 80 km-long. It has been awarded a prize in "7 Wonders of European funds" category.

Close to the hotel there is also one of few gravity hills, where the cars seem to go uphill on their own. Only 3 km away is a cable car railway, which can transport 2,400 people per hour. In winter you can get to the railway by a minibus. The slope is snowed and provides 25,00 m illuminated ski pistes.

ROOMS

In the former "Proprietor's villa" there are 18 rooms and 3 suites. Due to the historic nature of the building, each room has a different shape and a different size. In the new building there are 39 rooms on 3 floors, each painted with different colour: purple, red and blue. All decorations and ornaments in particular rooms correspond to those colours. The rooms are spacious, very functional and equipped with all the necessities.

SPA

On the ground floor there is a wellness zone with a small indoor swimming pool, a jacuzzi, saunas, and a mineral spa. In six treatment rooms guests have access to various body and facial treatments based on energetic properties of minerals.

The spa Manager, Justyna Zukowska will provide you with a consultation and perform facial or body treatments based on natural cosmetics. The flagship treatments: "A cotton cocoon", "A pumpkin soufflé", or "A mango smoothie" is a sheer poetry of fragrance and sensations. There are also seasonal treatments – warming ones in winter, while in summer refreshing, detoxifying and figure-shaping. There is also a special treatment for bikers.

VERDICT

It's a friendly, modern hotel with its own spa treatments inspired by the natural richness of the Jizera Mountains. A great place for tourist trips and sport activities. Cottonina is perfectly adapted to accommodate families with children. Awarded with a prize for the third best new spa in Poland.

Katarzyna Siewierzyńska

PIĘKNY NEAPOL



KRAKÓW-NEAPOL

W DWIE STRONY, CENA CAŁKOWITA

OD **805** PLN

WARSZAWA-NEAPOL

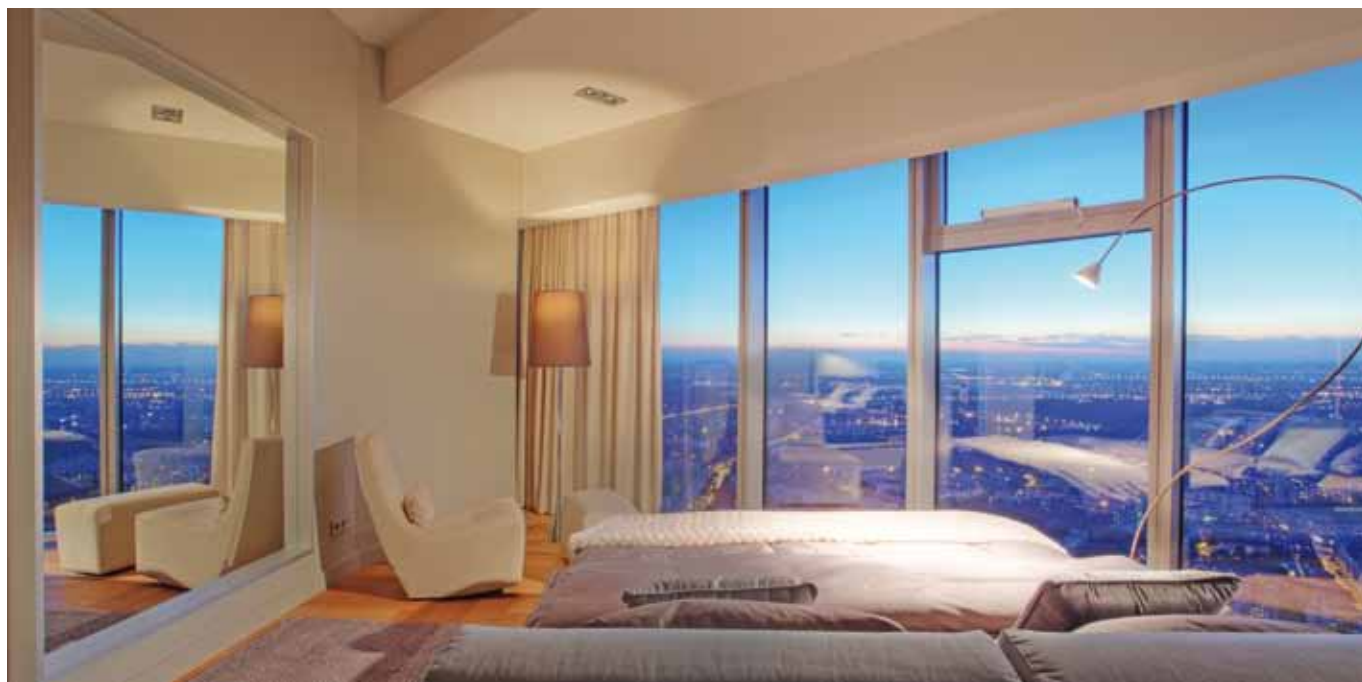
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The history of residential skyscrapers dates back to the beginning of 20th century. The pioneer was the Empire State Building - an icon of New York. The century that followed was to become the era of skyscrapers, which became a symbol of luxury. Wrocław's SKY TOWER is currently the only residential building in the European Union which offers the opportunity to purchase an apartment even on the 48th floor.

PRESTIGE AND PANORAMA

Luxury, prestige, convenience, time saving, functionality, and freedom – these are the values that are desirable in the modern world. These are also the qualities of SKY TOWER apartments that are located in the tallest residential building in Wrocław and in Poland.

It is a unique place that breaks with current habits and stereotypes. It was created for people who are professionally and socially active, who value time and access to numerous facilities. Few of us have ever lived

in the so-called “city within a city”. The view from behind the glass walls of the apartment is breathtaking. Watching the illuminated space flashing with nightlights up the horizon, you feel as if you were in the heart of an urban agglomeration that pulsates with life. During the day, in turn, sunrises and sunsets, as well as clouds racing across the sky, give a sense of participating in an amazing spectacle created by nature.

CONVENIENCE AND HMS SYSTEM

The apartments were designed by well-known and respected architects who took care of the functionality, design, comfort, individual finish, and a high standard of rooms. Selected apartments feature spacious terraces which provide extra room on the open space.

All the apartments are equipped with an intelligent management system. Using a smartphone or a tablet, you can control the light intensity, temperature, open and close windows, and

even choose music or a television channel.

COMFORT OF LIFE

Residents of SKY TOWER apartments can use concierge service 24 hours a day. His responsibilities include assisting in organization of everyday life, for example, calling a taxi, booking air tickets or a room in a hotel. The concierge can also arrange tickets to the cinema, theatre, or a concert, as well as an exciting sporting event – always with the best, VIP seats.

With the house keeping service the residents do not have to worry about cleaning up before Christmas holidays or tidying their apartment after their friend's visit.

The podium of the building features a modern shopping gallery, which consists of designer shops, services, beauty salons, wellness studios, and spa. A unique feature is the possibility of practising jogging on a path located high above the ground, and then a visit to the fitness club, spa, or in the billiards or bowling club.



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NOW BOARDING

With its streamlined design, striking art and world-class lounges, Heathrow's new T2 promises a pleasing journey for Star Alliance passengers, says **Graham Smith**.



In December 1955, Queen Elizabeth II inaugurated London Airport's first passenger terminal, the Central Terminal Area. This month, the 88-year-old monarch will for a second time officially open T2, now rechristened the Queen's Terminal. The old T2 was built to handle an annual 1.2 million passengers; by its closure in 2009, it was dealing with eight million and the airport 65.9 million.

SHORT TRANSFER TIME

The new terminal is opening in stages from June 4. For the first two weeks, United will be the only airline using the £2.5 billion facility. Fellow Star Alliance carriers Air Canada, Air China and ANA will join it on June 18, with the alliance's other airlines moving over gradually until all are in place at the end of October. Aer Lingus, Germanwings and Virgin Atlantic Little Red will be the only non-Star Alliance carriers operating out of the terminal.

A major boon for Star Alliance passengers will be the reduction in transfer times that comes with operating out of the same building. From October, the alliance anticipates an average transfer time of 60 minutes, compared with the 90 minutes it currently takes. Mark Schwab, chief executive of Star Alliance, says: "Our initial objective is to reduce [connection times] to 60 minutes. [Amsterdam] Schiphol is delivering transfer times close to 45 minutes and that's where we want to get to."

Terminal 2 has been designed to take into account passenger moods and reactions to

everyday elements such as natural light, acoustics and comfort. To this end, lead architect Luis Vidal and his team have flooded the building with daylight from north-facing skylights, while the gate areas will be open-plan and part of the main departure area.

ALL FOR PASSENGERS

John Holland-Kaye, who takes over as Heathrow's chief executive on July 1, having previously been development director, says: "Terminal 2 is the model of future terminals. It has been designed around the pas-

sengers, so we have really simple passenger flows. For instance, there is more space in security and deeper lanes."

Most passengers will head straight to one of 66 self-service kiosks, each of which caters for every flight so they can check in wherever they choose, with staff on hand to assist. Economy passengers with luggage then move forward to the fast bag drop or, behind that, to 56 traditional premium and economy check-in desks. The 60 bag-drop desks are zonal – that is, they're not assigned to any particular airline – so as long as you're in the right zone, you can go to any desk. Aer Lingus and Virgin Atlantic Little Red prove the exception: both have their own desks in Zone C. The bag-drops also double as premium check-in desks for first and business class passengers during busy periods.

Directly behind the check-in hall, security has four fast-track lanes and 17 for economy passengers. After passing through, passengers arrive at the balcony level of departures, which is like a slightly smaller version of the T5 departures hall. Straight ahead is a glass wall that overlooks the apron and the gates.

From here, those flying long-haul from the terminal's T2B satellite pier head down to a walkway that links it, under the runway, to the main building. Taking you underground is the second-longest escalator in the country, after the one in Angel Underground station.

The 522-metre-long satellite atrium, which will see annual footfall of ten million peo-

WHEN AIRLINES WILL MOVE IN

- June 4 United Airlines (from T1 and T4)?
- June 18 Air Canada, ANA, Air China (from T3)?
- July 2 Eva Air, Thai Airways, Turkish Airlines (from T3), Avianca (new to Heathrow)
- July 9 Aer Lingus (from T1)?
- July 23 Aegean Airlines (from T1)?
- September 10 Scandinavian Airlines (from T3), Virgin Atlantic Little Red (from T1)?
- September 17 Singapore Airlines, Egyptair, Ethiopian Airlines (from T3)?
- October 1 Lufthansa, Austrian Airlines (from T1)?
- October 8 Germanwings (from T1)?
- October 15 Swiss, Brussels Airlines (from T1)?
- October 22 Air New Zealand, Asiana Airlines, South African Airways, TAP Portugal, Croatia Airlines, LOT Polish Airlines (from T1)



ple, has floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the airfield. T2B hosts the United, Air Canada and Singapore Airlines lounges, more shops and restaurants and 16 boarding gates.

