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VIEW COSMOPOLITAN WARSAW

OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONS

In this issue I recommend you to read articles focusing on two regions of the world that are striving to come out of the shadow. One of them is Thailand with its capital Bangkok, where political instability and economic malaise in the past couple of years had a chokehold on growth. But June figures from the World Bank's Thailand Economic Monitor show growth expected at around 3.5 per cent for 2015, up from 0.9 per cent the previous year. Visitor figures in the first quarter are at their highest ever at 7.88 million. The public spend is also on an increase.

Out of 189 economies, Thailand now sits 26th for ease of doing business, up from 28th a year ago.

Another place where you can observe considerable growth, is Africa. According to McKinsey, Africa's consumer-facing industries are predicted to grow by more than US\$400 billion by 2020, accounting for more than half of the total revenue increase that all businesses are expected to generate there by the end of the decade.

Research by Euromoney shows that, since 2000, consumer spending in sub-Saharan Africa has grown at a steady 4 per cent per year, reaching almost US\$600 billion in 2010. The market is expected to be worth US\$1 trillion by 2020.

These are impressive figures, representing glittering opportunities for brands and property investors. Enjoy your reading!

Marzena Mróz

Marzena Mróz
redaktor naczelna

*Najlepsza Linia Lotnicza
na Bliskim Wschodzie*

*Najlepszy Projekt Fotela
w Klasie Biznes*

*Najlepsza Linia Lotnicza
na Świecie*



Qatar Airways Najlepsza Linia Lotnicza na Świecie



Jesteśmy dumni, że zostaliśmy wybrani przez naszych pasażerów po raz trzeci z rzędu, *Najlepszą Linią Lotniczą na Świecie*.

W imieniu całego zespołu Qatar Airways, pragniemy wyrazić nasze serdeczne podziękowania dla milionów ludzi, którzy na nas głosowali.

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Linie lotnicze

Lufthansa

NEW CONNECTIONS TO SAN JOSÉ

Lufthansa is to introduce a new non-stop service between Frankfurt and San Jose, California (USA). The new service, which will commence on 29 April 2016, will be the first non-stop flights to the state's Silicon Valley from a European airport. The five-times-weekly service will be operated using Airbus A340-300 equipment. The new westbound LH 488 service will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, departing from Lufthansa's Frankfurt hub in the morning and arriving in San Jose in the early afternoon after a 12-hour flight. The corresponding eastbound LH 489 service will operate as a night flight, leaving San Jose in the afternoon and arriving in Frankfurt the following morning. The schedules have been designed to provide the best possible connections with other Lufthansa services from and to Germany, Europe, Asia and Africa at the Frankfurt hub. The San Jose metropolitan region has a population of around 3.3 million and lies in the heart of Silicon Valley, the major site of high-tech start-ups and corporations. San Jose is also an attractive tourist destination, serving as an ideal starting point to explore Northern California. Big Sur, Yosemite National Park, Lake Tahoe and other key attractions are all close by, making San Jose a genuine travel alternative to San Francisco, which is just 70 kilometres away. Lufthansa travellers to and from San Jose will have three seating classes to choose from: Business Class, Premium Economy and Economy. And a round-trip ticket will be available for as little as €899.

Watch

Certina

TIME FOR A NEW MODEL

Equipped with either a moulded rubber strap or a three-row brushed stainless-steel bracelet, the new DS Action Chronograph is a stunning timepiece. Its broad bezel and oversized, skeletonised hands, indices and indicators make reading the time an easy matter in all conditions, enhanced by the uncompromising accuracy provided by its cutting-edge Pre-cidrive™ movement. Behind a sapphire crystal treated with anti-reflective coating on both faces, the black dial is home to two chronograph counters, for 30-min. and 1/10th-sec., and a small-second counter. Each



counter is highlighted by a silver-coloured outline. A date window is conveniently placed at 6 o'clock. The display of the CERTINA turtle logo on the case back is a reminder of the superior quality of DS Action. The DS Action's sporty dial comes in either black or blue, to satisfy all watch lovers. Suggested retail price: PLN 3,060; certina.com



Technology

Lenovo

COMPUTER FOR BUSINESS

Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Carbon sets a new standard for business ultra-portables. It is a combination of refined elegance, lightning-speed performance and ultra-light design. A real premium class for the most demanding users who seek innovative solutions and maximum working comfort. Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Carbon sets a whole new standard of mobility. It is slim and incredibly light - in fact, it is the world's lightest 14-inch ultra-book. What is more, its battery allows for 10 hours of continuous work without recharging. The ergonomic, six-row keyboard is also illuminated.

Beauty

Carpe Diem

A PERFECT FIGURE

All those who dream of having a slim, well-shaped figure, but dread the invasive treatment - should try the revolutionary solutions called i-Lipo. It is an innovative laser technology used to reduce excessive fat in the area of abdomen, thighs, buttocks, arms and the chin. The set includes an extra massage head called Ultra, which can be used to reduce cellulite and firm the whole body; carpediem.pl



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Club Med

Architecture

Patio Cosmopolitan

NEW PLACE

There is a new place in Warsaw that combines world-class architecture, art and culinary delights. The patio in its very centre features now a mobile installation by a prominent Israeli artist Eran Shakine. The work entitled "You and Me" is an 8-metre high sculpture of a couple. The woman and the man face each other, moving slowly up and down as if they were on a huge swing. The newly open space is also the venue to try the delights made by first-class chefs from all over the world. It is here where the iconic Benihana brand has opened its first Japanese restaurant in Poland. A few steps away you can try real flavours of South America thanks to Ceviche Bar by Martin Gimenez Castro. There is also La Fromagerie where you can taste more than 100 types of cheese, and Odette Tea Room, which offers delicious sweets and a wide choice of tea.



Beauty

Sephora

WINTER TRENDS

Streams of gold, silver geyzers, explosions of glitter. This winter Sephora proposes myriads of golden sparkles and iridescent sparks for the face, body and hair. The result? A truly dazzling look - perfect for a proper celebration of the New Year. The essential glamour touch is obtained with finely ground silvery glitter that can be applied in various ways: by patting onto the top of the cheekbone, under the brow ridge or applied with thick brush onto the neck and shoulders. The complete set for this killer look includes golden or silvery glitter spray, ultra-shiny lip gloss and the top coat for extra glamour. Get carried away with this incredible whirl of glitter dust with remarkably tempting glare; sephora.pl



Technology

New app

FRANCE COLLECTION

A new app named France Collection is a true interactive and practical companion to your trips to the Napoleon's country. Towns, cities and their monuments are sorted by theme. The app also features numerous tours and quizzes. With geolocation feature you can explore the nearest attractions and monuments, learning about their history. Each completed task is awarded with points to move from amateur to mater level. A very useful thing when planning your next journey.

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Podróże inspirują



Tourism

The Dominican Republic

HOTEL FOR DISCERNING CUSTOMERS

The Dominican Republic is one of the most beautiful places in the Caribbean. It is associated primarily with beaches covered with white sand, tropical atmosphere, wonderful lush nature, colonial UNESCO World Heritage sites as well as excellent service. Those who visit the country can book a stay in luxury boutique hotels or international hotel chains that offer all-inclusive packages. One of the most popular resorts is a monumental Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, situated on the east coast of the cape of Punta Cana. The property has as many as 1,775 beautifully designed and well-equipped rooms and suites, 13 pools, 11 restaurants, a fitness centre, spa, amphitheatre, the famous Oro disco, as well as a casino.

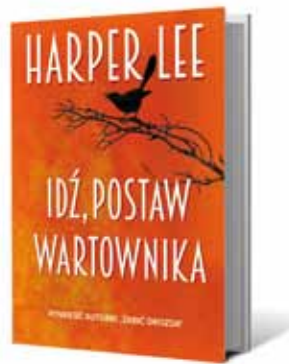
Those who choose to stay at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, should take advantage of a new luxury package called Rock Royalty Level, which includes VIP check-in and check-out, personal staff, spa package, massages, aromatherapy, as well as free concert tickets. Active leisure aficionados can use the resort's tennis and volleyball courts, numerous mountain bike trails and a golf course. Punta Cana is considered to be a paradise for golf lovers, mostly owing to a large number of high-class golfing facilities located here. Hard Rock Golf Club features an 18-hole course designed by a famous architect Jack Nicklaus. In 2016 the city will open a new sports park. The facility is said to offer unusual and original ways to practise sports, including those that guarantee a real adrenaline boost. The hotel also offers well-equipped conference centre, as well as exclusive wedding packages. No wonder it is considered one of the best venues to organize your wedding combined with honeymoon. GoDominicanRepublic.pl

Book

Best-seller

GO, SET A WATCHMAN

Harper Lee, the author of the iconic "To Kill a Mockingbird", returns with a new novel. Within just a week after its publishing, "Go, Set a Watchman" has sold in the US in over one million copies. It has been equally popular in the UK and Germany, placing high on the list of the bestsellers in those countries. In Poland the book will hit bookstore shelf in November. We can't wait!



Airline

LOT

BEST AIRLINE IN EASTERN EUROPE

LOT Polish Airlines has received yet another Business Traveller Award for the best Eastern European Airline, presented by the British edition of the magazine. This year's award ceremony was held in Royal Garden Hotel in London Kensington. The statuette for LOT Polish Airlines was received by David Bentley, the representative of the carrier in the United Kingdom. This award is further confirmation of the company's strong position in the market. The Polish edition of Business Traveller congratulates the winner and wishes further success!



Airline

Finnair

AIRBUS 350 XWB TO FLY TO SHANGHAI

Finnair is Europe's first airline to receive and put into operation the new and long-awaited Airbus A350 XWB aircraft. Finnair intends to double its Asian traffic by 2020 from the 2010 baseline, and the A350 fleet investment is the backbone of this strategy. The company has ordered a total of 19 A350's, making it the biggest investment in Finnair's history. The first four aircraft are expected to arrive in the fleet in 2015, with another seven being delivered in 2016 and 2017. The complete order will be fulfilled by 2023. The new A350 aircraft also plays a key role in Finnair's cargo strategy, providing up to 50% more cargo capacity by 2020. The A350's first scheduled commercial flight, from Helsinki to Amsterdam and Oslo will be on October 9, 2015 as part of its crew familiarisation tour. The first Finnair Airbus A350 XWB will enter into long-haul service on November 21, 2015 on Finnair's Helsinki-Shanghai route.





BELLA&MEDYCYNA

Doktor Magdalena Łopuszyńska jest doktorem nauk medycznych, dermatologiem, lekarzem medycyny estetycznej. Ukończyła Akademię Medyczną w Warszawie w 1985 roku. Potem był staż i specjalizacja I i II stopnia z dermatologii w Klinice Dermatologii CSK MSW. Ukończyła również Podyplomową Szkołę Medycyny Estetycznej PTL. Gdy dr Łopuszyńska stawiała pierwsze kroki do realizacji swoich marzeń w zakresie przedłużania młodości kondycji skóry, towarzyszył jej cały świat medyczny, który również debiutował na tym polu. Wszystko wymagało dogłębnego poznania i zrozumienia. Zasięgnięcia wiedzy u źródeł. W tamtym czasie to, co pragnęła robić dr Łopuszyńska było czystym wizjonerstwem. Częścią jej etyki pracy od początku był ciągły rozwój i budowanie kompetencji. Regularnie uczestniczy w kongresach i sympozjach medycyny estetycznej. Świadomie wybiera interesujące ją obszary. Po 20 latach treningu intuicji zawodowej od razu wie, jaka nowa kuracja lub technolo-



gia odniesie sukces i będzie służył pacjentom. W odróżnieniu do dnia dzisiejszego, 20 lat temu nie istniały gotowe produkty, rozwiązania i sieci sprzedaży znanych marek. Co było podobne, to ludzie pragnący czuć się atrakcyjni, chcący dbać o swoje atuty wizualne i poszukujący specjalisty, który ich w tym wesprze. Zespół lekarzy i specjalistów pracujących w Gabinet Kosmetyki Lekarskiej BELLA, który od niedawna znajduje się przy ul. Pięknej 19 w Warszawie, to wciąż ten sam skład od 20 lat, powiększony adekwatnie do rozwoju gabinetu i potrzeb rosnącej rzeszy klientów. Zespół może liczyć nie tylko na skuteczne zarządzanie pracą, ale też na profesjonalne wsparcie, konsultację i rozwój dzięki wewnętrznym szkoleniom prowadzonym przez dr Łopuszyńską. Na współpracę z BELLA zdecydowali się również specjaliści chirurgii plastycznej najwyższej klasy tacy jak z dr T. Witwicki, czy prezesem Polskiego Towarzystwa Medycyny Estetycznej dr A. Ignaciuk.

www.bella-derm.pl

BUSINESS IN BANGKOK

Is Thailand turning a corner? The government installed via military coup in 2014 has been at pains to point this out to the world, and evidence is mounting to suggest it may be correct.





Political instability and economic malaise in the past couple of years had a chokehold on growth and the capital Bangkok endured the brunt of this. But June figures from the World Bank's Thailand Economic Monitor show growth expected at around 3.5 per cent for 2015, up from 0.9 per cent the previous year.