SHOPS, RESTAURANTS AND... THE SLIPSTREAM

Shops, bars and restaurants line the balcony to the left and right and downstairs. There are 52 retail outlets in total at T2, including the first airport John Lewis store and a personal shopper lounge.

Max Vialou-Clark, Heathrow's retail director, says: "I'm conscious that retail is not the reason why people have come to Terminal 2. They've come to get on a plane. But we have put together a package that inspires and encourages people to get involved in the retail offer."

Dining options include Heston Blumenthal's the Perfectionists' Café – offering "easy to enjoy, familiar dishes... with some truly British eccentricity thrown in", according to the chef – and the Gorgeous Kitchen, a collaboration between chefs Gee Charman, Sophie Michell, Jo Pratt and Caroline Mi Li Artiss, serving global cuisine and afternoon tea. There will also be a Fuller's pub called London's Pride, where a specially brewed ale named Wingman will be on the pumps.

A major talking point ahead of T2's opening has been the huge sculpture suspended in the entrance courtyard, a space on the scale of the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall. With some 20 million passengers passing through T2 each year, Richard Wilson's Slipstream, which is longer than an A380 and is designed to resemble the flight path of a stunt plane, will be the UK's most-viewed public sculpture.

LOUNGES AT T2

● **UNITED** The United Global First lounge and the adjacent United Club are located near the airline's gates in T2's satellite concourse. They feature floor-to-ceiling windows with airfield views and offer free food, drink and wifi. The Global First lounge is for first class passengers travelling with any Star Alliance carrier. It has a tea lounge, a buffet area, a wine room, private phone booths and a quiet zone with sofas and privacy drapes.

The United Club lounge is for alliance business class passengers and is the first outside the US to feature the new United Club design. Seating more than 280 guests, it has



The satellite atrium, hosts the United, Air Canada and Singapore Airlines lounges, more shops and restaurants and 16 boarding gates.





“I am certain that soon, Britain will have the world-class hub it deserves,” says John Holland-Kaye.

a 25-seat bar (the longest at Heathrow), two buffet areas, a TV lounge and phone booths. There are eight shower suites for customers using either lounge, offering a valet service with garment pressing and steaming. unit-ed.com

- **AIR CANADA** Air Canada’s Maple Leaf lounge is located in the satellite pier, adjacent to the airline’s departure stands and gates. It has large windows overlooking the airfield and include details such as maple panelling and marble finishes, a live cooking station, a manned bar, shower area and a quiet zone featuring relaxation pods fitted with TVs. aircanada.com

- **SINGAPORE AIRLINES** SIA’s lounge, also in T2B, will seat a combined 210 guests in its first and business class sections.

Just under 1,000 sqm, it will closely resemble the airline’s new concept SilverKris lounge that was first unveiled in Sydney last December. Facilities include showers, international and Singaporean cuisine, and “productivity pods” allowing passengers to work in privacy. singaporeair.com

- **LUFTHANSA** Lufthansa will have separate Business and Senator lounges, collectively seating 350, with 120 seats for Senator/Star Alliance first class passengers and 230 for alliance business class flyers. The 1,600 sqm lounge, the largest Lufthansa facility outside Germany, will be in the main terminal building and will be similar in style to the airline’s recently opened New York Newark lounge. Featuring apron views and parquet flooring, it will offer comfort, work and bistro zones, a drinks counter, and hot and cold food. lufthansa.com

- **AER LINGUS** Located in T2A, Aer Lingus’s 580 sqm Gold Circle Lounge will have seating for 130 passengers, including a separate quiet rest area with chaise longue-style seating for up to 30 people. The facility will feature a five-metre-high glass wall with views of the airfield, as well as buffet food, drinks, meeting rooms, a work zone and showers. aerlingus.com

- **PLAZA PLAZA PREMIUM** Plaza Premium Lounge’s T2 facility is the Hong Kong-based group’s first in Europe.

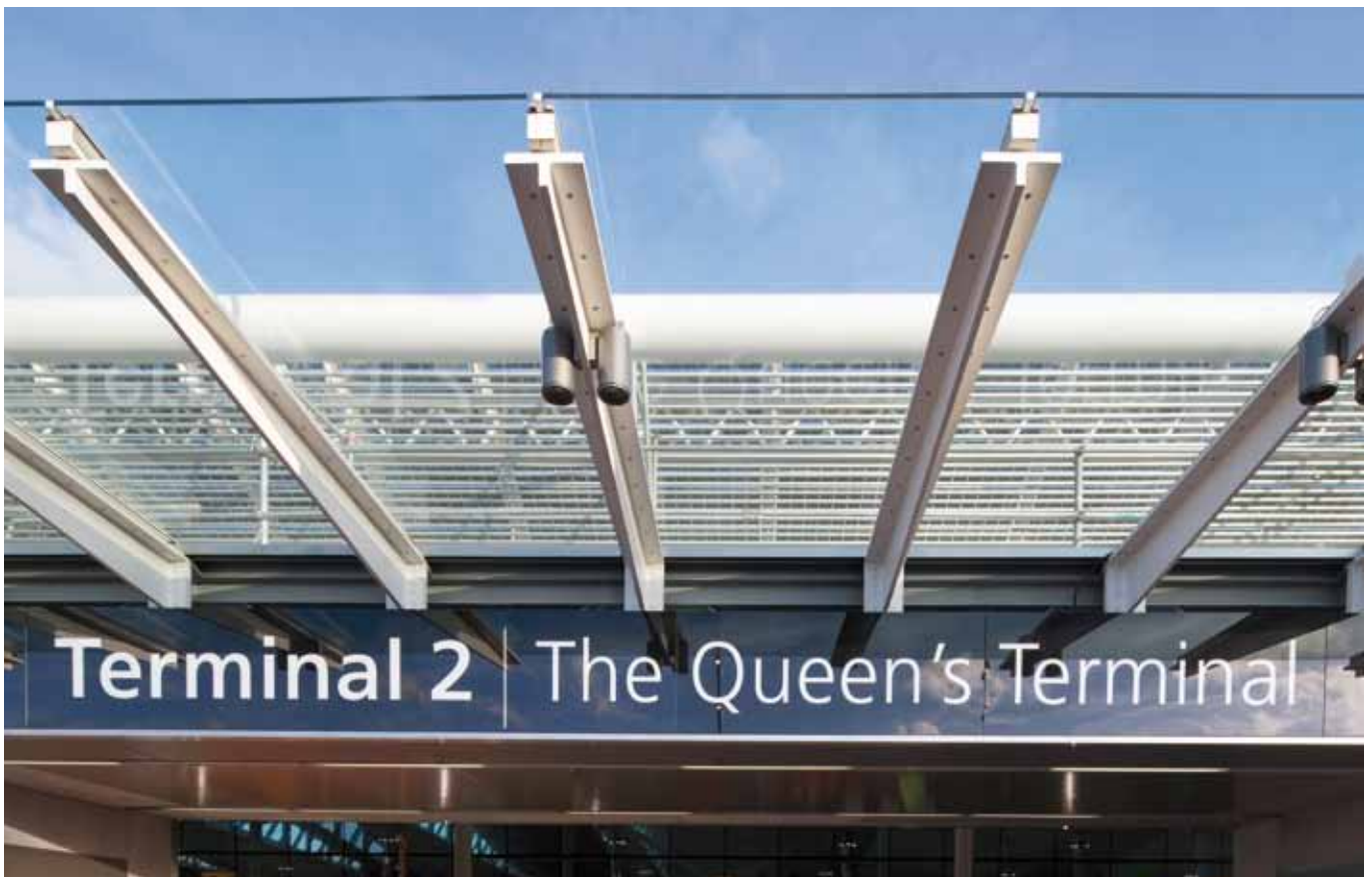
The 752 sqm, 180-seat space is in the main terminal building and will offer a live cooking station with made-to-order dishes and a champagne bar also offering a daily tapas selection.

It will also feature computer workstations, free high-speed wifi, and a spa offering treatments designed to tackle travel-related ailments and fatigue.

Open daily from 5am to 11pm, entry costs £38 per person for up to two hours. plaza-network.com



A major boon for Star Alliance passengers will be the reduction in transfer times that comes with operating out of the same building.



LUFTHANSA'S NEW PREMIUM ECONOMY CLASS



Marzena Mróz talks to **Bart Buyse**, General Manager for Poland at Lufthansa German Airlines

On 3 July 2014, Lufthansa will launch a connection from Lublin to Frankfurt hub. What does this mean for Polish passengers?

We are very proud to announce this new, very important route leading from eastern Poland to Germany. Poland is one of the fastest growing markets for Lufthansa, and the Lublin Airport will be the 8th in Poland where we will offer our services, which strengthens our position as a leading international airline in Poland. The flights from Lublin will enable passengers to connect to all major cities of Europe, as well as to New York, Chicago, and Toronto.

Could you tell us in detail about this particular connection?

The Lublin-Frankfurt route will be operated twice weekly by ultra-modern A319 aircraft, which can accommodate up to 138 passengers, both in Business and Economy Class. Flight number LH1381 departs from Lublin

on Thursdays at 12.10 pm and reaches Frankfurt at 2.05 pm, while on Sundays the departure is scheduled for 1.00 pm with landing in Frankfurt at 2.55 pm. Flight number LH1380 takes off from Frankfurt at 9.30 am on Thursdays and lands in Lublin at 11.25 am, while on Sundays the departures and landing times are 10.25 am and 12.20 pm respectively.

Why did you decide for Frankfurt to be a destination for outbound flights from Lublin?

Frankfurt is a part of Germany's second largest metropolitan area, and one of the largest economic regions in Europe. Altogether, the member airlines of Lufthansa Group, that is Lufthansa, Germanwings, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, and SWISS, will offer a total of 301 destinations in 102 countries, via Frankfurt, Munich, Brussels, Düsseldorf, Vienna, and Zurich hubs. At Frankfurt Airport our passengers can use

15 comfortable business lounges with offices, quiet work and relaxation zones, as well as good restaurants.

From May you can book tickets in Premium Economy Class on board Lufthansa aircraft for flights operated at the end of 2014. Who does Lufthansa aim at with this brand new product?

The new product is mainly aimed at passengers who now fly Economy Class, but would like to enjoy more comfort. Following the introduction of its new full-flat Business Class, Lufthansa created a much wider gap between Economy and Business Class. As a result, there is now room for its new Premium Economy Class, which offers considerably more space and comfort as well as many additional product features, but is closer to Economy Class than Business Class in terms of its average prices. The move also means that Lufthansa is introducing a completely new travel class for the first time in



The new seats – depending on the model of an aircraft – are even 3 cm wider than before. They also offer up to 10 cm more of personal space.



35 years. We expect that each year more than 1.5 million passengers will use our new Premium Economy Class.

Certainly the most exciting features of the new class is much more legroom than in Economy class, as well as the new wider seat and a truly competitive price compared to Business Class.

The new seats – depending on the model of an aircraft – are even 3 cm wider than before. They guarantee approximately 10 centimetres more room at the side thanks to each seat having its own wide armrest and a centre console between the seats. The back rest can be reclined further and the seat pitch is a significantly more spacious 38 inches, or 97 centimetres. As a result, passengers have around one-and-a-half times as much room as Economy Class. Fares in the Premium Economy cabin will be closer to Economy rather than Business class. For example, a return flight across the North Atlantic or to Asia will cost an additional €600 on average. Also a ticket from Warsaw to Chicago or New York in Premium Economy Class will cost only PLN 4,356.

What other facilities are offered with Premium Economy Class?

First of all, Premium Economy means more comfort. For example, the head rests can be set to the exact height desired. Also height-adjustable foot rests provide extra comfort. Practical features around the seats such as a bottle holder, electrical socket and lots of storage space for passengers' belongings also help to ensure a relaxed and pleasant journey. An enhanced service awaits Premium Economy passengers on board: they are greeted with a welcome drink and will find their own water bottle as well as a high-quality travel amenity kit with practical travel accessories at their seat. Meals will be served on porcelain tableware. Passengers can navigate the extensive in-flight entertainment programme using their own touchscreen monitor on the seat in front of them.

What are luggage allowances and excess baggage fees in Premium Economy Class?

Luggage allowance in this class includes 2 items of checked luggage, each weighing up to 23 kg. Charges for excess baggage are the same as in Economy Class.

Are there any additional checked luggage allowances for members of Miles & More programme with a higher status?

Members of the programme with Senator or Hon Circle status travelling in Premium Economy Class, can additionally bring one more item of checked luggage (23 kg). In other words, they are entitled to bring 3 items of checked luggage up to 23 kg free of charge. Other passengers flying in Premium Economy Class, including members of Miles & More programme with Frequent Traveller status, are entitled to bring 2 items of checked luggage (up to 23 kg each).

Can Premium Economy passengers use Lufthansa airport lounges?

Yes, such passengers have access to almost all business lounges for a fee of €25 or US\$35. They can also use Lufthansa Welcome Lounge after paying a fee of €50 or US\$70. Passengers with HON Circle, Senator, and Frequent Traveller status can use those lounges free of charge.

When will we be able to enjoy Lufthansa's Premium Economy Class?

From 10 December 2014. The flights will be operated by Boeing 747-8 aircraft. More than 3,600 new seats will be installed during the next 12 months across our intercontinental fleet.

Thank you for the interview.

Poland is one of the fastest growing markets for Lufthansa, and the Lublin Airport will be the 8th in Poland where we will offer our services, which strengthens our position as a leading international airline in Poland.

AIR FRANCE UNVEILS ITS NEW BUSINESS CLASS



CONTACT
www.airfrance.pl

Based on a study carried out among customers, Air France has revolutionized its Business Class, developing it around the concept of 3[°]Fs[°]: Full Flat, Full Access, and Full Privacy. First of all, the French carrier has introduced completely new seats, which recline into a fully flat bed. The seats can be adjusted according to the need of each passenger – from sitting to lying position – reclining automatically by a flick of just one button.

A HEAVENLY TRIP

The seat's soft foam is designed to offer impeccable quality of sleep. On the aisle side, there is a leather armrest, which lowers completely, offering additional space to the soft duvet and XXL-sized feather down pillow have also been designed with the Each detail of the seat has been specially designed in collaboration with Zodiac Aerospace, the world leader in manufacturing aircraft seats, in order to ensure

the highest functionality, quality, and unique design.

The seat with its graceful curves envelops the passenger instantly, creating a discreet place to rest or work. Like a cocoon it provides ideal comfort while travelling through time zones. The special hard shell of the seat ensures that on its reclining it does not affect the space of the passengers sitting behind, and each of them can enjoy a sense of privacy.

Customers seated in the centre of the cabin have a removable divider between the two seats that helps provide additional isolation within each cocoon. In the down position, it offers greater proximity for couples traveling together.

The research has shown that on-board privacy is the second most sought after amenity (after a flat-bed seat) among Air France's business passengers.

The third most desired element is full freedom in moving about the cabin. That is why, Air France is revolutionizing its

Business Class with a new cabin layout: each passenger has direct access to the central aisle and can move about at their convenience during the trip.

SPACE COUNTS

The revolution in the Business Class cabin also included a number of additional amenities. A large, adjustable table, covering 25% more space (48 x 42 cm) than current seats, serves as a high-end dining area or an optimized desk. A second side table, fully integrated into the seat, further expands total available surface. As for storage space, nothing is left to chance. Spaces are provided for easy passenger access to shoes, bags or purses. Books, magazines or tablets slip into a pocket, accessible even when the seat is reclined. Another novelty is a personal compartment, with red interior, for audio headphones, a mirror and personal belongings. The new lighting options available also have been thought through in detail. Ceiling, indi-

vidual reading and ambient lighting - located in the compartment and the lower part of the seat - underline the elegance of Air France's new seat.

ENTERTAINMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

With the newest amenities on board, guests immediately take control of their space. The fully intuitive seat is controlled through a system of integrated control buttons and can be easily adjusted to the desired position. An individual international format electrical outlet and USB port are available for recharging throughout the flight. In Business cabin, customers have a wide touch screen offering a high definition image. This 16-inch screen (41 cm, compared with 10.4 inches - 26.4 cm previously) offers a unique onboard navigation experience similar to a tablet.

A new touch screen handset also allows navigation through the various programs, regardless of the seat's position. A true second screen, this handset, designed like a smartphone, can be used for making phone calls and enriching the in-flight entertainment experience. To ensure full enjoyment of in-flight entertainment programs, each customer is provided with

the latest generation noise-reduction headphones.

Air France has also extended its entertainment offer. Movies, games, music, TV shows and many other programs make the trip a true time for pleasure. The 1,000 hours of programming ultimately available on demand makes for a fully enriched entertainment system. Each month, the company updates nearly 100 hours of programming.

VINTAGE AND CHIC

To fully complement the offer, meals in Business Class cabin are served on linen tablecloths, like in a fine restaurant. The menu is prepared by acclaimed French chefs (presently by three-star Michelin chef Régis Marcon). Air France also offers its guests delicious champagne and serves fine vintage wines.

New, enriched travel kits contain small accessories and cosmetics by French brand Clarins. Elegant and practical, these kits embrace the vintage trend and are intended as a true gift. Air France has paid particular attention to their design, featuring the model that was distributed on board the legendary Concorde. Not only the flight A Business Class trip starts even before the flight. For exam-

ple Business Class passengers have exclusive access to business lounges worldwide. Some of them (for example the one at Charles de Gaulle Airport) offer additional services, such as complimentary spa treatments. The business lounge in Paris also offers iPads, the office zone, as well as a wide culinary offer. An intercontinental Business Class ticket entitles passengers to join the Klub VIP and to receive a Gold Card in Flying Blue loyalty programme. Klub VIP is a Polish initiative, not available anywhere else in this unique formula. Its members, in addition to a limousine transfer or accommodation at a Warsaw hotel prior or after their intercontinental journey, may also use a dedicated phone hotline to deal with all matters related to their journey. In the event of any flight delays or other unforeseen events, Air France personnel contacts each VIP passenger.

The new Business Class debuted on 23 June on Paris-New York flight. Soon this new quality of comfort will also be available to passengers flying to Singapore, Jakarta, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Houston. In 2015 they will be joined by more destinations, including Doula, Dubai, Boston, Malabo, and Sao Paulo.

AIRFRANCE 

A total of 2,102 Business Class seats will be installed between June 2014 and summer 2016 on 44 Boeing 777's, the core of Air France's long-haul fleet.



IT'S WORTH FLYING WITH AUSTRIAN AIRLINES

Austrian Airlines is part of the Lufthansa Group, Europe's largest airline group, and a member of the Star Alliance, the first global alliance of international airlines.

One year ago, on May 17, 2013, Austrian Airlines resumed its non-stop flight service from Vienna to Chicago as part of its long-haul offering. Since then, the route has turned into a major success: Austria's domestic carrier has transported some 100,000 passengers on this route, achieving an average capacity utilization of 88 percent. This performance surpassed the initial expectations placed on the resumed flight service. Due to the strong demand in the first year, Austrian Airlines has expanded the number of flights into Chicago, and now flies directly from Vienna to Chicago on a daily basis instead of five times per week.

MORE FLIGHTS TO NORTH AMERICA

The summer 2014 flight schedule represents a massive expansion of the Austrian Airlines flight offering to North

America: Starting on July 2, 2014, the domestic airline will launch direct flights to a new destination, namely Newark. In addition to the daily flights to Chicago, Austrian Airlines is also expanding its offering to Washington: Starting on July 1, 2014, Austrian Airlines will operate a Boeing 777 instead of Boeing 767 on its daily flights to Washington, which represents an additional 90 seats per flight. As a result, its offering to North America will be expanded by about 30 per cent in the summer of 2014. The existing daily flights on a Boeing 767 from Vienna into Toronto, Canada round off the North American offering of Austrian Airlines.

PUNCTUAL AND RELIABLE

In the year 2013 Austrian Airlines once again achieved peak performance with respect to punctuality and reliability. 88.5% of all outgoing flights left the airport on time or no later than 15 minutes after the planned departure time. This 15 minute window of time comprises the accepted industry-wide standard used in measuring punctuality. In international comparison Austrian Airlines also holds a leading

position in terms of punctuality in 2013. Austrian Airlines is rated third in spite of the severe winter weather prevailing at the beginning of 2013. In fact, in the month of October Austrian Airlines was the most punctual airline in the world according to www.flightstats.com. The reliability of Vienna as a flight hub for transfers to other destinations along with the quality of its baggage services developed positively as well. The share of transfer passengers who were unable to reach their connecting flights in Vienna or who could not pick up their baggage at their final destination was in the low one percent range. "Punctuality and reliability rank among the most important criteria passengers expect us to fulfill as an international network airline.", says Karsten Benz, Chief Commercial Officer of Austrian Airlines.