PROS AND CONS

Domestic demand has lifted, visitor figures in the first quarter are at their highest ever at 7.88 million, and overall public spend is up. Out of 189 economies, Thailand now sits 26th for ease of doing business, up from 28th a year ago, says the World Bank.

There's more evidence from hotel solutions provider HRS, which shows Bangkok saw a massive 46.3 per cent growth in room rates in Q2 this year compared with the previous year. "With a more stabilised environment, people are more confident travelling back to Bangkok," says HRS managing director for Asia-Pacific Todd Arthur.

"TCEB [Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau] has been actively working towards rebuilding meeting planner confidence, and has launched three campaigns to highlight three of the country's key unique features as a business events host.

"With these campaigns ... the country can expect to welcome more business events visitors. The multiple-entry visa is [also] likely to be a trade boon, making it easier for business travellers to visit often and attracting longer-stay tourists to the country."

Still, security problems and instability linger, the worst possible example being last month's bomb attack downtown, which rocked the city. Thailand also has an ongoing insurgency in the south and a bitter political polarisation pruned by a military coup.

One of the city's biggest stakeholders, Country Group CEO Ben Taechaubol, told Business Traveller Asia-Pacific the day after the attack that the losses on August 17 were deeply mourned by the nation. "It's too soon for us to judge the ramifications of these actions, but it's frustrating when economically our country was on a positive trajectory and [is now] hindered by the sudden shock of this appalling incident," he says. "Nonetheless, I believe this will only have an interim impact on Thailand and our economy, as our people have time and time again shown spirit, unification, and resilience. Furthermore, our outlook will remain positive as our nation continues to show strong core fundamentals and economical potential."

THE RIVER OF HOPE

If history is any guide Taechaubol is right, and the impacts of such one-off attacks, although sharp, are usually short term when fundamentals are strong. And despite this event, the tide that may yet turn the capital's fortunes, figuratively and literally, is the rejuvenation of Bangkok's enduring waterway, the Chao Phraya River.

After a decades-long hiatus from development, the big brands and the bigger developers have descended with a splash on the

riverfront. Like squares on a chessboard they border the River of Kings as it flows through Bangkok's heart, multi-billion-dollar developments that have sprung up as if preparing for a high-end battle for corporate dollars, retail and travel spend, and luxury hotel and residential investment.

David Robinson, spokesman for Bangkok River Partners, a group formed to market and attract local and international business and tourism to Chao Phraya, explains some history. "There's been a couple of attempts at marketing the river as a destination, but this is the one that's had the longest run," he says. "It was started by the luxury hotels here, between the Hilton and Sheraton down to the Anantara. So that includes Millennium Hilton, Royal Orchid Sheraton, Mandarin Oriental, Peninsula Bangkok, Shangri-La Bangkok, Chatrium Hotel Riverside, Ramada Plaza Bangkok Menam Riverside, and Anantara Bangkok Riverside.

"They started the project about two-and-a-half years ago, and at that time the ambition was to promote the destination for the MICE industry. I advised them to broaden that out to make it a wider destination for leisure and tourism."

Bigger projects have kicked in. Country Group's US\$1 billion Chao Phraya Estate project has three properties – Capella Hotel Bangkok, Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok and Four Seasons Private Residences – on 14.2 acres at Soi Charoen Krung, the oldest and first road in Bangkok, an area steeped in history and cultural significance. The develop-



ment is low-density luxury and lifestyle-oriented and according to the group was the Crown Property Bureau's last remaining "golden site" on the river.

"It's very exciting to have the space in the city to do this development. Bangkok's got a piece of the city that hasn't been touched for 30 years and it's moving that way now," says Richard Scott-Wilson, director of Hamiltons International, master planners for the project.

NEW HOTELS IN THE CITY

Within Chao Phraya Estate, the Four Seasons hotel has 312 guest rooms and boasts the largest suites in the market, along with a 1,400 sqm ballroom on 200 metres of prime river frontage. The Four Seasons 73-storey residential tower is designed so that all 355 units are corner units with views of the river and city. The Capella offers 101 guest rooms and river villas all focused on the waterfront.

Country Group's Ben Taechaubol was educated in Australia but has the demeanour of Thai gentry – quietly spoken, polite, and very determined that his first massive project for the family business will succeed. "A project like this is really the opportunity of a lifetime," he says. "This piece of land, anyone in Thailand will attest that you simple can't find something like this, and so when we first saw it immediately the instinct was to acquire it."

Taechaubol says more than 300 individual title negotiations took place over four years just to get the land required. His company is backed by Chinese investment, mainly via the Export-Import Bank of China and sealed in a 2013 ceremony overseen by none other than Chinese premier Li Keqiang and former Thai prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra. Not surprising with Taechaubol's strong business roots in China via his father and grandfather, both of whom served as presidents of the Thai Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Not long after the signing, Beijing Construction Engineering Group was installed as main contractor.

"It's meant to be a waterfront lifestyle, which cannot be replicated again – meaningful luxury and timeless elegance are my descriptions," Taechaubol says of his project.

At the group's Hong Kong exhibition in mid-May, Country Group registered sales of THB700 million baht (US\$20 million), the highest amount ever for a Thai luxury project in the city, according to the South China Morning Post. As property surges in Hong Kong, investors are seeing the value in high-end projects, especially on a weak baht. And residences collaborated on by top-tier design consultants Hamiltons Inter-



That's the reason they had to build Suvarnabhumi in the beginning, because Don Mueang was too small, and was a military airbase originally.





So, the river renaissance has begun, but how successful these plans are and how many visitors will come, stay, shop and maybe even invest may largely depend on practical solutions to long-held infrastructure problems.

national and interior design firm BAMO's Gerry Jue, a man familiar with the Four Seasons brand, seem to be successfully luring Hong Kong and Chinese money.

BANGKOK'S HIGH LINE

At the front of Chao Phraya Estate, a riverfront park and public walkway is being planned and designed by the Urban Design and Development Centre with Chulalongkorn University. This kind of public space on the Chao Phraya is a first for Bangkok, and Country Group has supported the move. Known as the Yannawa Riverfront project, Bangkok's first river promenade will extend 1.2 km from in front of the Country Group site to the Saphan Taksin BTS Skytrain station on one of the river's most spectacular reaches. With walking and biking trails, shaded areas and art installations planned, Taechaubol says the project is "on a par with icons like the High Line in New York".

Across the river, Iconsiam is a massive competitor – a US\$1.54 billion initiative, the largest amount ever invested by the private sector in a property endeavour in Thailand – from partners Siam Piwat, Magnolia Quality Development Corporation and Charoen Pokphand Group.

Covering 20 acres and due for completion in 2018, the project features The Residences Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, the brand's first residence project in Southeast Asia with 146 waterfront residences on 52 floors. Also included is the 70-storey Magnolia Waterfront Residences, two high-end retail complexes on 130 acres, and other attractions including a cultural museum.

"If you look at the riverfront from the south, it's mostly industrial with warehouses and so on. When you get closer in there are most condominiums. But when you pass the Sathorn Taksin bridge, these are the most prime riverfront locations. Then you get into the old city, temples, the palace ... mostly restricted to commercial development," says Magnolia International Corporation managing director Thanawan Chaiwatana.

"So to me this is the prime location, and when you focus here you see the Mandarin Oriental, Shangri-La, Peninsula, all the luxury hotels."

Both of these large-scale developments will have facilities for yachts and water transport.

Other developments on the river ride worth noting include the 26-storey Avani Bangkok Riverside Hotel & Spa from the Minor Hotel Group (Thailand's first Avani), and some lavish residentials including the 57-storey Canapaya Residences and 54-storey Menam Residences.

So, the river renaissance has begun, but how successful these plans are and how many visitors will come, stay, shop and maybe even invest may largely depend on practical solutions to long-held infrastructure problems.

THE CITY'S BOTTLENECK

Logistically, the city's airport facilities are inhibiting Bangkok's growth, no small problem considering the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) forecasts 28.8 million visitors this year spending an estimated THB1.4 trillion (US\$40 billion). Throughput at the facilities is more than twice that number.

The government has announced an upgrade of Suvarnabhumi Airport, also called Bangkok International Airport – which is operating well in excess of its design capacity of 45 million passengers a year – with a third runway and two new passenger terminals. With the runway undergoing an environmental health assessment and one of the terminals awaiting government approval, timeframes are sketchy.

Don Mueang, Bangkok's low-cost carrier airport and the nation's second-largest with a capacity of 18.5 million, will also have its Terminal 2 and other facilities upgraded so that both facilities can cope with 120 million passengers a year by 2021, according to Airports of Thailand, with capacities of 80 million and 30 million, respectively.

"It's funny, when they first started letting airlines back to Don Mueang, in the beginning they allowed them to use the domestic terminal. After three months they allowed them back to the international terminal, and now the international terminal is crowded again, mainly with the low-cost carriers," says Suvadhana Sibunruang, director of marketing development and commercial communications at Thai Airways.

"That's the reason they had to build Suvarnabhumi in the beginning, because Don Mueang was too small, and was a military airbase originally. It's so narrow, and expansion can only be in one direction."

The facilities are ageing, and the flagship is also experiencing turbulence. Suvadhana says the airline cut unviable US routes recently to focus more on European and regional services, and a restructuring that

has included the phasing out of more than 40 older aircraft has inevitably resulted in a second quarter loss following encouraging profits in the first quarter.

Other woes include being slapped with a number of warnings and flight bans to destination countries following safety concerns from the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the US Federal Aviation Administration that are understood to revolve around air operator certification processes and a shortage of qualified Department of Civil Aviation staff to carry out safety inspections at home. Unfortunately for Thai Airways, this solution lies with the government.

“Right now the government itself, the Ministry of Transport and [Civil] Aviation [Department], have been having problems with the FAA and ICAO,” says Suvadhana. “We at Thai Airways have been inspected at ports of arrival and have been okayed, but our government needs to fix its compliance problems fast.”

TRAFFIC NIGHTMARE

Away from the airport congestion, another stumbling block preventing the city from transcending to a shinier developed status is the ubiquitous headache of getting

around. Bangkok traffic has been notorious for decades, and although much improved due to mass transport initiatives, getting from A to B on the roads can still take hours depending on when you move.

The government’s transport plan – part of a US\$90 billion infrastructure investment plan for 2015-22 announced last October that includes the airport revamps and is in essence patched together from the blueprints of previous democratically elected governments – includes an upgrade for the Airport Rail Link network.

The mass transit railway system for the city and vicinity will be extended substantially with the acceleration of four new lines under construction and at least seven more lines either in the bidding process or awaiting approval – routes that in all traverse more than 250km of the city. A switch to a double-track system for high-speed trains connecting the city with the rest of the country is also a priority.

GOVERNMENT IS THE KEY

With these best-laid plans, private investment and support is still key, as well as the government’s budget disbursement for its own initiatives, as deputy prime minister Pridiyathorn Devakula has admitted. So

what do the big developers think? Thanawan sees stability as the key component for the city. “The government’s plan is quite good, but no matter how much they build, the traffic will still be a problem. There are big plans, but it will take five to 15 years to build everything.”

But he sees a bright side. “For the major destinations, the mass transit planning is well covered. It is only a question of how fast we can do it. The issue with me is the politics, rather than the capital. If the political stability is quite high, then the plans have a high probability to be executed.”

Taechaubol goes further. “The things to me that are holding us back are a lack of clear government direction to seize on our very solid foundations and take it to the next level via initiatives that will encourage business and shopping, spending, and a different kind of hospitality experience,” he says.

Whether a caretaker government that is struggling to fix even its flagship carrier’s inspection problems can successfully steer through an evolutionary transport plan and guide the city into its next phase is in question. Perhaps listening to the developers and other stakeholders that are getting it right in areas like Bangkok’s riverfront may be the key.



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PRICE

US\$1,100 per two adult guests
per night plus a child under 12

The private island built from scratch and intimate villas tucked away in lush greenery with private beaches and excellent cuisine. Owned by One&Only hotel group, the Reethi Rah hotel in the Maldives is a place where you can recharge your batteries for long months.

WHERE IS IT?

One&Only Reethi Rah is situated on a small island in the North Male Atoll, several dozen kilometres from the Male International Airport. I must admit

that the place is a true miracle of the human imagination and (keeping all the proportions) resembles the Palm Island in Dubai. Carefully designed to the tiniest detail and formed on a shallow lagoon, the man-made island takes a fabulous shape, showing how the nature can beautifully collaborate with human ideas.

Guests are brought here by the hotel motor yacht that delivers them to a private marina. The setting is truly impressive, with broad, white, sandy beaches surrounded by palm trees, the untouched nature and the

turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean. Most people who arrive here for the first time, call the place a real paradise on earth. And they do not exaggerate.

THE VILLAS

Reethi Rah offers 128 private villas. 96 of them are Beach Villas, each with access to a private stretch of beach surrounded by exotic plants. 32 villas sit on stilts in the lagoon and are separated from each other by a reasonable distance to guarantee ultimate relaxation. Each villa comes equipped with an LCD TV with satellite channels,



a hi-fi system, a DVD player, an iPad docking station, as well as broadband internet access.