130 DESTINATIONS WORLD-WIDE

Austrian Airlines is Austria's largest carrier and operates a global route network of round 130 destinations. That route network is particularly dense in Central and Eastern Europe with 41 destinations. Thanks to its favourable geographical location at the heart of Europe, the company's hub at Vienna International Airport is the ideal gateway between East and West. Austrian Airlines is part of the Lufthansa Group, Europe's largest airline group, and a member of the Star Alliance, the first global alliance of international airlines. The flight operations of the Austrian Airlines Group has been bundled at its 100% subsidiary Tyrolean Airways since 1st July, 2012.



INVESTING IN SPORT



Why would a businessman want to sponsor a cycling team?

ACTION has sponsored cycling for years. The fact that a team of cyclists wearing shirts with our logo participates in prestigious international events that are broadcast all over the world, builds brand recognition and helps to establish relationships with customers, not only in Poland but also worldwide. It is very important to us, since we are developing dynamically in Germany and export exported products to 43 countries. Professional cycling is gaining an ever-increasing fan base, which builds sports emotions that are needed to promote a brand. Cycling is currently one of the most watched sports in the spring-summer season.

Why did you decide to invest in sport?

First of all, sports marketing is one of the most effective promotional tools now. An example is our cooperation with Legia Warsaw in the years 2011-2013. The analysis proved that each invested złoty brought back spe-

cific benefit to our brand, and the promotional effects of this sponsorship will be felt until 2018. Secondly, sport has been my passion since childhood.

What sports do you practise yourself?

I used to do running, now I train cycling. My goal is to compete in the M50 category of the amateur world championship in three years. I train together with the boys from the team and I use their facilities, which helps me in achieving better results. I think that for them it is also a good thing when they see that I know what is going on in the sport. I also actively participate in managing the team, as the Team Manager.

How does one build a cycling team?

Cycling season starts in January, but building a team must start several months earlier, when cyclists sign contracts for another year. The same is true for the support staff, including physiotherapists, mechanics etc. Apart from the human factor, it is important to attract partners. In ActiveJet Team we

were able to build a strong team and provide it with world-class technical facilities. We collaborate with several partners who support the team financially. With its development, ActiveJet Team will require greater financial resources, and at this higher level, the involvement of other partners will have to grow.

What plans do you have for the team for the next two seasons?

We started as a continental team, in the so-called III division. From the very beginning we threw our cyclists in at the deep end, as they participated in major competitions abroad, including Tour des Fjords, Vuelta Andalucia, or Garmin Velothon Berlin. Our goal is to compete at the highest level and the only way to join the best, is the most frequent contact with them. Next year, we would like to move up in the ranks, and become a pro-continental team. This would allow us to compete in the most prestigious races. Already this year, one of our cyclists will be a member of the Polish national team for Tour de Pologne.



Agata Janicka talks to **Piotr Bieliński**, the President of ACTION S.A, which is the main sponsor of ActiveJet cycling TEAM.

DISCOVER THE WORLD OF EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGES WITH LE CLUB ACCORHOTELS



CONTACT
accorhotels.com/leclub

Pullman Paris, Mercure Hotel in Budapest, or perhaps Sofitel Grand Sopot with a view of the Baltic Sea? If you join the Accor Group's Le Club Accorhotels loyalty programme by 31 July, you can win a stay of dreams in a hotel of your choice, with 2,700 hotels available in 92 countries.

GREAT COUNTDOWN!

Le Club Accorhotels is a loyalty programme by Accor Group which is available to all hotel guests. Members of the programme receive points for each stay in the hotels of such brands as Sofitel, Pullman, MGallery, Grand Mercure, The Sebel, Novotel, Suite Novotel, Mercure

The Sebel, ibis, ibis Styles, Orbis Hotels, Adagio Access and Thalassa Sea & Spa. The points can be redeemed for a variety of rewards and benefits such as discounts at booking, hotel vouchers or coupons of the programme partners. The programme was created five years ago and presently has

more than 14 million members, with the number to soon reach 15 million. There is a big countdown going on, because the 15 millionth members of the programme will receive a unique prize – a stay of their dreams in one of 2,700 hotels in 92 countries (for two people including flights), worth €6,000.

EARN POINTS EVEN FASTER!

Members of Le Club Accorhotels receive additional privileges, depending on their status and the brand of the hotel. An important aspect of the Le Club Accorhotels is that the collected points do not expire. It is sufficient that a programme member spends yearly at least one night in one of Accor hotels.

To meet the needs of hotel guests, Le Club Accorhotels, offers them new opportunities to enable them to collect points, earn prizes, and higher membership statuses even faster. From 1 July 2014, Le Club Accorhotels card holders receive 25% points more for each night, as well as a new price offer named "Only for the Chosen" – that is PLN 20 for each night booked online at accorhotels.com

TRAVEL WITHOUT LET-DOWNS

Joining Le Club Accorhotels programme is a perfect option for the upcoming holidays. With the membership you just need to choose the place where you want to spend your summer, and Le Club Accorhotels will take care of the rest. One of the privileges offered by the programme is ensuring that the place of your stay will never turn out to be a disappointment. With Le Club Accorhotels you can be sure that no matter whether you spend your holidays in the mountains or at the seaside, the standard of your hotel will suit your needs. In addition, Le Club Accorhotels means saving time, because the programme members have check-in priority, are entitled to late check-out and



Sofitel Warsaw Victoria

Members of Le Club Accorhotels receive additional privileges, depending on their status and the brand of the hotel.



Ibis Warsaw Old Town

other benefits depending on the status of the card.

During their stay, guests can also enjoy free wifi, as well as other pleasant surprises available only to members of Le Club Accorhotels. To enjoy the privileges during your stay at Accor hotels, simply complete the application form at the reception or via the website www.accorhotels.com/leclub. Upon registration, each guest

collects points for stays and other services purchased in the hotel. The points can then be redeemed for e.g. Le Club Accorhotels Rewards vouchers (with which you can pay for your stay), air miles at partner airlines, or services provided by the programme partners (Europcar, Club Med, Shell, Lenôtre, Die Bahn). You can also enjoy a number of other benefits offered by Le Club Accorhotels.

SHERATON - HOTELS FOR ENTHUSIASTS OF LIFE



MORE DETAILS AT
www.starwoodhotels.com
www.sheraton.com

With the number of travellers gradually increasing, more and more people seek hotels that not only meet their basic needs, but also offer something more than a room to stay. Over the last four years traveling expenses increased by nearly 40%, which is the double the growth rate of world GDP. In response to these macroeconomic trends Starwood Hotels & Resorts, the owner of Sheraton brand, is expanding its hotel portfolio. In Europe alone, the group plans to open 60 new hotels by 2020. The next few months will also mean record growth for the world's most recognizable brand of the group – Sheraton hotels. With the goal of expanding its portfolio to 500 hotels by 2016, Sheraton plans to launch 35 new hotels in the next 12

months. The new investments include such markets as Russia (Rostov-on-Don), Azerbaijan (Ismayilli Resort & Spa), and Switzerland (Zurich).

The strength of Starwood lies in the unique nature of each of its hotel brands, and building relationships with the guests. Research conducted by Gemius in Poland shows that for up to 58% Polish customers the brand of the product is the most important when making a purchase. They search for hotels that guarantee them not only a comfortable stay, but also experience that is in line with their expectations. The experience of the stay is the most important factor influencing the choice of the hotel for 51% of the respondents. This was followed by a good location of the property (48%), and the price (42%). That perception of the experience of

the stay is particularly important in the segment of luxury (59%) and upscale (54%) hotels. Sheraton is the largest and most global brand owned by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. Its status of a global icon is proved by the fact that Sheraton is recognized by 92% of business travellers – the highest result among hotel brands in the world. Sheraton operates nearly 500 hotels in 75 countries worldwide. The brand has repeatedly demonstrated a pioneering approach to doing business. It was the first hotel chain to introduce an automated and centralized booking system, and then a free helpline for guests.

Sheraton's mission is to connect and bring travellers closer, which reflects the belief that Life Is Better When Shared. Guests of Sheraton hotels are

* The data comes from a survey conducted by Market Metrix



mainly people who like to combine work with pleasure and for whom travel is also an opportunity to gain experience. They appreciate luxury devoid of pretentiousness, as well as individual attention to their needs.

In its mission to connect people, Sheraton has created products and services to ensure that its guests will have a comfortable stay in a hotel with a friendly atmosphere. The first place where they can experience this Sheraton's travel philosophy is the hotel's lobby. It is a space full of life, with Link@SheratonSM Experienced with Microsoft, situated in the very centre. It has been created for guests who wish to get in touch with their loved ones or colleagues, work, or socialize. At the Link@

Sheraton you can use the free internet access, watch the latest news or an interesting TV programme, read a newspaper, or print out documents.

Each room is equipped Sheraton Sweet Sleeper Bed™, which was designed specifically for Sheraton. The bedding consists of snow-white duvets and sheets made of pure cotton, hypo-allergenic white goose down pillows, as well as a bedspread which matches the décor.

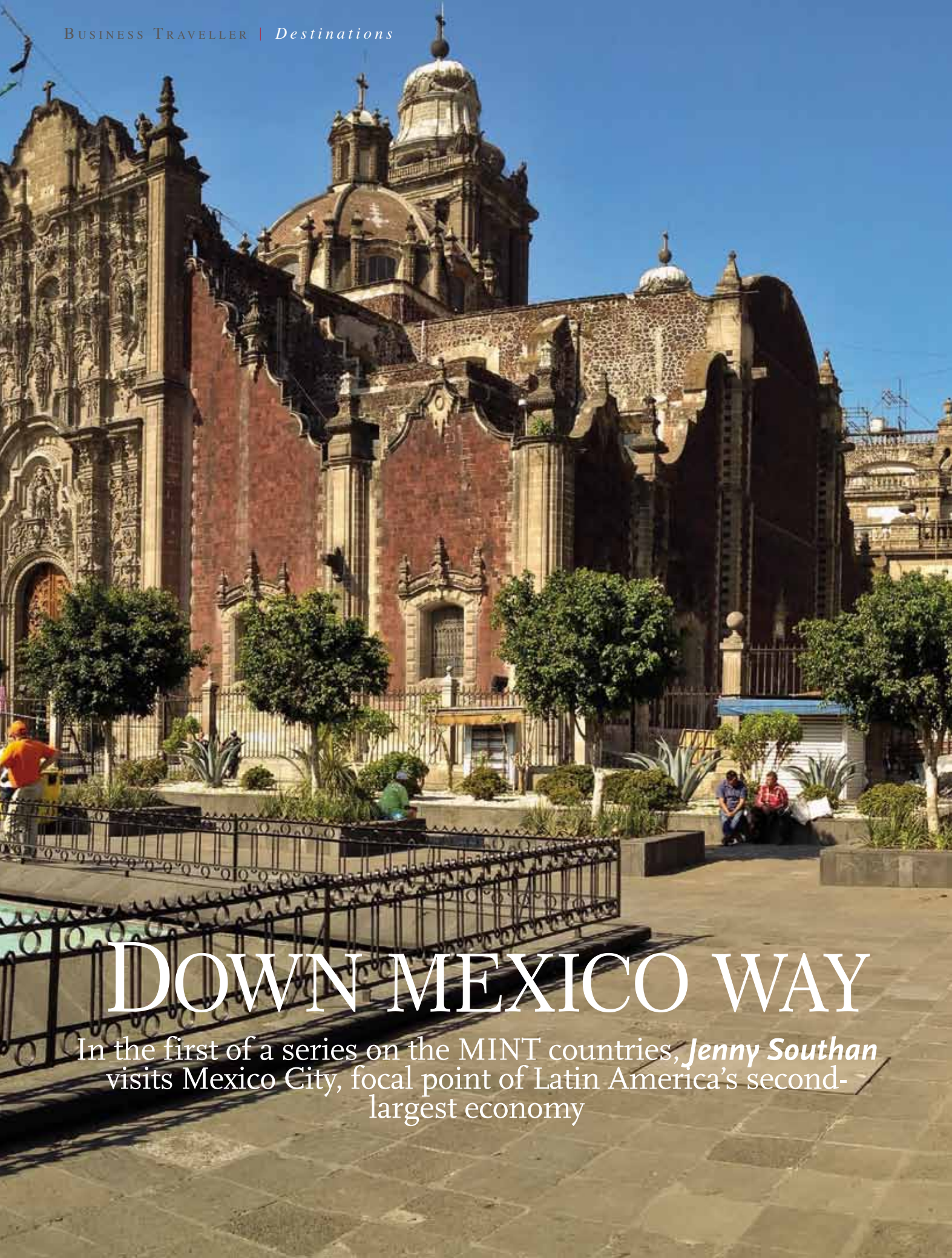
For the most demanding guests Sheraton has created Sheraton Club, with superior rooms and access to the Club Lounge - a space that can be used for work, rest or informal meetings. It also offers free snacks and drinks, and is accessible to guests around the clock.

Sheraton Social Hour is a perfect occasion for networking. It is the first of its kind premium wine tasting programme, created with the support of top experts in the business.

For all those who do not like to break with their training regime while travelling, the chain has designed Sheraton Fitness by Core Performance programme. It offers access to the most modern fitness centres, a special menu available in hotel restaurants and via room service, as well as a specially designed website with exercise programmes available online. A part of the programme is Color Your Plate concept, which is an uncomplicated approach to healthy eating.



At a meeting with press, Marco Foelske, the General Manager at Sheraton Poznan Hotel, presented Sheraton brand, as well as the latest trends in global tourism.



DOWN MEXICO WAY

In the first of a series on the MINT countries, *Jenny Southan* visits Mexico City, focal point of Latin America's second-largest economy



Like a giant hand-painted comic book, the murals of 20th-century artist Diego Rivera cover every inch of the vast interior walls of the National Palace, depicting the history of Mexico in vivid technicolour. Standing, neck craned, between the two staircases that lead to the upper walkway, you can see the story of the indigenous Mayans and Aztecs, the arrival of Spanish Conquistadors led by a grotesque Hernan Cortes in the 1500s, the cruelty of the Inquisition, the Mexican Civil War of 1910-20, and Karl Marx pointing in the direction of a utopian future, while gold-grabbing capitalists and corrupt, carousing priests carry on beneath him.

Since the founding of “New Spain”, now known as Mexico (it gained independence in 1821), the country has moved from a place of blood-thirsty sun-worshippers who conducted thousands of human sacrifices on pyramid altars, to an ambitious, forward-looking democracy of 120 million people.

The star of the region

It now has the second-largest economy in Latin America (just behind Brazil). It's doing so well, in fact, that economist Jim O'Neill has identified it as one of four fu-

ture economic giants – just as his so-called BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) have emerged to become nations of booming wealth and progress, so the MINTs (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) are predicted to follow in their footsteps.

Why Mexico? For a start, president Enrique Pena Nieto, who was elected at the end of 2012, has been amending the constitution and pushing through radical new reforms that apply to almost every aspect of society – from education, tax and banking to telecommunications, financial services and energy. It's all aimed at boosting productivity, opening up the economy to foreign investment and readying the country for “sustained growth”, as Pena Nieto said.

At the heart of it all is the capital, Mexico City, virtually equidistant from both the coastlines of the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean, and from the US border to the north and Guatemala to the south.

Jose Manuel Ramirez, partner in charge of international tax practice at KPMG in Mexico, says: “Historically, our culture has been very centralised. Look back to the pre-Hispanic era to what is now Mexico City and the whole government for the Aztecs were based

in Mexico City [formerly Tenochtitlan]. All the business and trade happened around there and that hasn't changed for 500 years. There are now more than 150 multinationals in the capital.”

THE CAPITAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE

With nine million people (21 million in the greater metropolitan area) averaging a youthful age of 25, the city proper produces almost 22 per cent of the country's GDP (US\$1.8 trillion in 2013) and has been ranked by Pricewaterhouse Coopers among the top-ten richest cities in the world.

This is a place, however, of shocking inequality, with more than 45.5 per cent of the country's population living below the poverty line. You only have to drive past the huge shanty towns around the capital to see this is a major issue that needs to be resolved.

Economic growth is driven by two things – the working population and its productivity. And it seems, for the first time, that Mexico might have a pretty good chance of improving both. Crucially, its population is already young and expanding, the single-biggest factor for growth.



In the long-term, we believe Mexico to be one of the fastest-growing economies, because of all the strengths that it has when weighed against the weaknesses.

THE POWER OF REFORMS

With the newest reforms introduced by the government, teaching positions can no longer be bought, or inherited by family members, and teachers will have to undergo systematic evaluations to ensure they are up to the job.

Another major reform is shaking up the energy industry. Mexico is the world's sixth-largest producer of black gold, filling 2.5 million barrels a day, but until now its oil and gas reserves have been tapped exclusively by state-operated company Pemex.

New legislation passed in December 2013 will see the industry privatised for the first time since 1938, resulting in projected revenues of US\$10 billion a year in the form of royalties and taxes from outside investors, increased yield and cheaper energy prices. Mexico's undersecretary of hydrocarbons, Maria de Lourdes Melgar Palacios, was reported as saying: "We expect these reforms to result in an increase of 1 per cent to GDP by 2018 and an added 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2025." Experts have forecast the associated value of direct and indirect investments to amount to US\$1 trillion.

David Franco, principal analyst for Maplecroft, a risk analytics, research and strategic forecasting company, says: "With the help of private investment, oil production will, as in 2005, reach 3.5 millions of barrels a day in 2018."

The first contracts are expected to be awarded next year, with firms from China, Singapore, Europe and the Americas already showing an interest.

O'Neill said: "Energy reform is crucial to the future of Mexico. The Ku-Malob-Zaap oil field on its own produces almost 10 per cent of what Saudia Arabia can muster." But he noted that the reforms were "deeply controversial".

"Resources like oil have often been seen as national treasures, not to be exploited by foreigners or subjected to the open market," O'Neill said. "But the flip side of national control is that you end up with a nationalised energy giant like Pemex, unable to benefit from making commercial decisions, infantilised by the state's parental control."

He predicts that without energy reform, Mexico's economy will only grow by 1.7 per cent; but with it, it could increase by 5.5 per cent. (To date, growth has not been as good as hoped – last year it was just 1.1 per cent, and this year, estimates have been downgraded from 3.9 per cent to 3 per cent.)



City markets, where you can buy everything – from food to more or less genuine crafts, are favourite tourist spots.





The murals of 20th-century artist Diego Rivera cover every inch of the vast interior walls of the National Palace, depicting the history of Mexico in vivid technicolour.



IN THE VERY HEART OF AMERICA

According to Pro Mexico Trade and Investment (promexico.gob.mx), Mexico is one of the most connected commercial players globally, a gateway to a potential market of more than one billion consumers and 60 per cent of the world's GDP.

Its location means it can easily move exports to both North and South America, giving it another advantage over China. It has 11 free trade agreements with more than 40 countries, including NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement).

The EU is Mexico's second-largest export market after the US, trading mainly in machinery, electrical goods, transport equipment and mineral products, and a free trade agreement between the two came into play in 2000. "We have had five trade missions in the past four months with about 130 companies," says John Pearson, head of UK Trade and Investment in Mexico.

Last summer, meanwhile, Mexico shook hands with China, creating what's become known as the "Tequila Agreement" because

of the large volumes of the national drink (and pork) the Asian nation wants to import.

A NEW TERMINAL

As Mexico continues to open up, so transport and infrastructure needs to cater to demand. Last year, Mexico City's Benito Juárez International airport experienced record traffic of 29.5 million people, with 12 million foreign visitors spending time in the capital itself.

With numbers expected to rise further, the government has proposed a 5,000-hectare expansion with 70 aircraft gates to accommodate an extra 40 million people a year. An architectural competition has so far seen Zaha Hadid, Richard Rogers and Norman Foster among those shortlisted to design the building, the first phase of which could be completed in 2018. There has also been talk of opening a second runway at Toluca airport, 60km away.

Milko Rivera, director of the Mexico Tourism Board, says: "It will bring Aeromexico back to where it needs to be in terms of the competitiveness of what it's offering."

TIME TO INVEST?

The capital has more than 600 hotels equating to 50,000 rooms, and plenty of big-name brands such as Four Seasons, Hyatt Regency and Intercontinental. A 260-room Hilton was unveiled in the Santa Fe business district in April.

Alan Duggan, vice-president of sales in Latin America for Starwood Hotels, which has seven properties in the city (including a Sheraton, Le Méridien, W and St Regis), says: "Mexico is crucial to our growth strategy and is our largest market in Latin America. Mexico City has the most hotels in the region, reflecting its maturity as a business and leisure destination."

Frequent media reports of ongoing cartel violence across the country can be off-putting, but Mexico City is less affected than places such as Juárez and Acapulco. It also has a high police presence, especially in busy public areas, where you can expect to come across armed troops with dogs and riot shields, and patrol cars with blue lights flashing.