The smallest, 135 sqm Beach Villas have a spacious bedroom, a bathroom with a changing room, as well as a 26-metre veranda that also serves as a living room. Slightly larger, 165 sqm Pool Beach Villa offer all the amenities of Beach Villas plus a 23 sqm outdoor swimming pool on the beach.

Then there are the largest, 322 sqm Grand Beach Villas. Surrounded by exotic and lush greenery with access to a private beach, they offer ultimate comfort and discretion. They are also suitable for family holidays, with two bedrooms, a dining room, a living room and a 50 sqm pool. However, the best family option would be Duplex Beach Villa Pool that consists of two adjacent 300 sqm villas with an outdoor swimming pool between them to be used by two befriended families.

The most spectacular villa on the island is Grand Sunset Residence with a separate road

leading to its lockable gate and a private 2,000 sqm beach. The guests of the residence can move around the island by means of electric four-seat buggies. The residence consists of two adjacent villas and a pool. It also comes with SMEG Wine Cellar Bar, coffee and tea making facilities, iPads, as well as Bang & Olufsen and Bose hi-fi systems. Add to this the option to order daily breakfast that is prepared by your own chef in the villa's well-equipped kitchen.

If, however, you feel like staying as close to the lagoon, you can choose from three types of villas. The smallest one is a 150 sqm Water Villa with a terrace from which you can enter directly into water. Water Villa with Pool, as you may guess, comes also with a 40 sqm veranda with a pool. However the most luxury and spacious is the 241 sqm Grand Water Villa with Pool, which comes with a large bedroom, a bathroom, a living room and a pool with direct access to the ocean.

CUISINE

The resort-island offers seven venues where you can try various dishes and cuisines. You can also order private dinner to be made in your own villa or on your beach.

The most impressive and reminiscent a temple is the Reethi restaurant, built directly by the sea. It serves a modern blend of Asian and Mediterranean cuisine. Every Monday the chef prepares Italian pasta, gnocchi and risotto, while every Friday you can try here the flavours of Asian cuisine - from hot Thai salads, through mild Japanese ones to Peking duck.

Rah Bar is a good place for veggie food aficionados. You will enjoy here a cornucopia of healthy salads, wraps and snacks. The restaurant also offers low-calorie smoothies squeezed from fresh exotic fruit. In the evening the bar is the place to go for various drinks, rums and music straight from the Indian Ocean area and... the Caribbean. Every Thursday you can enjoy here delicious dinner with your feet dipped in... water.

The private island built from scratch and intimate villas tucked away in lush greenery with private beaches and excellent cuisine. It is a place where you can recharge your batteries for long months.

Hotel



Broad, white, sandy beaches surrounded by palm trees, the untouched nature and the turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean.



MALDIVES

Tapasake offers mainly Japanese cuisine, including sushi, Japanese tapas and the traditional sake.

Fanditha is a venue decorated in Arabic style and serving food of that region. It is worth visiting it during the Middle Eastern Night to try the delicious dishes of Lebanese, Turkish and Syrian cuisine. All this among Arab carpets, hammocks and bamboo sun loungers.

Those who love organic vegetables, will definitely pay a visit to Chef's Garden. All the ingredients used for the dishes are picked directly before they are prepared, so you can be sure that they are fresh and healthy. And on Sultry Jazz Nights guests can listen to good music here while tasting delicious organic wines.

The Beach Club is in turn a perfect place to have lunch. It is famous for mouth-watering grilled dishes as well as seafood. You can also smoke here the hookah (a waterpipe).

Epicure is a unique place - a bodega with a wide variety of wines on offer, including those from California, Tuscany, Bordeaux and RSA. On request the local sommelier can organize blind tasting of any variety. Those who wish to improve their knowledge of wines can take part in Wine Master Classes.

Another interesting option is Private Dining, which is dinner organized in your villa or on the beach - the venue and the menu depend only on your whim.

SPA SPORTS AND ATTRACTIONS

A real holiday on an exotic island would not be complete without using the rich offer of the local spa centre. As part of the Unwind. Restore. Elevate philosophy, you can calm down here, using a variety of treatments, including a 2-hour Ancient Healing Journey, One & Only Energy Equaliser or volcanic stone



compress. The offer of massages includes Balinese, Swedish and aromatherapy. As you might expect it from this part of the world, you can also enjoy here Ayurvedic treatment, as well as yoga, tai-chi and pilates classes. There are also boxing or kick-boxing classes for men.

What about other sports? Well, they are in abundance here. Reethi Rah has prepared for its guests two lighted tennis courts with hard surface, and an 8-metre climbing wall with five routes of varying difficulty. Guests can dive and snorkel around the resort's beautiful

coral reefs, use jet skis, rent a speedboat, canoes, as well as small catamarans. There are even two several kilometre long jogging trails.

Those who wish to have get acquainted with the local culture, can take a one-day trip by a traditional Maldivian dhoni sailing boat to see the North Male Atoll. The attractions of the trip include fishing, snorkelling and picnics on uninhabited islands. You can also go on plane trip round the area.

Reethi Rah is a kid-friendly place. For the youngest holiday-makers (4-9 years old) the resort

has prepared special daily programs called KidsOnly, while the older ones are welcome to participate in OneTribe program.

VERDICT

It is a great place to spend a long holiday. Silence, turquoise lagoons of the Indian Ocean, the remarkable hospitality of the service and the wide array of interesting activities, make it a perfect venue for those who want something more besides sunbathing. It is simply a five-star place offering the highest quality of service and amenities.

Rafał Sobiech



It is a true miracle of the human imagination. Carefully designed to the tiniest detail and formed on a shallow lagoon, the man-made island takes a fabulous shape, showing how the nature can beautifully collaborate with human ideas.

SWISSÔTEL TALLINN



CONTACT

Swissôtel Tallinn
 Tornimäe Street 3
 10145 Tallinn
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 tel.: +372 624 0000
www.swissotel.com/hotels/tallinn

PRICES

starting at €135

This luxurious and extremely comfortable hotel is the tallest building in the Estonian capital. Its large windows overlook the charming Old Town of Tallinn and the dark waves of the Baltic Sea. It is a perfect place to stay both for business travellers and those wishing to spend here a romantic weekend.

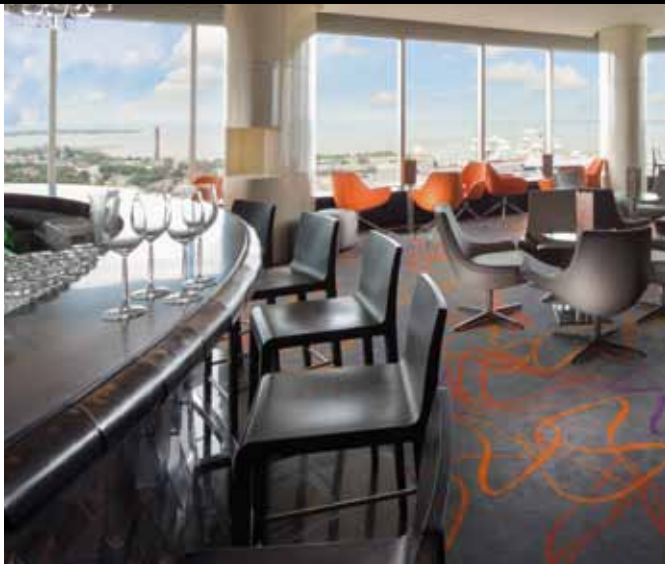
INTERIORS

Tallinn's International Airport is only 15 minutes away, while the beautifully restored medieval old town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with distinctive cobblestone streets, is only a 10-minute walk from the hotel.

The hotel offers 238 rooms and suites that provide breathtaking panoramic views of Tallinn including the port (192 Swiss Advantage Standard rooms, 34 Executive rooms, 11 One Bedroom Suites, 2 Executive Suites and 1 Presidential Suite). Business travellers will appreciate the Executive rooms, which have large working desks, and ergonomic chairs. Their guests have also free access to the Swiss Executive Lounge with complimentary snacks, cocktails and meeting facilities.

All rooms and suites are decorated in a modern and stylish manner. The interiors are dominated by bright colours, complemented with the shades of red and purple. They were de-

signed by Estonia-born interior designer Meelis Press. Paintings on the walls are, in turn, the works by Estonian artists. The amenities in the rooms include a large bed, a desk with a comfortable chair, a table with seats, designer lamps, a large plasma TV, as well as coffee and tea making facilities. The bathrooms are unique places as well, separated from the rest of the room by glass sliding walls. They come equipped with a shower cabin, two wash basins, as well as a bathtub with the view of the sea. Almost all the rooms overlook the Baltic Sea, which is a true advantage of the hotel. Free WiFi is available throughout the whole area of the hotel.



PUROVEL SPA & SPORT

My favourite corner in Swissôtel Tallinn was undoubtedly the Purovel Spa & Sport wellness centre. It is a spacious and beautifully decorated facility that deserves all possible prizes. Its professional massage therapists and beauticians make wonder to restore to life businesspeople tired after exhausting meetings. The number of treatments is head-spinning: from hydrotherapy to hot stone massage. Noteworthy is also the large illuminated swimming pool where water has the perfect temperature of 32 degrees Celsius. Add to this sauna and steam room, as well as a well equipped fitness club.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS

Whether for relaxing drinks and snacks with colleagues or friends, a light lunch, or fine dining with a selection of fine wines, Swissôtel Tallinn's three restaurants and two bars offer just the right atmosphere, service and cuisine for all occasions. The most spectacular of them is Horisont restaurant where you enjoy the panorama of Tallinn, tasting delicious drinks and seafood. Coffee and sweets aficionado will certainly go to Cafe Swiss that offers Swiss specialities, as well as No3 Deli Lounge & Bar to sample delicious cakes and sandwiches. And at the end of the day, you can go to Horisont Bar that al-



ways draws a stylish crowd with cocktails and pulsating music.

VERDICT

Swissôtel Tallinn deserves every one of its five stars. It is an ideal venue both for a large convention and a small business meeting. All the meeting rooms have access to the natural daylight. The largest one is the ballroom for up to 500 guests, which comes with integrated translation booths, a media room and a comprehensive, cutting-edge technical infrastructure. If you need any special equipment, Swissôtel Tallinn can organize that for you too: a Swiss Meeting Concierge is always on hand to provide assistance. I definitely recommend it!



Whether for relaxing drinks and snacks with colleagues or friends, a light lunch, or fine dining with a selection of fine wines, Swissôtel Tallinn's three restaurants and two bars offer just the right atmosphere, service and cuisine for all occasions.

OPEN HORIZONS



CONTACT

Mercure Gdynia Centrum
ul. Armii Krajowej 22
81-372 Gdynia
accorhotels.com
mercure.com

With its perfect location, modern design and high quality of service, Mercure Gdynia Centrum is ideally suited to the needs of individual and business

Mercure Gdynia Centrum is an iconic hotel. Built in 1983 it immediately became Gdynia's landmark, towering over Kościuszko Square and the Southern Pier. It combines high quality of service with local history, alluding through its design and menu to the traditions of the city.

Gdynia is fashionable and promotes major events. In September it becomes the capital of the Polish film industry, when the Polish Film Festival takes place here.

Great banquets to open and close various events gather on the terrace thousands of prominent figures of the national show business. The term "hotel of the stars" can therefore complement the real name of the property.

BUSINESS FACILITIES

Mercure Gdynia Centrum is well-prepared to handle large events of diverse nature: from wedding receptions, through festivals and team-building events to scientific or business conferences and banquets. The property boasts the largest conference facilities in the Tri-City,

with a total floor area of over 1,400 sqm. Another advantage is the hotel's car park for 200 vehicles.

The air-conditioned and fully equipped conference rooms on the ground floor are arranged around the outline of the building. As a result, eight of them have access to natural light. The conference rooms are complemented by the banquet hall with 270 seats that fill up during breaks in meetings.

Mercure Gdynia Centrum offers 294 smoke-free accommodation of different type: Privilege, Standard and Family rooms as well as Suites.

There is also a wellness and fitness centre with indoor pool, sauna and a solarium.

WINESTONE

On the ground floor, in the very centre of all the events, you can find Gdynia's first Winestone. This hotel lobby also plays the role of an "a la carte" restaurant and a shop. This original concept was introduced by Paweł Anders and implemented throughout the whole Mercure chain.

You can try here genuine sourdough baguettes with raisins, olives, delicious pate and

fine wine, which is carefully selected and unavailable in other stores. Selected brands from around the globe, refreshing, fruity, light and full of aroma, tempt with their attractive notes. Luckily, they are also affordable. The prices start at PLN 20, because the whole philosophy of Winestone concept is based on accessibility and openness. I recommend staying here a little longer and use the professional assistance of Łukasz Taboła who will introduce you into the worlds of wine tasting.

In Winestone all dishes are made with fresh ingredients. You should try the sets served on "les planches" that consist of several species of smoked fish.

The restaurant also serves saute cod fried on Kashubian oil, fish soup with smoked salmon and shrimps, as well as more traditional, meat dishes with Polish pork, beeed and duck.

VERDICT

The hotel stands out with its original and comfortable interiors, as well as perfect location. No doubt that with such facilities Mercure Gdynia Centrum is an ideal offer for both business and leisure travellers.