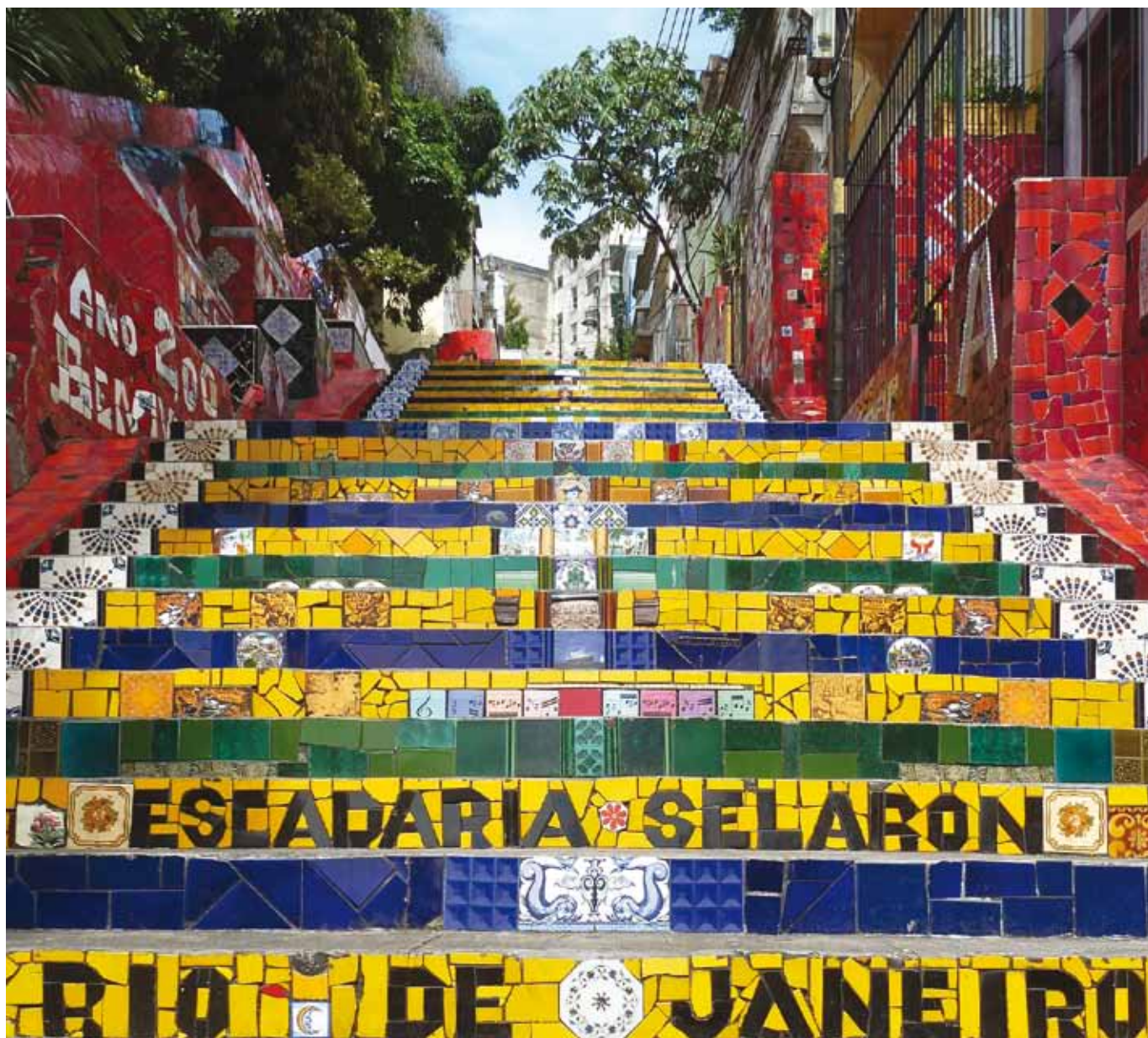
Even though FTI Consulting's 2014 Latin American Security Index suggested the country as a whole is among the top five most dangerous to do business in (along with Venezuela, Honduras, Guatemala and Haiti), a few sensible precautions will mean most travellers to the capital should not have a problem.

Nick Panes, managing director of risk consultancy Control Risks (Mexico), says: "As with many mega-cities, it suffers from crime issues in certain parts, but as a place to do business I think it is a progressive, open destination where the security risks are not insurmountable."

"For a business traveller, the primary risks are going to be around street crime, being in the wrong part of town at the wrong time. These issues can be mitigated by following some common-sense precautions, such as not taking taxis off the street, trying to maintain a low profile and avoiding obvious displays of wealth."

What does the future look like? Maplecroft's Franco says: "Corruption is still a high risk area in Mexico City but, in the long-term, we believe Mexico to be one of the fastest-growing economies, because of all the strengths that it has when weighed against the weaknesses."

KPMG's Ramirez predicts: "There will be more high-rise commercial space. There will be more sophistication, more efficiency and better transportation. You will see Mexico City evolving very close to cities such as New York or London."



WEEKEND IN... RIO DE JANEIRO

As the crowds descend on Brazil for this summer's FIFA World Cup, **Jenny Southan** suggests must-dos for a short break in co-host city Rio

This year's FIFA World Cup will take place between June 12 and July 13, in 12 host cities across Brazil. Unless you are one of the 600,000 football fans flying in especially for the occasion, it will be best to avoid Rio during this period as hotels will be full

and prices inflated. The city's 73,500-capacity Maracana stadium will be the venue for seven matches, including the final. If you want to pack in a few sights between games, or are in town at another time of year, here are some of the best things to see and do.

IPANEMA BEACH

Whether you're a beach bum or not, a weekend in Rio has to include some time on the sand – in the daytime, the beaches are the social epicentre of the city for every Carioca (as natives of Rio are known). You could choose Leblon or Copacabana, but

Ipanema, between the two, is widely considered the sexiest.

On Sundays, the road running alongside the seafront promenade is closed to traffic, allowing the buxom, the buff and the bronzed to stroll, cycle or roller-blade to their favourite spot. Friends arrange to meet near the postos (lifeguard huts) dotted along the water's edge.

The ocean tends to be too rough for swimming – instead, the fun comes from trying to stay standing up, or just giving in and rolling around in the surf. At one end of the bay is Arpoador Rock, which lures surfers, fishermen and hippies, while at the other are the Dois Irmaos (Two Brothers) mountains.

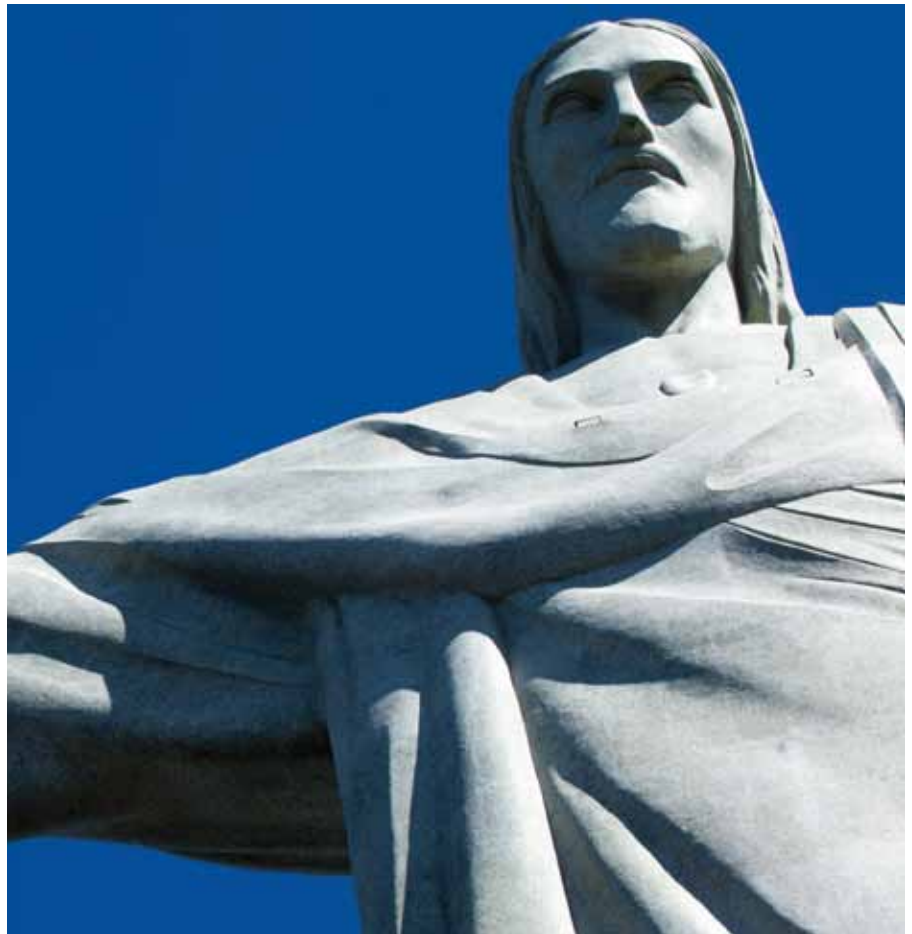
Each posto is known for a different subculture, with country flags, state flags, football flags and rainbow flags marking out territory. Posto 8 tends to attract kids from the favelas (slums), Posto 9 the gay and the beautiful, and Posto 10 the sporty. The people-watching is endlessly entertaining, and it's never long until a seller offers you a cold Skol beer or some corn-on-the-cob.

Keep a few Brazilian reals handy to hire a fold-out chair and an umbrella. No one, but no one, lies on a towel – bring a cotton sarong instead. Make sure you stay for sunset, which is an event in itself, and at dusk, pop across the road to trendy Bar Astor (110 Avenida Vieira Souto) for a margarita.

SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN

Before the days of “one lump or two”, when 16th-century Portuguese traders were cultivating sugar plantations in Brazil (with the help of local slaves), raw sugar had to be boiled, poured into conical moulds and left to solidify. The sugar “loaves” were then extracted and wrapped in paper for selling. Between 1600 and 1650, sugar accounted for 95 per cent of the country's exports, so it's no wonder that Rio's most distinctive peak was named as such.

Visitors have been ascending Sugarloaf Mountain since the early 1900s, when the first cable car was built. Located at the entrance of Guanabara Bay, the 396-metre summit affords stunning views of the Atlantic, the 4.5km stretch of Copacabana beach, the white tower blocks of Downtown, and Christ the Redeemer in the distance. An average of 1,360 people an hour are transported via aerial tramway from the sea-level ticket office at Praia Vermelha. It stops first at the 220-metre Morro da Urca hill, home to exotic gardens, before climbing to Sugarloaf itself. Tickets cost R\$62/£16.40 (10 per cent extra online at bondinho.com.br). Cable cars run 8.10am-9pm (first tickets 8am, last tickets 7.50pm).