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SELLER'S MARKET

Africa is considered the next frontier for global brands, from fashion to fast food to electronics. Jane Labous outlines the abundant opportunities for business.



W

andering around Accra Mall in Ghana's capital, it's hard to believe that this city was ever considered part of the "developing world".

Fashionable couples promenade through Mango, Puma, Levi's and Apple stores; women emerge from glamorous boutiques; a huge supermarket sells everything from ice cream to barbecues; a five-screen cinema shows all the latest Hollywood releases; and there's parking for 900 cars – many of them flashy SUVs.

All this without mentioning the food court offering fried chicken, smoothies and a bouncy castle for the kids.

Drive there via the spiralling highways of the city, meanwhile, and you see glossy adverts for iPhones, beauty products, flights, mortgages and the luxury condos that have recently appeared in the region.

It's the same in many major African cities. Nairobi, Lagos, Cairo and Dakar are all experiencing a shopping boom: it's the new fashionable pastime, along with fitness (gyms are having a moment, too).

In Dakar, the Sea Plaza mall houses 44 shops including Benetton and Aldo, ten restaurants, a cinema and a spa run by the Radisson hotel group on a site that, back in the 1990s, was a rugged bit of cliff overhanging the Atlantic Ocean without a paved road running past it.

In Lagos, the Ikeja mall opened in 2012, while the Palms centre is home to brands including Hugo Boss, Mango, Mac, Wrangler, Swatch and Sony, plus a cinema, food court and 1,000 parking spaces.

In Lusaka, Zambia, several complexes offer supermarkets, clothing, electronics and everything in between, led by South African retailer Shoprite and Woolworths.

There is more growth to come. In two years' time, it's anticipated that there will be 179 new malls in Africa.

Julien Garcier, managing director of Sagaci Research, which in 2013 predicted strong retail growth across the continent by 2017, says: "The number of new malls is impressive, driven by retailers' growing interest in looking for new growth opportunities. We are today at a major turning point across the continent."

NEW GENERATION

A burgeoning African middle class with disposable income and a high awareness of global brands via films, TV and music is driving the demand for consumer goods.

Africa has the world's youngest population, with more than half under 20.

The consumption habits of these young people are quite different from their elders – they are more likely to search for information online, seeking products and stores that reflect the right image; they are more brand-conscious, looking for the latest fashions and trends; and they like to try new things. Combined with urbanisation and the increased availability of credit, it seems like a winning formula.

In the cities, more and more people are flocking to malls rather than the smaller, informal shops and markets that have been the traditional choice. They are seen as places to eat, drink and socialise.

According to McKinsey, Africa's consumer-facing industries are predicted to grow by more than US\$400 billion by 2020, accounting for more than half of the total revenue increase that all businesses are expected to generate there by the end of the decade.

Research by Euromoney shows that, since 2000, consumer spending in sub-



A burgeoning African middle class with disposable income and a high awareness of global brands via films, TV and music is driving the demand for consumer goods. Africa has the world's youngest population, with more than half under 20.

Saharan Africa has grown at a steady 4 per cent per year, reaching almost US\$600 billion in 2010. The market is expected to be worth US\$1 trillion by 2020.

These are impressive figures, representing glittering opportunities for brands and property investors. Many consider the continent to be something of a new frontier in retail terms, with its huge, untapped source of potential consumers.

Karl-Hendrik Magnus, a McKinsey analyst based in South Africa who worked on a report called *The Rise of the African Consumer*, says: "The key factor here is that 45 million households across the continent are entering the 'discretionary income' sector. They have enough to spend, not just on bread and other basics but on non-essentials such as entertainment and aspirational goods. Ultimately, we're sitting in the second-fastest growing region in the world, after Asia, and that's underlying this."

Grant Hatch, former South Africa strategy lead at Accenture, says there are nine countries that will account for almost 75 per cent of total consumer spending in sub-Saharan Africa by 2020: Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda in the east; Angola, Zambia and South Africa in the south; and Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria in the west.

"Within these attractive markets are a wide range of consumers for whom companies must tailor appealing, differentiated offers," Hatch says. He recommends that they develop a deep understanding of competitors, and build partnerships and trust with local producers.

"Company managers need to be prepared to walk the markets and gain insights from talking to street vendors, watching consumers and building a qualitative model of how the market operates," he says.

THINK LOCAL

Still, many brands have little idea how to translate the opportunities into action and profit. International investors have to compete with traditional "umbrella" market stalls often offering cheap or counterfeit goods.

A lack of information about the African consumer is leaving companies at a disadvantage, and it is those with years of experience here that do well.

Then there is corruption and bureaucracy to overcome, while the logistics can be unreliable and infrastructure lags behind much of the developed world. Plus, the very diversity of Africa – 54 countries with differing cultures, languages, demographics

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As shopping malls develop and multiply, more and more brands should gain confidence. The solution could be e-commerce, which enables companies to enter various sectors without going through the bricks-and-mortar store phase.

and currencies – makes local knowledge implicit to success.

It is notable that the brands that are successful are those creating market-specific products catering to the needs of the consumer in different countries. Africa is enormous, and the taste of shoppers in Senegal differs widely from those in Kenya or Zambia. David Gyori, executive director of Banking Reports, which provides banks with research and analysis of economic markets in Africa, says it is the brands that understand these specificities that do best.

“The African consumer is changing at high speed, so a dynamic understanding of their journey is what makes a Western brand especially successful,” he says. “Part of this understanding is the right price point, one that takes buying power into account and that brings the joy of owning a certain brand to the customer at an affordable price.”

Despite controversies, Nestlé has been present in Africa for decades, specialising in food products such as instant coffee and powdered milk – yet a recent announcement that it will scale back its operations has been attributed to a misunderstanding over the past few years of the continent’s changing consumer base. It is seen to have chased the middle class while neglecting the low-

income consumer that was always its major customer base.

MARKETS TO CONQUER

In contrast, Unilever has adjusted its strategy to take into account local needs, resulting in double-digit growth on the continent over the past decade.

It has created affordable food, water-thrifty washing powders and grooming products to fit local tastes, such as a line of black hair products in South Africa, which previously relied on expensive US imports. It has also packaged products in smaller sizes and at low prices to capture the loyalty of poorer customers. Casino, the French supermarket giant, operates in Dakar, offering a huge range of products catering to this franco-phone market. Still, high prices are prohibitive – one afternoon I paid the equivalent of £6 for a kilo of French tomatoes and £5 for a goat’s cheese – and it will be a while before anyone but the very wealthy Dakarais will shop there rather than at local markets.

Gap entered the South African market in 2012, while Walmart purchased a majority share in local retailer Massmart some years ago and has seen huge expansion on the continent using the same strategies as Unilever to launch products such as cheap, effective sun cream in South Africa.

Other brands exploring the market include Zara, Cadbury, Coca-Cola and KFC. Still, few international names have yet dipped their toes in the water, despite consumers crying out for new places to shop.

“In Dakar, furniture and clothing is really expensive, even when it’s second-hand,” one Senegalese friend tells me. “We hear about shops like Ikea and Primark and we’d love to see them open here. Everyone would go.”

So how long will it be before such retailers wise up?

Garcia says: “I’d agree that consumers are looking for mass-market quality products [from the likes of] Primark, Zara and H&M. But entering these markets can be complex for those firms as they often face high import duties and transportation costs, and need to make sure that the market can handle their business. For Ikea, it’s going to take a long time before they enter the sub-Saharan African markets since it needs a very large customer base, as well as the right infrastructure and customs set-up.”

Yet as shopping malls develop and multiply, more and more brands should gain confidence. Add e-commerce to the mix, enabling companies to enter these sectors without going through the bricks-and-mortar store phase, and it could be that in 15 years, Africa will be the world’s new shopping heaven.

JAK POLSKIE FIRMY WYMIENIAJĄ KOMPUTERY?

BADANIE INFRASTRUKTURY KOMPUTEROWEJ W SEKTORZE MŚP.

W POLSKICH FIRMACH Z SEKTORA MŚP KOMPUTERY WYMIENIA SIĘ ŚREDNIO CO 2 DO 5 LAT – WYNIKA Z NAJNOWSZEGO RAPORTU LENOVO POLSKA. O WYBORZE NOWEGO SPRZĘTU DECYDUJĄ GŁÓWNIEM DWA CZYNNIKI: CENA I JAKOŚĆ. WYGLĄD CZY ZABEZPIECZENIA MAJĄ DRUGORZĘDNE ZNACZENIE.



Z najnowszego raportu Lenovo „Komputery w polskich firmach MŚP 2015” wynika, że cykl życia sprzętu IT w MŚP wynosi zazwyczaj od 2 do 5 lat. Średni czas wymiany jest zróżnicowany i zależy od rodzaju wymienianego sprzętu. Najrzadziej wymieniane są komputery stacjonarne (co 3,8 roku), notebooki/laptopy wymienia się co 3,2 roku, natomiast netbooki co 2,1 roku. Najprawdopodobniej skrócony czas użytkowania w przypadku sprzętu mobilnego wynika z ograniczonych możliwości jego modyfikacji i rozbudowy oraz większego zużycia (bateria, uszkodzenia w transporcie). Istnieją też przedsiębiorstwa, które wymieniają sprzęt rzadziej niż raz na siedem lat. Najwięcej firm trzyma u siebie ponad 7-letnie desktopy (11%), rzadziej są to notebooki (4%) i netbooki (2%). Co rok sprzęt wymienia tylko 1% przedsiębiorców.

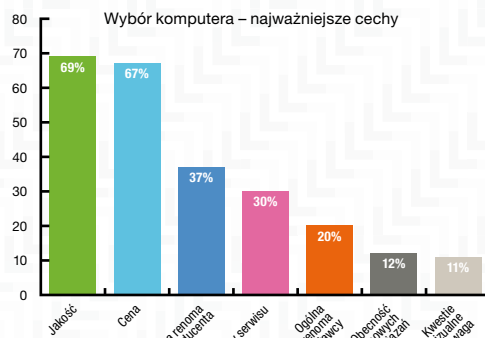
Najczęstszym powodem wymiany starych komputerów jest ich zużycie (73%), zniszczenie (40%) i wzrost wymagań sprzętowych związany z wykonywaniem nowych zadań (38%). Jedna czwarta respondentów jako powód wymiany wskazała upgrade oprogramowania i nowe wymagania wobec sprzętu. Najradsze przyczyny to: koniec okresu leasingu (5%), wymagania korporacyjne (6%), kwestie reprezentacyjne (7%) oraz zakończenie okresu serwisowania (8%).

Przy wyborze nowego sprzętu najważniejsza jest dobra korelacja jakości do ceny. Sprzęt ma być jak najlepszy (69% wskazań), ale istotne jest, by kosztował niewiele (67%). Liczy się też ogólna renoma producenta (37%) oraz dostawcy (20%). Firmy korzystające ze sprzętu Lenovo niemal dwa razy częściej niż inne organizacje biorą pod uwagę renomę producenta i dostawcy w podejmowaniu decyzji o zakupie sprzętu IT. Znaczenie mają też dla przedsiębiorców koszty serwisu (30%). Najmniej istotne są kwestie wizualne i waga (11%) oraz obecność nowych rozwiązań zabezpieczających dane (12%).

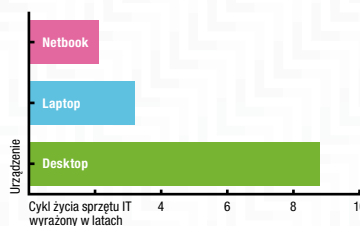
Firma Lenovo w sierpniu 2015 roku przeprowadziła wśród polskich przedsiębiorców z sektora MŚP badanie „Komputery w polskich firmach MŚP 2015” na temat zwyczajów i zachowań dotyczących kwestii wymiany oraz zakupu sprzętu komputerowego.

Badanie prowadzono na próbie 400 osób spełniających następujące kryteria:

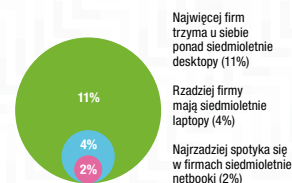
- Badanie było realizowane zarówno na obszarze największych miast, jak i w mniejszych ośrodkach, a struktura zrealizowanej próby miała charakter ogólnopolski.
- Respondentami były osoby odpowiedzialne lub współodpowiedzialne za zakupy /utrzymanie/modernizację sprzętu IT w firmie.



Częstotliwość wymiany sprzętu IT



Istnieją też przedsiębiorstwa, które wymieniają sprzęt rzadziej niż raz na siedem lat



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Źródło: Badania infrastruktury komputerowej w sektorze MŚP

LUFTHANSA GROUP FOR WINTER



Furthermore, in cooperation with 30 partner airlines, more than 18,000 codeshare flights will round off the respective flight offering, giving passengers access to an almost global network.

With the introduction of the new winter schedule on 25 October 2015, the Lufthansa Group Airlines will offer their customers one of the densest route networks worldwide, featuring more than 20,380 flights per week. This winter, via their hubs in Frankfurt, Munich, Zurich, Vienna and Brussels, as well as via many point-to-point routes, the Lufthansa Group Airlines will serve 261 destinations in 101 countries (previous year: 260 destinations in 100 countries). Furthermore, in cooperation with 30 partner airlines, more than 18,000 codeshare flights will round off the respective flight offering, giving passengers access to an almost global network. The winter schedules of the individual Group airlines will apply from Sunday 25 October 2015 until Saturday 27 March 2016.