You really can't come to Rio without making your way up Corcovado Mountain for a Kodak moment, arms outstretched, with Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer).



CHRIST THE REDEEMER

It's an obvious one, but you really can't come to Rio without making your way up Corcovado Mountain for a Kodak moment, arms outstretched, with Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer).

Standing 38 metres tall, the iconic art deco statue of Jesus was completed in the early 1930s and can be seen from miles around, even at night, when it is illuminated purple. Either drive up the 700-metre-high peak or take the 19th-century Corcovado rack railway, which takes you through the treeline of the Tijuca Forest in about 20 minutes, to the terminus just below the observation deck. From here, it's an escalator ride to the top, from where you can enjoy the truly God-like views. Note that you can no longer buy tickets for the tram at Cosme Velho station. Instead, book online at corcovado.com.br – they cost R\$50/£13.20 including entry to the monument, and run 8am-8pm daily every half-hour.

FAVELA TOUR

Rio's favelas get a lot of bad press for being dangerous hotbeds of drugs and violence. Marcelo Armstrong has been taking people into the shanty towns for years, and has set up a website, favelatour.com.br, where you can book visits. There are estimated to be almost 1,000 in the city, and about 40 now have a permanent police presence. The communities may be poor, but thanks to being built high up on the hillsides, they have million-dollar views. Marcelo will escort you first by jeep and then

on foot through the Vila Canoas and Rocinha favelas, taking in local homes and shops, dozens of narrow streets crisscrossed with reels of electricity cables, and a community school where you can buy handmade bowls and bags made of ring-pulls. You can take photos, but no close-ups of people without permission.

If you are feeling adventurous, visit the Maze jazz bar and hostel (jazzrio.com/en) in Tavares Bastos slum, run by eccentric ex-BBC correspondent Bob Nadkarni. Make sure you go with a local, though.

SELARON STEPS

This stunning flight of 215 mosaic-tiled steps leads from Ladeira de Santa Teresa all the way down to Rua Joaquim Silva in Lapa – is now one of Rio's most famous landmarks.

It was in 1990 that Chilean artist Jorge Selaron began renovating the dilapidated staircase outside his house, decorating it with ceramic fragments in Brazil's yellow, blue and green. Over time he became obsessed with the project. He hand-painted hundreds more, combining his recurring character of a pregnant African woman with messages and memorandums. A larger one near the bottom reads: "Living in a favela is an art. Nobody robs, nobody hears, nothing is lost, those who are wise obey those who give orders."

Sadly, at the beginning of last year, Selaron was found dead on the steps in an apparent case of death by self-immolation, although there were rumours at the time that it was murder. Despite this terrible end, his "tribute

to the Brazilian people" remains a glorious example of hope, passion and celebration.

SANTA TERESA AND LAPA NIGHTLIFE

Begin your evening out in the charming hilltop district of Santa Teresa, which is also home to characterful drinking spots, such as the white-tiled Bar do Mineiro (bardomineiro.net). Until a fatal crash in 2011, yellow trams used to trundle around the neighbourhood, but renovations to the line and a new fleet of cars will hopefully see it begin operations again this year.

Grab a bite to eat at quirky Espirito Santa (264 Rua Almirante Alexandrino; tel +55 21 25 07 4840; espiritosanta.com.br), which specialises in authentic Amazonian cuisine. There's an outdoor deck at the back where you can tuck into moqueca fish stew, fillet of pacu (a cousin to the piranha), palm hearts, sautéed plantain, and shrimp marinated in cachaça (Brazilian sugar cane brandy).

From here, you could meander your way down the Selaron Steps to Lapa, although if you're alone at night you may be better off asking the owner to call you a taxi. At the weekend, this district is heaving. Set against a backdrop of ornate, crumbling colonial buildings, there's dancing, drumming and punters spilling out of the bars on to the pavement.

Head for Carioca da Gema (79 Avenue Mem de Sa, barcariocadagem.com.br), which lays on riotous samba bands and serves dangerously strong caipirinhas made from cachaça, lime, sugar and ice.





Begin your evening out in the charming hilltop district of Santa Teresa.
If you wish to explore the city's nightlife, go to Lapa.





AUDI IS SET TO CONQUER THE WORLD

With the launch of the sporty A3 Sedan late this summer, Audi will enter the world's largest market segment – the class of compact sedans.

The third model in the successful A3 model line impresses with ultra-lightweight excellence, strong and very efficient drivetrains, and a great many high-end infotainment and driver assistance systems. The top-of-the-line version is the S3 Sedan with 221 kW (300 hp).

THE OLYMPIC SOUL

Audi's first notchback model in the premium compact class, the Audi A3 Sedan's sporty character is dazzling. It all starts with a curb weight of just 1,250 kg (2,755.78 lb) for the four-door 1.4 TFSI with S tronic, thanks to Audi's lightweight design mastery. Many of the components in the occupant cell are made of high-end hot-formed steel; the hood is aluminum. The low weight of the chassis and engines also sets new standards.

Three engines will initially be available for

the Audi A3 Sedan: one TDI and three TFSI units. They respectively exhibit 1.4, 1.4, 1.8 and 2.0 litres of displacement, and feature power outputs between 103 kW (140 hp) and 132 kW (180 hp). All four engines have been overhauled to combine robust power with astonishing fuel efficiency. A particular highlight for the 1.4 TFSI is the cylinder on demand (COD) system. At low loads, it temporarily shuts off two cylinders.

Concerning the powertrain, the A3 Sedan is also best-in-class. Depending on the engine, a manual transmission or the S tronic is available. When combined with the Audi drive select dynamics system, the S tronic dual-clutch transmission boasts a free-wheeling function that further reduces fuel consumption. Quattro permanent all-wheel drive will be made available before long.

The sporty personality of the Audi A3 Sedan can be traced in part to an optimized distribution of axle loads (59% to 41%, front

to rear) and a sophisticated chassis. The MacPherson front suspension contains some aluminum components, while the four-link rear suspension handles longitudinal and lateral forces separately. A sensitive power-steering system features an electro-mechanical drive for high efficiency. Audi can also install progressive power steering, which varies the steering ratio. Electronic limited slip differential – an intelligent subsystem of electronic stabilization control (ESC) – makes handling even smoother and safer during fast cornering.

THE ELEGANCE OF A BLACK PANTHER

Some 4,460 mm in length (14.63 ft), the design of the Audi A3 Sedan combines classic notchback styling with the dynamics of a convertible. The flat roof line terminates at the C-pillar and merges seamlessly with the shoulder line. The tornado line is



It's hard to list all the strengths of Audi A3 Sedan, but a broad assortment of assistance systems definitely bolsters the A3 Sedan. Some solutions have been borrowed directly from luxury limousines.

a prominent contour edge and the wheel arches are remarkably flared.

As with all Audi vehicles, the single-frame radiator grille is the primary design element up front. The bumpers, which terminate in striking horizontal contours, as well as large air inlets underscore the width of the A3 Sedan. Audi can optionally fit this new model with all-LED headlights, a marvel of engineering and a feast for the eyes alike. Taillights boasting light-emitting diodes are also available.

Equipment lines also feature their own respective interior colors. The S line sports package for the Ambition line, for instance, bathes the interior entirely in black. Available upholstery materials include fabric covers, a mix of fabric and artificial leather, Milano leather and a combination of Pearl Nappa leather and Alcantara.

Individual options such as Audi adaptive light and a panoramic glass sunroof are taken directly from the luxury class.

PIONEERING SOLUTIONS

As far as multimedia is concerned it's easier to say what Audi A3 Limousine doesn't have than what it does. The Bang & Olufsen sound system and MMI Navigation system are just the beginning of the list. The user terminal has a turn/push control designed as a "touchwheel" with MMI touch – the touchwheel's top surface is a touch-sensitive pad for inputting letters and numbers. The Audi connect system ideally complements the MMI navigation plus. Audi connect will soon grant one-of-a-kind Internet access to A3 customers in LTE standard. The driver benefits from customized Internet services integral to Audi connect. Services

range from navigation via Google Earth images and Google Street View through Audi online traffic information to Facebook and Twitter. A brand-new Audi connect service is the parking-space locator. This feature provides information on parking spaces, multi-level parking facilities and underground garages.

A broad assortment of assistance systems also bolsters the A3 Sedan. They range from adaptive cruise control to Audi side assist, Audi active lane assist, camera-based traffic sign recognition and the park-assist system with surround-view camera to the safety system Audi pre sense. The driver information system with rest recommendation is standard in the sporty and luxurious Ambition and Ambiente equipment lines; it is optional for the entry-level Attraction line.

Joanna Krzyczkowska

Audi's first notchback model in the premium compact class, the Audi A3 Sedan's sporty character is dazzling.



SUCCESS IN BUSINESS HIDES IN... A CUP OF COFFEE



With a cup of coffee everything seems beautiful. Smiling receptionist Anna or an amusing banking consultant – it is half the battle won! However in combination with aromatic espresso they provide perfect and unique service.

In effective business, customer service is of utmost importance. Similarly, good customer service makes your business look more impressive. In some places of business, if you wish to make your customer feel treated in an exceptional way, you offer them a cup of the finest coffee. Such places include a waiting area in an exclusive car dealership, a spa, or a hair salon. You may achieve the desired effect with professional solutions for business and the highest quality blends of Nespresso coffee.

INTUITIVE DEVICES...

With a cup of fine coffee in your hand, everything seems more beautiful, regardless of what you are doing - waiting for the inspection of braking pads in your car, undergoing quick rejuvenation treatment in a beauty salon, or waiting for your suite in the hotel foyer. But, how can you be sure that the coffee you offer to your customers is of good quality? Simply, by choosing professional solutions from Nespresso – a pioneer in pod-based machines and premium portioned coffee.

Nespresso's intuitive coffee makers boast top design that can be incorporated in any

space. They are designed for frequent use, made with Swiss precision, and with their first-rate specifications can prepare coffee like from a real café.

... TO PLEASE YOUR CUSTOMERS

Which solution should you choose? The tower is a simple modular system with four configurations to choose from. It combines a flexible method of payment and ease of use, allowing you to prepare your own coffee at the touch of a button. It has ample storage space for pods, sugar and stirrers. You can decide on the method of payment for coffee - by coins, cards, or free of charge, for example in the VIP zone.