THREE FARES

Now, the new price concept on domestic German and Euro-

pean routes will also apply to Austrian Airlines and Lufthansa. In Economy Class, travellers can individually choose between the three graded fare options "Light", "Classic" and "Flex". These options vary mainly with regard to the possibility of making advance seat reservations, re-booking or cancelling flights, and permitted free luggage allowances. Since tickets went on sale last July, the new low-priced "Light" fare option has proved popular with customers. For all options, the Lufthansa Group Airlines as a premier airline still permits one free item of hand baggage. Passengers are also offered free snacks and drinks on board, fixed seat allocation at the check-in counter as well as bonuses for "award miles", "status miles" and "select miles".

LUFTHANSA EXPANDS OFFER

This winter, Lufthansa will serve 197 destinations and operate a total of 9,900 flights per

week. With the introduction of the winter schedule, Lufthansa is expanding its new intercontinental flight offering, which is tailored to the needs of leisure travellers. Tampa (Florida), a new destination since 25 September, is the first of several new holiday destinations due to be added to the Lufthansa route network from Frankfurt in the coming months. From the end of October, Nairobi (Kenya) will be included in the Lufthansa flight schedule, and at the beginning of December, Cancun (Mexico), served mainly by charter flights, Malé (Maldives) and Mauritius will follow, with Panama City rounding off the new timetable in March 2016. Good news for all Airbus A380 fans: this winter, for the first time, Lufthansa will operate its flagship on the Frankfurt-Hong Kong route. Services from Luxembourg will also be expanded, and with 28 weekly flights from Frankfurt and 24 flights from Munich, the Benelux countries will be served much more fre-

quently than before. The new winter timetable will offer passengers an hourly connection from Munich to Dusseldorf and Berlin-Tegel. The easy-to-remember flight times, which already apply to connections from Munich to Frankfurt and Hamburg, will now be extended to Dusseldorf and Berlin. Lufthansa flights from Munich to Berlin will take off on the hour, and to Dusseldorf at half past the hour.

This winter, Cape Town will once again be connected with the Munich hub. From 25 October, the Airbus A340-600 in a four-class configuration will take off daily for South Africa. Lufthansa customers can also escape the cold winter weather and fly to new destinations in the Canary Islands - to Fuerteventura and Tenerife. From 19 December 2015, Lufthansa will take off every Saturday to Kittilä, 170 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle. The nearby skiing resort of Levi is the largest winter sports center in Lapland.

GERMANWINGS AND EUROWINGS

In the 2015/2016 winter timetable, Germanwings and Eurowings will offer a wide range of flights to 100 destinations in 36 countries, including intercontinental destinations. Germanwings flights to Berlin-Schönefeld will complement

the carrier's existing services to Berlin. A total of 35 flights per week will take off from Cologne/Bonn and Stuttgart to Berlin-Schönefeld Airport. Germanwings will thus be the only airline flying from Cologne/Bonn and Stuttgart to Berlin's Tegel and Schönefeld airports.

This winter, for the first time, the new Eurowings will take off from its new Austrian base in Vienna, from where it will operate non-stop services to Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca and London. In November 2015, the airline will launch long-haul flights from Cologne/Bonn Airport with the Airbus A330-200 aircraft. The first of six intercontinental destinations will be Varadero in Cuba. Further destinations will be Phuket and Bangkok in Thailand, Dubai as well as Puerto Plata and Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.

SWISS NEWS

This winter, the new SWISS flagship, the Boeing 777-300ER, will enter scheduled service on routes from Zurich. From January 2016, the new long-haul aircraft will be deployed on the Zurich-New York route. With the introduction of the winter timetable, SWISS will boost frequencies on its routes to Sao Paulo (Brazil) and Miami (Florida), and will also expand its services from Geneva to destinations in Russia and Portugal in order to meet seasonal demand.

In total, SWISS will thus fly to 105 destinations in 49 countries this winter.

AUSTRIAN AIRLINES

In the 2015/2016 winter season, Austrian Airlines will offer its passengers a wide range of flights to as many as 130 destinations in 59 countries. From October, it will also offer flights to Mauritius and Colombo (Sri Lanka), and from November, to Marrakesh (Morocco).

BRUSSELS AIRLINES - NOT ONLY TO AFRICA

Once again, Belgium's leading airline is underlining its position as the Africa specialist with the launch on 26 October of a new connection between Brussels Airport and Ghana. From that date, the Ghanaian capital Accra will be served four times a week. The flight schedule offers ideal connections to Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and the USA. The airline will also fly to Bremen five times a week, while Zagreb (6 flights/week) and Billund (12 flights/week) will be served for the first time. The Canary Islands Tenerife and Gran Canaria will be connected twice a week with Brussels Airport. During the winter months, more flights will therefore be available to Monrovia (Liberia), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Lomé (Togo), Cotonou (Benin) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).



This winter, Lufthansa will serve 197 destinations and operate a total of 9,900 flights per week. With the introduction of the winter schedule, the carrier is expanding its new intercontinental flight offering.



NOVO² LOUNGE BAR AT NOVOTEL



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The well-known Novotel brand is a perfect blend of modernity, comfort and gourmet cuisine. Observing the changing trends and trying to meet the expectations of customers, the brand successively introduces to its properties across Poland its restaurant concept NOVO² lounge bar. Although this innovative project has been implemented for only two years, it now enjoys extraordinary popularity. The proof of its popularity may be the fact that it is still being developed and improved.

Autumn is a good time for new, positive changes that guests will certainly recognize.

THREE PILLARS OF NOVO²

NOVO² is a unique combination of restaurant and bar, based on three fundamental values: VITALITY or health, CONNECT-AINMENT, which symbolizes entertainment and the international nature of the concept, and IMAGINATION, which refers to inspiration and innovation.

VITALITY means serving dishes prepared mainly with

natural and healthy ingredients provided by local, reliable suppliers.

CONNECT-AINMENT or entertainment in NOVO² is the hallmark of the whole concept, while with the wide selection of dishes of Polish and international cuisine it is possible to present creative flavour combinations.

The last pillar - IMAGINATION - means following the latest culinary trends, modern interior design and interesting events that make up the unique atmosphere of this place.

NEW CULINARY INSPIRATIONS

The biggest changes can be seen in the menu of NOVO² lounge bar. The new offer has been available since the beginning of October and has already managed to find its fans. The menu features specialities of the Far East, such as various types of delicious Pad Thai, tender Shishimi duck, as well as traditional hummus with vegetables. You can also order a signature burger made with grilled beef and the Polish speciality: beef cheeks served with healthy buckwheat groats. However the new dishes are not the only changes made to NOVO².



ENTERTAINMENT AS THE HALLMARK

In addition to the very successful jazz&culinary meetings dubbed "Cookin' Jazz", from November guests will have a chance to participate in another exciting project called "In The Game". All those who treat sports events as a great opportunity to meet their friends and jointly follow their favourite disciplines, will now be able to enjoy broadcasts of most important events, not only from Polish pitches and courts. To better feel the atmosphere of the sporting events, for the duration of the project the staff of NOVO² will change the design of the venue and their attire. There will be referee uniforms, sports caps and whistles. Guests will also have an opportunity to play there table football, popularly known as foosball.

"Wherever we implement the culinary concept NOVO², it gains crowds of loyal customers, not only because of its excellent cuisine, but also owing to the atmosphere it generates," says Sabina Bartyzel, Area General Manager South Region Poland / General Manager Novotel Krakow City West at Accor. "The offer of NOVO² lounge bar features exciting events, and that is why we have come up with the idea of music evenings called



Cookin'Jazz or the In The Game project that is now being implemented and is based around sporting emotions. The success of the concept is proved by the fact that we are continuously invest in it. Novotel Kraków Centrum boasts the new, overhauled NOVO² lounge bar and is the second property of the brand in the city - the first one is Novotel Kraków City West."

NOVO² NOVOTEL KRAKÓW CENTRUM

The grand opening of the newly refurbished restaurant of No-

votel Kraków Centrum, based on NOVO² lounge bar concept, was held on 1 October 2015. During the culinary&jazz evening emceed by Łukasz Cioch, guests could taste dishes from the new menu, listen to great music and see a jaw-dropping bartender show. The main attraction of the evening was the culinary show by Andrzej Żylski, the head chef of NOVO², commented by a former juror of "Top Chef" programme and a famous culinary celebrity Joseph Seeletso.

The grand opening of the newly refurbished restaurant of Novotel Kraków Centrum, based on NOVO² lounge bar concept, was held on 1 October 2015.

STEAK BY STEAK MENU IN SHERATON AND WESTIN HOTELS



**WIĘCEJ INFORMACJI
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Since 19 October at Sheraton hotels in Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań and Sopot, as well as Westin Warsaw, you can try steaks prepared with the Argentine, American, Polish and Italian beef. The new offer is called Steak Steak and combines the highest quality beef with fine wines.

The descendants of the American cowboys and Argentine cattle drovers brought the art of preparing steaks to perfection. The secret of cooking the

noblest portion of beef lies in a distinctive cut, the appropriate method of frying, and good quality of meat. The quality and taste are mostly determined by the so-called seasoning process. The meat is stored in specific conditions and matures for four weeks, yielding exceptional flavour, unique juiciness and taste.

Join the ranks of enthusiasts of genuine steaks and try the culinary blends of Polish seasoned beef with best steak meat from the America Angus or Italian Chianina. This culinary

feast will be complemented with carefully selected wine from various parts of the world that go in ideal harmony with the taste of juicy beef.

For real gourmets the head chefs of Sheraton hotels in Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań and Sopot, as well as Westin in Warsaw have prepared six beef variations from different parts of the world. The menu also features numerous sauces and side dishes.

Undoubtedly, the real star and the attraction for connois-



“When I was composing the steak menu, my aim was to show the diversity of beef and invite our guests on a culinary journey,” said Artur Grajber, the head chef at Sheraton Warsaw.

seurs will be the steak prepared with the meat of the Italian Chianina breed, which in addition to the excellent quality is also famous for being the world’s largest and one of the oldest breeds. The Steak by Steak menu features the following options: T-Bone Polish seasoned beef (PLN 120, up to 700 grams) combined with the recommended Château Purcari Rara Neagra from Moldavia; Polish grilled entrecote (PLN 60, 300 grams) plus Australian Banrock Station Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz; Polish aged sirloin steak (PLN 60, 300 grams) and the recommended Castilian Hacienda Zorita Tempranillo; Argentinian grilled entrecote

(PLN 90, 300 grams) and the recommended Serie A Zuccardi Mendoza Malbec from Argentina; American Angus sirloin steak (PLN 60, 300 grams) plus the recommended Ravenswood Vintners Blend Zinfandel from California; Fiorentina - Italian Chianina beef steak (PLN 35, 100 grams, minimum serving portion - 1 kg) and the recommended Tuscan Chianti Ruffino Sangiovese.

“When I was composing the steak menu, my aim was to show the diversity of beef and invite our guests on a culinary journey during which they can see the differences among dishes and meat coming from different countries and from

various breeds of cattle. With steaks you can fully appreciate the quality of beef and bring out what is best in it. I am especially pleased that we will have the opportunity to present Chianina breed, which is hardly known in Poland and which, in my opinion, is one of the best steak beefs in the world,” said Artur Grajber, the head chef at Sheraton Warsaw.

The Steak by Steak offer will be available for six weeks until 30 November 2015 in SomePlace Else restaurants at Sheraton hotels in Warsaw, Cracow and Poznań, in 512 Bar and Lounge at Sheraton Sopot Hotel, as well as JP’s Café and Bar at Westin Hotel in Warsaw.



SINGAPORE'S REVIVAL

Singapore has for many years attracted businesspeople from all over the world. Known as the Asian haven and a law-abiding city, as well as the place where for most of the year the temperature stays in high twenties and low thirties (Celsius), Singapore is also a perfect destination to do serious business.





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Since among the skyscrapers
of the Lion City appeared the
futurist shapes of the sophisticated Marina
Bay Sands, the Asian city-state has been ex-
periencing a true renaissance of popularity.

MARINA BAY SANDS

It is widely regarded as the world's most
expensive leisure resort, valued at US\$4.9
billion, inclusive the cost of land. Interest-
ingly, since the cityscape of Singapore saw
the addition of three identical, gleaming
towers capped by a horizontal structure that
resembles the hull of an aircraft, the num-
ber of tourists and investors coming to the
city has nearly doubled. The total floor space
of the centre is impressive 580,000 sqm and
it features not only 55-storey hotel, but also
a giant shopping mall with stores of the
world's major fashion designers. There are
also two theatres, a museum and several
refined restaurants. The resort's also boasts
the world's largest atrium casino with 500
tables and 1,600 slot machines.

The property was designed by Israeli-Can-
adian architect Moshe Safdie, the author
of the iconic Habitat 67 housing estate in
Montreal, which was the main pavilion of
the EXPO 1967. Interestingly, it was origi-
nally conceived as Safdie's master's thesis
in architecture. The modernist experiment
based around the unprecedented use of

prefabricated concrete forms for residential
purposes, turned out to be one of the most
interesting architectural solutions of the
20th century. Marina Bay Sands, which is
Safdie's latest project, also boasts a complex
and intriguing form. Its three towers topped
with an impressive platform were inspired
by a deck of cards. And as you might expect
it from a structure built in Asia, the resort's
architecture and major design changes
along the way were also approved by feng
shui consultants. No wonder it is frequently
visited by such stars as Lady Gaga or Kylie
Minoque.

The resort was developed by US-based
corporation Las Vegas Sands. The whole
complex consists of three 55-storey towers
that house a total of 2,560 rooms. It is orga-
nized around two principal axes that traverse
the district and give it a sense of orientation
placing emphasis on the pedestrian street
as the focus of civic life. Hotel guests en-
joy here easy access to numerous boutiques,
stores and restaurants. The three towers are
capped by the 340-metre long Sands Sky-
Park, which offers 360-degree view of Sin-
gapore's skyline. It is home to restaurants,
lush gardens, an infinity edged swimming
pool and the world's largest public cantile-
ver housing an observation deck. The Sky-
Park can accommodate up to 900 people at
the same time, offering a truly breathtaking





view that includes the impressive jungle of the high-rises of the banking district. The place also features a 151-metre infinity pool where the water flows over one or more edges, producing a visual effect of water with no boundary. The central section of the deck is occupied by a lush park with 250 trees and about 650 other plants. You simply cannot miss it!

PULAU UBIN

For those who want to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the big city, we recommend the Pulau Ubin island situated in the north-east of Singapore. It is home to one of the last kampongs (traditional Malay-style rural village) in the country. Exploring it is like travelling back in time to the Singapore of the 1960s. There are still plenty of villagers living here and many still rely on subsistence farming and fishing, wells for their water supply and diesel generators for electricity.

Pulau Ubin was once a granite mining area that contributed to the livelihood of a few thousand settlers, so the terrain now comprises a series of undulating granite hills. Abandoned quarries create dramatic

landscapes, while secondary forests and grasslands imbue the island with an unexpectedly wild frontier spirit. When you get off the boat at Ubin Jetty, head west and you will arrive at Ubin Town, where you will find bike rental shops and stalls selling tasty barbecued meat skewers. Stop for a snack, washed down by a fresh coconut juice, before exploring the island. Look out for the large stage in the centre of the town, where traditional performances of wayang – classical Javanese shadow puppetry – and Chinese opera have been regular fixtures for many years. The nearby Tua Pek Kong temple next door is also worth a visit.

If you want to get some exercise, walk or cycle along the peaceful roads lined with swaying coconut palms. To get a good 360-degree perspective of island life, join the Pulau Ubin Tree Trail, which will take you through old rubber and coconut plantations, past candlenut and attaps, and the home of a former village leader, before ending at a Tudor-style heritage house.

Alternatively, bring a book and a towel and simply unwind on one of the secluded beaches. On the eastern tip of Pulau Ubin are the Chek Jawa Wetlands (open

8.30am-6pm daily; free entry), which are about a 40-minute hike from Ubin Jetty. This 100-hectare nature reserve encompasses a rich diversity of wildlife among its mangrove swamps, sandbars, coral reefs, coastal forest and seagrass lagoon, including pipefish and seahorses, monitor lizards, kingfishers, and even wild boar. Peer over the 1km-long boardwalk to look out for starfish and crabs – and maybe even a glimpse of coral.

Z Warszawy
do ponad
150 miast na
całym świecie.





● **How to get there** Head to Changi Village bus terminal, which is served by bus services 2, 29, 59 and 109, and then walk 100 metres to the ferry terminal. From there, you can take a ten-minute “bumboat” ride (S\$2.50/€1.5) to Ubin Jetty. Ideally, start your journey in the morning and catch an early evening ferry back to the main island.

MACRITCHIE RESERVOIR PARK

A well-loved destination among Singaporeans, MacRitchie Reservoir Park (open 7am-7pm daily; free entry) is a slice of serenity in the heart of the city-state.

Constructed in 1867, it was Singapore’s first manmade water supply, built in response to the island’s growing need for fresh water.

It is a popular spot for walking, kayaking, picnics and marathon training sessions and is equipped with showers, lockers, food kiosks and eateries.

Enjoy a bird’s-eye view of the tropical rainforest from the 250-metre high Treetop Walk – a freestanding suspension bridge between the park’s two highest points. Look out for squirrels, long-tailed macaque monkeys grooming their young, monitor lizards, and even flying lemurs and owls.

Fuel up on local favourites such as laksa or beef stew at Mushroom Café, or enjoy a cocktail at Vava Bistro.

● **How to get there** Several buses stop on Lornie Road in front of the park. If you are departing from Orchard Road, take bus 132 or 167. Marymount or Caldecott MRT stations are the closest.

SOUTHERN RIDGES

The Southern Ridges is a 10km-long channel that connects a handful of green spaces, including Mount Faber Park, Telok Blangah Hill Park, Hort Park, Kent Ridge Park and Labrador Nature Reserve (many of which are open 24 hours and well lit at night time). Henderson Waves, the highest pedestrian bridge in Singapore, connects Mount Faber Park to Telok Blangah Hill Park and is eye-catching not only for the spectacular views it provides but also its unusual wave-patterned structure.

The entire Southern Ridges walk takes up to five hours to complete, from Mount Faber Park to Kent Ridge Park, but there are shorter options. Eight trails take you through the various parks, each of which has its own character.

At the top of Mount Faber is the Sentosa Island cable-car station, and an entertainment and leisure complex called Faber Peak Singapore with restaurants, gift shops and viewing decks.

Telok Blangah Hill Park was once a gathering place for trading communities, which

flourished here in the early 19th century. A symbol of the prosperity at that time is Alkaff Mansion, a regal colonial bungalow built by an Arab trader, which now serves as an event venue.

Hort Park is a one-stop-shop for everything related to gardening, with interactive displays and regular horticultural events. The adjoining Kent Ridge Park has a total of 20 fitness stations, as well as various lookout points. It is also home to tembusu and acacia trees, many exotic species of birds and insects, and even wild orchids.

On the eastern side is a pond teeming with turtles and koi. Nearby lies the site where one of the last battles to defend Singapore during the Second World War was fought – the Reflections Bukit Chandu Museum tells the story.

In Labrador Nature Reserve, you can hear the songs of 70 different bird species, including oriental magpie-robins and black-naped orioles, and maybe catch a glimpse of one of 30 species of butterfly that live here.

Take a walk along the Berlayer Creek Mangrove Trail and the foothill of Bukit Chermin Boardwalk to observe this spectacular coastal habitat, or examine various remnants from the war, such as artillery pieces and secret tunnels. Hungry? Tamarind Hill Restaurant serves exquisite Thai food (tamarindrestaurants.com).



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THE ISLAND OF DREAMS

If on an autumn, misty evening you feel down and tired, then you should go to YouTube to see a video that features Huvafen Fushi - a tiny island in the Maldives, where you can find a place that is not only luxurious, beautiful, comfortable and delicious, but also incredibly pleasant and friendly.

The market of luxury boutique hotels around the world has been growing fast and furious. Secluded islands, inaccessible slopes, jungles, wild and high cliffs... These combined with the fine weather and safe surroundings, constitute a truly perfect environment to build architectural gems -

modern structures where walls are sparse to make room for the exceptional views, space and the nature. Such resorts generally consists of several villas, each with its own pool and a garden that guarantees privacy. The places also feature small runways for aircraft carrying guests to the island, motorboats, spas, and of course restaurants

with a panoramic terrace. Add to this a hotel manager with international experience, prices around a few thousand dollars per night and a big hotel chain as the owner.

The demand for such intimate spots is now higher than ever, mostly owing to new millionaires from China, Brazil, the Middle East, Russia and India. Also, nowadays



the most demanding clients seek not only the highest standards and new experiences, but also something exceptional that will provide them with the so-called “unique added value”.

THE UNIQUE THING

Each hotel and company relies on good service and builds its philosophy around it. All of them offer impeccable service, trying to meet your highest demands and make your dreams come true.

So how can one stand out from thousands of similar, luxury hotels? It is not about remembering the guest’s name and knowing their preferences. This standard can, in fact, be sometimes annoying. I personally prefer to stay in a place where there is no staff run-

ning around with slips of paper, trying to correctly pronounce my name.

The truth is that there are both luxury hotels where you can feel good and those you simply dislike. And then there is Huvafen Fushi - a place where you feel more welcome than at your mom’s, the one that by far exceeds the standards of the so-called good service. And just as it is difficult to describe the beauty of some places, their views, the warm breeze and the smell of exotic plants, so it is hard to define this blissful feeling of being here.

IT IS PEOPLE WHO CREATE THE PLACE

“It’s so intangible and hard to define”. Is it a coincidence that you have met here a perfect

butler? And then there was a great waiter and a chef who created delicious raw food dishes especially for you. And the lady on the ship who knew exactly when to bring you a new glass of chilled champagne, because the previous one got warm. Perfect villa service staff, a perfect massage therapist in the spa, a perfect waiter in Thai and Lobster Dinner restaurants, as well as a perfect sommelier who remembered your preferences and positively surprised you with new wine. Is it just a coincidence? Or perhaps all those people are having an exceptionally good day?

However, a sharp eye will notice that all of this is a laboriously worked out strategy of forming talented, intelligent people, who are taught here necessary professional skills, and who develop a sense of bond with the compa-



There are four restaurants and at least ten other places where you can enjoy an intimate dinner for two.



ny, understand the value of good manners, invest in their personal development and know that their own success must be combined with the success of the company.

PATENT FOR QUALITY

I wondered what training system lies all behind it. No doubt, if you want to teach this attitude to your multicultural and multilingual staff, you must simply exemplify all those qualities. At Huvafen Fushi this is all about Mark, the general manager. He is unlike any boss of an ultra-luxury hotel. Most of them are stars who were offered this job as a sort of reward for various achievements in the hospitality industry. However Mark, who has managed to create here a perfect team and even more perfect atmosphere, is a modest, athletic man, available for guests round the clock. “Should you have any questions, take my phone number and call me any time you want,” he says.

The resort pays a high price for having such perfect personnel. New, luxury resorts that are launched in the Maldives every year, have everything you can imagine, but they cannot boast such a great team. No wonder they try to cherry pick some of the members of the staff of Huvafen Fushi. They probably have a hard time trying to resist better positions or salaries than the ones offered here. Perhaps the resort could patent their employees? Since you can patent even such tiny things as screws, then why shouldn't you do the same with good management that makes employees work with passion and commitment? They truly deserve such a patent!

HIGHLIGHTS

Huvafen Fushi is a tiny island that puts a great emphasis on “being close to wildlife”. Just before the sunset, groups of stingrays approach the shore where guests of the resort can feed them with slices of fish. Celsius restaurant is, in turn, frequently visited by friendly dolphins. Then there is a truly beautiful coral reef round the island, and you can explore it with diving equipment provided by the resort. Huvafen Fushi also boasts the world's only underwater spa with rooms situated in the very middle of the reef. In the evening, the place is illuminated and you can observe here the real underwater world as if you were a part of it.

There are four restaurants and at least ten other venues where you can enjoy an intimate dinner for two. These include the picturesque beach, the oval pier, the tiny tip of the island or the terrace of your own villa. You can compose your own menu, but the best idea is to try the chef's sug-



It is difficult to describe the beauty of some places, their views, the warm breeze and the smell of exotic plants. It is simply hard to define this blissful feeling of being here.

gestions, such as the refined seven-course set of delicious dishes that offer amazing flavours. For example the Lobster and Champagne dinner consists of six lobster dishes, each one offering different taste sensations. These include delicate soup flavoured with cognac, salad of quinoa, pomegranate and tender lobster meat, panna cotta with foie gras and lobster with caviare, as well as several variations of dessert with champagne in the main role. You should also try the Thai menu that consists of seven tiny dishes prepared on an oval platform just for you.

The Ocean Pavilion guarantees ultimate intimacy with two large ocean-front villas connected with a long pier, each with a private infinity pool next to the living room and illuminated in the evening as if it were the Milky Way.

The Cube Villa is situated right on the beach. It is a gorgeous, private sanctuary with the incredible 463 sqm of floor area, three bedrooms, a kitchen and dining room for up to 10 guests, a huge lounge to relax and barbecue, its own illuminated pool, as well as a white sand beach.

As a complimentary gift guests receive a CD with beautiful ambient music created

especially for Huvafen Fushi. Distance from the Male International Airport - 30 minutes by motorboat from the resort. The resort offers 26 villas built on water and 18 on the beach.

THE MALDIVES A COUNTRY WITH NO STADIUM

You may find it surprising, but the Maldives is the world's only country that is too small to accommodate a full-size football stadium.