If coffee is to be served by a member of your personnel, for example at the reception desk or in the office, you can opt for one of the devices from Gemini series, equipped with the semi-automatic insertion and ejection capsule system. Thanks to double head extraction system and a 3-litre container, it can prepare two cups simultaneously. This solution is particularly popular in beauty salons, treated as an additional moment of pleasure, or in the customer area in banks, where negotiation loans or pre-

sending individually tailored financial solutions becomes easier with a cup of fine coffee. Coffee should also be present in luxury boutiques, where one of consumer coffee machines will be a perfect choice. For example, the retro-looking Citiz model can be put in a classic interior, while the compact and minimalist Inissia – in modern ones.

... WITH A CUP OF COFFEE WITH UNIQUE AROMA

The offer of reliable coffee makers is complemented by a wide range of coffees. Every Grand Cru is obtained from selected beans, undergoing proper roasting. The offer includes intense, mild and decaf mixtures, which come from plantations around the world.

The range starts with distinctive Ristretto Intenso – a combination of Arabica and Robusta from South and Central America, and finishes with delicate decaffeinated Lungo Decaffeinato obtained from the South American varieties of the coffee plant. Nespresso capsules (pods) are hermetically sealed to provide unique aroma and freshness of the coffee. Just drop the capsule into the machine, press the button and watch your customer smiling!





Profesjonalne rozwiązania usługi WIFI
dla właścicieli biurowców, najemców, restauracji, galerii handlowych oraz innych lokali usługowych.

- Gwarantowana jakość oraz dostępność usług,
- Estetyczne instalacje wewnątrz budynków,
- Usługi dopasowane do potrzeb klienta,
- Bezpieczny dostęp do internetu,
- Niski koszt administracji usługi oraz sprzętu,
- Profesjonalnie przeprowadzone planowanie radiowe,
- Podział dostępu dla pracowników oraz gości biura,
- Dedykowany Opiekun dla każdego klienta

Aforte więcej niż Hot Spot

4 HOURS IN... MADRID

Although Barcelona is considered the most beautiful, and the most tourist-oriented city in Spain, Madrid is equally attractive. Just spend here a few hours and you will fall in love with this city.



Erecting a massive building which looks like a delicate lacy ornament is definitely not a piece of cake. And there are hundreds or even thousands such buildings in Madrid.

Madrid is an city extraordinary city - modern, well communicated, and at the same time you can feel the breath of history at every step. And at the same time, the city is nothing like a museum. The local monuments are still alive – there are people living in centuries-old buildings, in some of them you will find ordinary shops, restaurants and even the local museums don't resemble "temples" where you are required to remain quiet and contemplate the great art...

GRAN VIA AND CALLE SERRANO

Start your tour from Gran Via street – one of the most representative streets in the city. The street is quite young for Madrid, it is merely a hundred years old, but it is here, where you will find the shopping, cultural and entertainment centre. It's the centre of nightlife, you can buy almost anything here – from famous cold meats to products of one of the most luxurious Spanish brands – Loewe. Its boutique was first opened here in... 1939 (currently under no. 8) and was rewarded with the title of the Royal Supplier at the beginning of the century. If luxurious shopping is your thing, head for Serrano street. You will find here designer boutiques of such brands as Michael Kors, Armani, Prada, as well as Manolo Blahnik, discreetly hidden under the number 58.

PUERTA DEL SOL AND BARRIO DE LAS LETRAS

Puerta del Sol (Gate of the Sun) is only a stone's throw from Gran Via. In the evening, you can see buskers performing here. You also shouldn't miss the statue of Charles III and to pat on the bottom the statue of a little bear climbing a madroño tree. The bear is the heraldic symbol of Madrid, and tourists believe that if they touch it, they will one day return to the city. The kilómetro cero (kilometre zero) tile on the pavement at the entrance of the House of the Post Office seems to play a similar role. It's a special location in Spain, from which



The Crystal Palace in the Retiro Park, the bear on Puerta del Sol, the houses resembling fine works of art, Las Ventas Arenas... It's virtually impossible to see all of the major Madrid's attractions during one stay.

all the distances are measured. Apparently if you step on it, you will visit Madrid again. Leaving the square, go down San Jeronimo street, then turn right and a few blocks later you will get to Santa Ana square situated in the heart of the Literary Quarter. A while ago, the district was frequented by Ernest Hemingway, and before that in 17th century it was home to numerous poets and playwrights, such as Lope de Vega or Cervantes.

SOBRINO DE BOTÍN RESTAURANT

Go down Antocha street to reach Plaza Mayor, where a stone's throw away is Calle de Cuchilleros. Here under number 17 you will find Sobrino de Botin, the world's oldest restaurant by the Guinness Book of Records. Since 1725, when it was established, it has been visited by various famous patrons, including Scott Fitzgerald or Graham Green. Ernest Hemingway was even friends with the grandparents of the current owners. It's here where he wrote "Death in the Afternoon", and the final scene of "The Sun also Rises" takes place in the very restaurant. The Botin restaurant was also mentioned in the works of other writers such as Arturo Barea, Frederic Forsythe or Ramon Gomez de la Serna. Inside, you can still sense the spirit of great literature, as well as have a fantastic meal. Apart from its flagship dish - cochinito asado (roast suckling pig) - roasted in the 300-year-old oven, you should definitely try the local gazpacho, ice cream and naturally, wine.

MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

After the meal, take a walk to Tirso de Molin underground station, get off after one stop, and take a short walk again to Prado - one of the most famous museums in the world. To see everything that it houses you would need way more than 4 hours, or even 4 days, but it's worth visiting if only for a moment. Seeing the most famous Spanish painting - Las Meninas by Diego Velazquez is an absolute must, but you should also see the rich collection of paintings by Francisco Goya - including the famous the Nude Maja and the Clothed Maja. Note that "Maja" is not a name, but a Spanish word meaning a girl, a cutie. It's impossible to list all the major works, but you'll also find here paintings by such artists as Picasso, El Greco, Titian, Bosch, Memling and almost all of the world's most important painters.

THE RETIRO PARK

A stroll down the beautiful Parque del Buen Retiro will make a perfect end to a perfect day. With a little bit of luck on your way back from Prado to Retiro you will see the most extraordinary buskers in Madrid - a saxophone player and a dog, which can howl to the rhythm of the music played by the owner. The park is exceptional even for the city as green as Madrid. It used to be the Royal Gardens, but when Charles III came to power, Retiro became an urban

park. The beginnings were quite informal - the king allowed the citizens to use one section of the park, and in 1868 Queen Isabella II gave the gardens to the city. You can have a boat trip round a lake here, watch a theatrical performance (usually held during holidays) or simply admire unusual plants. There are many exotic tree species like Montezuma Cypress planted in 1633, but even far more ordinary thuyas were trimmed in such a way (over the centuries) that now they resemble unique plants from faraway lands.

LAS VENTAS AND BERNABEU

If you can't imagine a trip to Madrid with no adrenaline, you can choose between people's or bulls' games. Plaza de Toros de Las Ventas, the home of bullfighting in Spain was erected as late as 1929, but it's a perfect symbol of Arabic origin of the city. The red-brick walls were built in the Moorish style and decorated with intricately painted ceramic tiles. The arena is worth seeing, although to really understand the corrida, you would have to be born in this part of Europe. Bernabeu - the stadium of Real Madrid football team - can also provide you with emotions, though it's much less controversial. Every football fan should visit the Museum of the Royal Club to see the European Cup or find the name of Jerzy Dudek listed among the team players.

Joanna Kadej-Krzyczkowska



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 different price?

I made a reservation at a hotel in Madrid. My company has an agreement for €98 per night. The price includes breakfast and internet access. My agent booked a room at a higher price - €120. I wanted to change the price, but it turned out to be impossible. I was informed the hotel was fully booked. I knew that there were vacancies, as I saw people making new reservations. Why did the agent book a room at a higher price? I also had to pay extra for breakfast and the internet was not included.

Tomasz

Dear Tomasz,
I checked your reservation and the agreement. Indeed it mentioned the price of €98 a night for a standard room, including free internet access and breakfast in a form of buffet. I also notice the agreement doesn't apply to deluxe or executive rooms. This means that you can't benefit from the corporate rate in rooms of higher category. In such cases, you have to pay the official rate, available at the time of making the reservation. Please keep in mind that hotels, just like airlines use "revenue management" systems, allowing them to make the maximum profit when accepting the reservations. That's why, even if standard rooms are vacant, the corporate rates might be unavailable. Your agreement doesn't specify that the corporate rate will be always available (the so-called "last room availability"). When the hotel is (or is expected to be) fully booked, it's not profitable to open the lowest rates. They are usually limited. Similarly, special prices on plane seats are closed if the flight is booked. With last-minute booking, only the highest rates are available. Your situation was even simpler - all the standard rooms were already taken and you stayed in a deluxe room. That's why your agent couldn't book a room at the corporate rate. He booked the room at the lowest available rate, which didn't include breakfast or free internet access.

Long haul flight and health

My boss's mother is flying to her cousin in Miami for holidays. She's an elderly person with a history of heart disease. She's afraid of the long flight because of her health. My boss asked me to book her a comfortable seat. He mentioned something about the economy class syndrome. I'm not sure what he meant by that. Should she be prepared for the flight in any particular way? What type of seat should I book for her?

Agnieszka

Dear Agnieszka,
I wrote about economy class syndrome already a few years ago. I'd be happy to tell you more about it, as this subject often comes up during the holiday season. Please note that in the case of any doubt concerning health, you should contact your doctor. The doctor will provide precise suggestions when it comes to travelling or prescribe appropriate medications. ESC (economy class syndrome) is a condition related to the inactivity associated with air or car travel, etc., when you sit in one position for a long time. If there is some pressure building up in the back of your thigh, it might result in clogged veins. People with DVT (deep vein thrombosis), the elderly and children are at risk for ESC. In extreme cases, it may lead to a formation of a blood clot and pulmonary embolism, which is a life-threatening condition. That's why you need to be well prepared for the flight. First of all, you should wear loose clothes and comfortable shoes. You might also want to take your shoes off during the flight. I recommend selecting an aisle seat, which gives you more comfort (the window seat usually limits the possibility to stretch out your legs). The best seats are in the first row (bulkhead seats) as they have more room for legs. You can also use special compression bands, reducing the diameter of the veins and thus increasing the blood flow rate. You should stay hydrated - drink plenty of still mineral water and juices while avoiding coffee and alcohol. It's good to stand up and walk for a while from time to time during the flight. It is also advisable to exercise (each professional airline includes examples of exercises in their on-board magazines). In the case of additional health complications it's highly recommended to contact your doctor before the flight.



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