The Maldives is situated south of India, on the Indian Ocean, on both sides of the equator. The country is made up of 1,192 tiny islands, often smaller than a car park of a neighbourhood supermarket, as well as countless sand heaps that form 26 atolls stretching over the distance of 960 kilometres. The capital lies on a 5.8 sq km of land, has its own international airport situated on a man-made island called Hulhule. The city is inhabited by almost half of the country's total population. Other citizens live on several other small islands and often work in tourism industry, mainly in islands/resorts whose number is increasing year-on-year. Each resort occupies the entire island and

features low-rise buildings, mainly villas built on water and on the beach. If the size of the island allows it, the resort also has sports facilities, gardens, and restaurants. If not, then they are built on stilts on the sea. The reefs in this region are famous for the crystal-clear water, and the world's most beautiful white-sand beaches surrounded by shallow blue lagoon.

Landing for the first time in the Maldives, you may be taken aback by the sight of tiny islands scattered around the turquoise waters of the ocean. You land in the paradise where the fable is about to begin. Only here each luxury hotel has its own welcome lounge at the airport. The best is the one that belongs PER AQUUM group, owner of the Huvafen Fushi island hotel.

The moment you get there, you can take your shoes off and stop worrying. Someone will look after you in the best way you can only imagine. Your guardian angel will take care of your luggage and all formalities. They will also take you to the luxury lounge, offer a drink, arrange a shoulder massage should you need it, and finally take you by motorboat to the island of your dreams.

Magdalena Boratyńska

NEW SPANISH TRAIL

What do Toledo, Sevilla, Granada, Salamanca, Avila, Malagon, Burgos and Beas de Segura have in common? In addition to the unique Spanish tradition and magnificent sights, those cities are distinguished by presence of Saint Teresa of Avila - a prominent mystic of the Catholic Church.

And since 2015 marks the 500th anniversary of her birth, you can now follow a trail in the footsteps of Saint Teresa.

TAKE A PASSPORT AND GO

The most famous pilgrimage route in Europe, Camino de Santiago, has received a strong competitor this year. Each of the 17 Spanish cities: Toledo, Seville, Granada, Salamanca, Avila, Malagon, Burgos, Beas de Segura, Medina del Campo, Valladolid, PASTRANA, Alba de Tormes, Segovia, Caravaca de la Cruz, Villanueva de la Jara, Palencia, Soria, is visited by tourists who follow the trail of Saint Teresa of Jesus. Interestingly, you are free to plan out your own "camino", so it can become a pilgrimage, cultural, tourist or even culinary trail. Just pick and choose what

motivates you most to follow the footsteps of this prominent theologian. Saint Teresa inspired Pope John Paul II, who also declared her the first female Doctor of the Church. At tourist information offices in all the towns associated with St. Teresa you can receive a pilgrim passport to be stamped with reminders of the places that you have visited on your way, to get a certificate of completion of the route. There is only one condition: you need to visit at least four Teresian cities in at least two autonomous communities and end the journey in Avila. You can also download the passport from huellasdeteresa.com

AVILA - HOUSE AND TREATS

Located 110 kilometres from Madrid, Avila is the highest elevated city in Spain. Surrounded by a fortified wall, in the evenings

when it is illuminated with bright light, it resembles a model of a medieval castle. Following in the footsteps of St. Teresa, you can visit a place that was once her home and today houses a church and a convent. In the church of San Juan Bautista where the mystic was baptised on 4 April 1515, there is still a baptismal font that dates back to those times. It is worth staying in Avila for at least two days. In this way you will have an opportunity to try the Teresian cuisine, which offers simple yet tasty dishes, but first of all is famous for delicious Dulces Carmelitas and Yemas de Santa Teresa pastries.

BEAS DE SEGURA

- THE NINTH CONVENT

This tiny town was a source of inspiration for both St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.





“Camino a Santa Teresa” is a great opportunity to see the most interesting places in Spain, its culture, traditions and customs.

It also enchanted writers such as Jorge Manrique or Lope de Vega. It is a historical place, where many roads meet, the border land where the windows of houses surrounded by Sierra de Segura mountain range overlook the picturesque Beas River. It is also one of the few natural gateways to Sierras de Cazorla National Park. The mystic founded here San Jose del Salvador - the ninth of her convents and the first one in Andalusia. It is truly worth visiting this place full of memorabilia of the saint that are stored with great reverence. As we know from Teresa's notes, she spent here some of the happiest moments of her life.

SEVILLE - A UNIQUE PORTRAIT

There are numerous reasons to see Seville, the fact that St. Teresa lived here for some time being one of them. She came here to establish her 11th convent. Originally it was located in a different part of the city, but after St. Teresa left Seville, the authorities

decided to move it to the quieter Santa Cruz street. Today the congregation of St. Joseph has on display numerous relics of the saint, as well as her portrait painted in her lifetime and the manuscript of “The Interior Castle”. To learn more of the times when the mystic visited Seville, you should also see the São Jorge Castle - the former seat of the Court of the Inquisition, as well as the Carthusian convent in which she used to stay.

GRANADA - IN THE REALM OF KNOWLEDGE

Granada is a true melting pot of cultures, the birthplace of Spanish poetry and flamenco, a land of knowledge and the cultural centre of the southern Europe. The place also attracts crowds of tourists because of the legends of the Alhambra as well as the Generalife and Albaicin gardens. This is where Muslim past of the city with its Mudejar art blends with Renaissance churches and convents. St Joseph Convent was the 16th and

penultimate institution founded by St. Teresa, who was seriously ill at that time and was preparing to establish the last work of her life - the convent in Burgos. It exists to this day and is situated at the entrance to the historic district of Realejo. It is home to Carmelite nuns who take a real care about this place.

TOLEDO - WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS

It is one of the most beautifully situated cities in Spain, famous for the most spectacular Corpus Christi procession in Europe. It was also the key stage in the life of St. Teresa. It is here where she started to write down her thoughts, concerns and intentions that gave rise to her abundant literary legacy. With the help of a wealthy entrepreneur Martin Ramirez who on his deathbed donated her money, she was able to found yet another convent.

Marzena Mróz



A CITY WITH A VIEW

Annie Harris is enraptured by the Italian town of Ravello, the magnificent vistas and gardens of which inspired a musical masterpiece.

Sitting high above Italy's dazzling Amalfi coast, the charming hill town of Ravello offers breath-taking views of sun-drenched terraces cascading down to the azure Mediterranean sea.

Only a 45-minute drive from Naples, it's a wonderful place for a relaxing break after a business trip to the Neapolitan capital. Ravello has been here since the sixth century and has been attracting the rich and pow-

erful ever since. A former holiday hotspot for the likes of Elizabeth Taylor, Humphrey Bogart and Greta Garbo, it still retains an air of quiet sophistication and grandeur.

The opulent palaces along its cobbled streets were once majestic family residences – now they are home to some of the area's finest luxury hotels, set in stunning secluded gardens, each with their own fabulous views of the coast.

One of the best vantage points for taking

it all in is Villa Rufolo, just off Piazza Centrale. Dating back to the 13th century, its impressive grounds and gardens inspired Wagner when he wrote his last opera, *Parzifal*, and it now hosts performances during the prestigious Ravello Festival, which has taken place every summer since the fifties.

The opulent palaces along its cobbled streets were once majestic family residences – now they are home to some of the area's finest luxury hotels, set in stunning se-

cluded gardens, each with their own fabulous views of the coast. The cypress-lined avenues and pretty courtyards are lovely to wander through. Open 9am-8pm daily; entry €5; villarufolo.it

Similarly spectacular panoramas can be enjoyed from Villa Cimbrone, a short stroll away. This Roman-style palace is home to the Terrace of Infinity, a balcony lined with 18th-century marble busts suspended above the glittering sea – look down if you dare.

The grounds feature a mix of Italian and English-themed gardens, as well as a small tearoom. Open 9am-sunset; entry €7; villacimbrone.com

An ideal base while staying in Ravello is Palazzo Avino, a member of Preferred Hotels and Resorts. Located through a discreet doorway off a narrow pedestrian street near the town square, this 12th-century palace opened as a five-star hotel in 1997.

Inside, modern white public spaces lead to an outdoor restaurant and bar with terraced gardens that descend to a pool and open-air gym. The 43 rooms and suites are also painted white, showing off the ornate

Italian furnishings and Moorish architectural features, and most offer beautiful sea or mountain views.

One of the pleasures of visiting Italy is, of course, its food. At Palazzo Avino's Michelin-starred restaurant, Rossellinis, you can enjoy a contemporary take on the region's classics. Sampling the exquisite tasting menu on the terrace while drinking in the sea views – and the fine wines – makes for a truly memorable evening. For something a little more hearty, head for one of the town's homely trattorie. At Cumpa Cosimo, off the main square, locals and tourists tuck into generous portions of homemade pasta, fresh fish and plump, locally grown vegetables. The proprietor – quite a character – won't be happy if you leave hungry. 44-46 Via Roma; tel +39 089 857 156.

If you feel inspired, you can join a cookery class to learn how to recreate the area's cuisine at home. An afternoon at Villa Maria's Nonna Orsola cookery school will give you three dinner-party courses to be proud of. Energetic chef Vincenzo Amatruda makes it all seem easy, and his homemade limon-

cello is the best you will have tasted Via Pa. Alberghi; tel. +39 089 857 255; cookingravello.com

A great way to walk off all the excess is to take the footpath down from Ravello to the seaside town of Minori (the birthplace of TV chef Gennaro Contaldo). The route takes about an hour, weaving through lemon groves, vineyards and tiny hamlets before arriving at the low-key town, which has a small beach and some nice spots for a well-earned aperitif. In the summer, ferries go from here to the larger, busier resort of Amalfi.

If you're feeling less energetic, the Palazzo Avino offers a shuttle down to its beach club, an exclusive spot on the coast to sunbathe, swim and lunch in secluded surroundings. Reserved for hotel guests, it never gets too crowded and is a heavenly oasis of calm. Just what you need before returning to reality.

Palazzo Avino is open seasonally between April and October. Room rates in September started from €390 online. Via San Giovanni del Toro 28; tel. +39 089 818 181; palazzoavino.com





TOWARDS THE SUN

It's time to grease your skis and make an all-important decision. Let's see: Austria - order, Italy - sun, France - challenge. Try to combine all three and what you get is... the Pyrenees.

The mountains lying on the border between France and Spain, may be much lower than the Alps, but also have one definite advantage.

It's the sun, the warming sun that in winter doesn't set until even 6 pm. No wonder the place is loved by so many ski aficionados.

Once upon a time, beyond the forests and mountains, over the Louron valley located south of Toulouse, there were two villages named Peyresourde and Agudes. Each of them boasted several ski slopes on two sides of the same ridge, so no wonder they fiercely competed with each other. Until one day A.D 1988, when they decided to leave their animosities and combine their forces to try and created one, joint ski resort. And this is how Peyragudes was created and everyone lived happily ever after. No, wait. There's more to the story. After all, "tomorrow never dies" as it was proved by James Bond himself who came to Peyragudes in 1997 as part of the plot of one of his movies.

You can reach the resort directly by air. But this seems to be a bit too pretentious, doesn't it? A cheaper and much simpler way is to take a coach or a train from Toulouse located just 150 km away. There are also charter flights to Lourdes from where you can take buses to Peyragudes.

But beforehand you need to decide where to stay. Remember that there are two villages situated on two sides of one mountain ridge. Conditions of accommodation are similar in both of them: in Agudes the buildings have flat roofs, while in Peyresourde they are sloped. No other differences observed. And although both villages are quite intimate, they also guarantee a wide range of hotel rooms and suites at affordable prices. Of course, you will find here ski rental shops, stores, bars and restaurants, as well. It's a truly family resort, where everything is focused around one core activity - skiing down the perfectly groomed sunny slopes.

IN FULL SUN

17 high-speed lifts start from both villages almost directly from the main door of the hotels, finishing their run on the main ridge. There you can choose among 50 ski slopes, going down both sides along the beautiful natural setting of the Pyrenees and the national park. Most of the pistes (a total of 60 km) can be covered by snow cannons, which combined with the altitude from 1,600 to 2,400 metres above sea level, guarantees appropriate snow cover. Most of the runs are blue and red - meaning they are excellent choice for recreational skiing, as

well as for beginners. I was positively surprised with the common access to facilities for the disabled tourists, who can enjoy skiing in the resort without any problems. Of course you can combine the runs in such a way to thoroughly explore the whole 1,500 ha area of the resort. For those interested in such explorations, I recommend the 4 kilometre La Vallee Blanche run from the peak by Serre Doumenge to the bottom of the valley. The run meanders through a beautiful secluded area, where you are basically all alone. There's only you and the mountains. Enough to say that I never met there any other skier. Truth be told, the tourist traffic in the area is much lower here than in Alpine resorts. An even longer, 6 kilometre run is a part of Val Lumieres trail that leads to Peyresourde.

I would have felt disappointed if this French station hadn't offered the opportunities to boost my adrenaline level. Luckily, these are guaranteed by black runs with Pene Nere as the most challenging one. And, of course, the off-piste rides on powder snow outside the designated routes and according to the Kantian principle: the starry sky above me, skis beneath me and the moral law within me. In fact, you can deviate from most of the runs, skiing down the steep slopes

and gullies. I recommend to take Pene Nere at full speed and then traverse the slope to the red run at Traverse Estives. You can also climb on foot from the upper lift terminal along the Cap des Hittes ridge where there's a vast basin for your personal use.

Even further escapades are possible on a dogsled available in the Nordic base nearby. You can choose here between malamutes and huskies eager to help you explore the area. Not all of us love long journeys. Those who don't like straying beyond the main trails, can always enjoy the resort's snow park. Snowboard acrobats can practice here their 180s and 360s, using the numerous jumps, hips, boxes, rails, and halfpipes.

AFTER SUNSET

Tired? Time for après ski activities. Right in the very centre of the resort there's the excellent Spa & Wellness Centre Spassio. It offers fun in the pool, massages, saunas and jacuzzi. But if it's not enough water for you, there's always Loudenvielle located 10 kilometres from the resort, where you can enjoy all the pleasures of warm H2O at the vast Balnea aqua thermal centre. Water here is rich in mineral compounds and offered in a wide range of forms and thematic sceneries including an Indian bath with totems in the background, a Japanese outdoor pool, as well as Roman baths with a swimming pool, steam and music. And all of this in a little lost town in the Pyrenees.

But since you're already here, you might want to immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the old Romanesque villages with their stone churches and taverns. Most of the buildings of the old Mont village that lies 4 kilometres north from Loudenvielle, date back to 12th-16th century. The village has now 40 residents. It's worth paying an extremely delicious visit to the local livestock farm here to see the whole production line, starting with shaggy sheep and finishing with tasty fromage cheese. Cheeses from the Pyrenees have a characteristic flavour that you can't find anywhere else.

I also recommend a night jetski ride to Le Cabanou restaurant. This incredible place will certainly bring a smile to your face with traditional tipples and dishes, such as tartiflette - potato casserole with lardons bacon, reblochon cheese and onions. It's good to feast, but it's time to return to the resort at the bottom of the valley. And if you thought that the ride up the mountain was crazy, wait for the trip down where your jet ski chauffeurs will show you their skills. The black night, the snow and the sound of the mountain air whistling by your ears...

Barbara Scharf



The Pyrenees may be much lower than the Alps, but also have one definite advantage. It's the sun, the warming sun that in winter doesn't set until even 6 pm. No wonder the place is loved by so many ski aficionados.





A WARM-UP IN DRUSKININKAI

The year-round open, almost half-kilometre ski slope, a rope course with challenging routes, a large aqua park - all of this available in a quiet and historic spa town. Druskininkai, Lithuania is a perfect place for a weekend getaway and a warm-up before the upcoming winter season.

DRUSKININKAI

Situated on the edge of the Augustów Forest, on the banks of the Neman river, Druskininkai is Lithuania's largest spa with more than two centuries of history. It's also just 45 kilometres away from the Poland's border in Ogrodniki.

And although the town is quite small, it boasts numerous sanatoriums, aqua parks, hotels and guesthouses. Prices? Affordable - up to €60 per room per night. One of the places that you might want to stay in is the three-star Senasis Pastas (Old Post Office) guest house, situated right by Druskonis Lake and offering cosy suites with kitchens. It's also close to all the attractions of the town.

SNOWPARK

Of course for ski aficionado, the biggest attraction of Druskininkai is the Snow Aren ski resort that lies on the opposite bank of the beautiful Neman. It boasts Europe's fourth largest (after German Alpincenter

Bottrop, French SnowHall Amneville and Dutch SnowWorld Landgraaf) they year-round open indoorski slope. Opened five years ago, it's owned by a private investor and the local authorities of Druskininkai.

The Snow Arena covers the area of almost 8 hectares and offers three ski slopes. The most prominent one is the 460-metre piste snowed with the state-of-the-art cooling system, which keeps the temperature in the hall at the constant level of -5°C. The slope is groomed everyday. You can also try your



hand here at slaloms, but note that since this section is regularly used by professional skiers and lots of national teams, it's often sprinkled with water, so it's surface is extremely hard. The run is served by a four-seater chairlift.

Alongside is a short 150-metre slope for beginners and kids, equipped with a belt lift. When the outside temperature falls below 5°C, you can use the longest, 550-metre outdoor run.

From the upper terminal you can enter directly a good restaurant called Aero Gallery, as well as the observation deck, which overlooks the winding Neman and the town. This season skiers will have a real treat, as this year the authorities will launch a new gondola lift that will take you from the lower terminal next to the aqua park to the Snow Arena situated by the Neman.

UNO PARK

Visiting Druskininkai, you can't miss a visit to Uno rope park, which is the largest project of such type in the Baltic countries. Here you can enjoy 10 routes of varying difficulty, and climb, jump, slide down, as well as perform special tasks, of course under the watchful eye of the instructors. The biggest attraction here is riding a zip line over the Neman with the speed up to 55 kmph.

Filip Gawryś



one number

to rozwiązanie zunifikowanej komunikacji, które pozwala na dostęp do usług z dowolnego miejsca na świecie.
Poczuj swobodę i komfort komunikacji, gdy Twój numer jest zawsze tam gdzie jesteś TY!



NEW TRAVEL APPS

Jenny Southan rounds up new apps designed to make your trips easier.

**FOUR SEASONS**

The hotel group's new app allows you to make and manage bookings, check in and out, arrange airport transfers, request toiletries, wake-up calls, housekeeping, turndown and room service, and book restaurants, spa treatments and golf. There are also tips on the local area.

- Android, Apple, Amazon

**KLM**

The Dutch airline revamped its app last year to make it more intelligent. It has an attractive, intuitive interface allowing you to make bookings, check in and select your seat, while new features include the ability to predict your preferences based on data from the past. The reservation process has been simplified and you can pay in-app with credit card details that are stored for next time. Specially installed beacons help you to navigate Amsterdam Schiphol airport. Android, Apple,

- Blackberry, Windows

**EASYJET**

Easyjet's updated app is more personalised, providing location-based way-finding through Gatwick airport, check-in reminders, directions to bag-drop and information about gate openings. It also pulls your digital boarding pass up when you need to board and tells you which carousel to find your suitcase at. Payment details can be retrieved and extra luggage added. Apple, Android

**SINGAPORE AIRLINES**

New features on the SIA app range from a "My trips" page with booking reference numbers and flight schedules listed, to a reservation widget so you can search and pay for flights and check in online. Boarding passes can be saved to Apple's Passbook, and Krisflyer members can see their points.

- Android, Apple

**UNITED**

The airline has updated its app to allow you to re-book if your flight is delayed or cancelled, and view interactive airport maps for Chicago, Denver, Houston, LA, New York Newark, San Francisco and Washington DC, with more to come. If you have a mobile boarding pass, it will show the route to your gate and the time it takes to walk there.

- Amazon, Android, Apple, Blackberry, Windows

**BOOKING NOW**

Hotel reservation site booking.com has launched Booking Now, which uses geolocation software to show properties nearby with rooms available. It lists more than 600,000 hotels worldwide with images and reviews. You also get directions, Apple's Passbook integration and offline access to save on data. Pay for a room in just two taps.

- Android, Apple

**SAFETURE**

Previously for corporates only, Safeture was extended to the public in the summer. It provides real-time information on security and health risks, the weather, civil unrest, terror attacks and airport disruption alerts around the world, with data pulled from government bodies, foreign offices and meteorological agencies. It also offers a one-click connection to local emergency services, as well as location sharing to show others where you are.

- Android, Apple

**AMADEUS MOBILE MESSENGER**

Designed for companies that employ travel managers, this piece of software is similar to Safeture in that it helps to mitigate risk by flagging up location-specific issues that could be a danger. It also provides a direct line to your employer back home, and can be used to monitor spend and policy compliance. Tracking technology shows your manager exactly where you are (reassuring for some, invasive for others).

- Android, Apple, Blackberry, Windows

**FLIO**

Launched in August, in partnership with 20 airports (and another 200 to come by the end of the year), Flio offers one-touch connectivity to free airport wifi, as well as discounts and offers at airside shops and eateries. There's also advice for navigating terminals, as well as the ability to book extras such as lounge access and transport.

- Apple, Android soon

**MEETOO**

This cloud-based app allows event organisers to conduct live polls of attendees, as well as create a platform for sharing opinions and ideas or asking questions in real time. More than 1,000 delegates from the same group can use it simultaneously – it can also be employed for training sessions, virtual meetings and multi-location events. PwC was an early adopter. It costs from US\$99 to US\$899 per room/per month.

- Android, Apple, Blackberry, Windows

**GOEURO**

Travel planning app GoEuro allows people to compare journey times and prices between airlines, coaches and trains across 33,000 European destinations. Partners include National Express, First Train, Eurolines, Eurostar, Virgin Trains, Gatwick Express, Easyjet, Renfe, Deutsche Bahn and TrenItalia.

- Android, Apple

**SKYZEN**

Announced in June, Skyzen pairs with the Jawbone fitness tracker via your iPhone (an Apple Watch and Fitbit version will come soon). Developed by IATA (the International Air Transport Association), with data from the Official Airline Guide (OAG), it's designed to monitor your sleep and activity patterns in the air. Information on time zones can also help to combat jet-lag.

- Apple, Android soon

**AIROUND**

Airound records how many miles and hours you have spent flying, logging every journey you have made via GPS. Open the app when you board, turn on flight mode and then, on landing, turn off flight mode for an automatic calculation. You can organise your travels according to frequency or duration, map routes, and input flight numbers and aircraft types.

- £1.49; Apple



LUNAJETS

Charter one of 4,800 private jets worldwide with the swipe of a finger. Arrange one-way, return or multi-destination journeys, and book seats on empty legs (there are usually about 200 services a day and prices can save you up to 75 per cent). Not only can you take your pets, you can also request to smoke on board. One-hour flights from €2,000 per aircraft; six-hour journeys from €20,000.

● Android, Apple, Blackberry World



WAYGO

Scan Korean, Japanese and Chinese characters on menus or signs and this clever translation app will instantly convert the text into English. You don't even need an internet connection. Users get ten free translations a day, while an upgrade of US\$1.99 will allow a week-long unlimited package, or US\$6.99 will get you as many as you want forever. More languages coming soon.

● Android, Apple



WESWAP

This "social currency" app allows you to swap your money for currency supplied direct from a local abroad. Transfer the amount you want to exchange in sterling on to the app, select a currency and it will match you with someone who is willing to buy it. If it's someone you know on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter, the transaction is free; if not, there is

a 1 per cent fee. If there are no matches, WeSwap will buy it from you for 1.5 per cent. You will receive a free prepaid Mastercard to withdraw your cash from an ATM or make purchases. It holds up to 16 currencies.

● Android, Apple



LAUNDRAPP

You have unpacked your suitcase, but when will you get to the dry cleaners? With Laundrapp you can arrange for your clothes to be collected and delivered back at a convenient time. Available in London, plus five other cities across the UK. A shirt costs £2.50, a two-piece suit £11, or a suit and five shirts

● £16. Android, Apple, Amazon



VENTOURA

This peer-to-peer app connects you with locals in 30 European cities, including London, Paris, Madrid and Amsterdam, who can set up tours (for a fee), meetings and provide tips. Publish your itinerary on your profile and you can start talking to fellow travellers or residents. A partnership with British Airways means you can book BA and Oneworld partner flights at the same time.

● Android, Apple



SEASONAL CITIES

Disappointed that you can't do the bike ride you planned? This app will suggest things to do in 11 cities

based on real-time weather forecasts. Rewritten every three months, the guides (79p each) provide five recommendations for shops, restaurants, bars, clubs, events, sights and hotels according to the season and across a range of budgets, with places of interest geotagged on maps.

● Apple



URBANOLOGIE

Virtual members' club Urbanologie gives you the lowdown on new hotels, restaurants, pop-ups, exhibitions and bars in London, New York, Los Angeles, Miami and Dubai. The guides are updated daily by local freelancers and in-house staff. There's also a clever pull-out map that works well on touchscreens. It costs £100 per year but use offer code "businesstraveller" to receive a free three-month membership.

● Android, Apple



MILEHI

MileHi promises to put you in touch with like-minded people on the same flight. It says it's aimed at both leisure and business travellers, but it will likely be used as a hook-up rather than a networking platform (the clue is in the name). Simply type in your flight details to see if any other users are on board. If you like the look of them, you can send a private message – and arrange to meet in the galley, perhaps.

● Android, Apple



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Monitoring kursu online. Dogodne formy zamawiania i płatności.



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CHASING THE DREAM

Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+ is equipped with the front and rear camera stabilizer, as well as Video Collage function that enables fast recording and intuitive editing of videos.

It is common to say that we live in an age where size does matter. Chasing a dream of having an even bigger house or a car we lose time only to recover it from some parallel reality by means of numerous devices that are supposed to simplify our lives. This natural expansiveness that is inherent feature of human beings, leads to endless race in which we, as consumers, often benefit, receiving better and faster products.

THE RACE EFFECT

Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+ is the result of this race, and we must admit that it is a very successful result. The first contact with

the gently curved and slightly widened 5.7-inch Quad HD Super AMOLED screen is simply a delightful experience. Especially when the piece you are holding is the golden version, which resembles a bar of this precious metal. Note however, that the curved screen is far from a mere gimmickry. To understand it, you just need to watch any video on it. After this experience, a regular screen seems somewhat grey and ordinary. The materials used by the Korean manufacturer in its phones, aroused mixed feelings. This has changed with Galaxy S6 where Samsung has replaced almost all plastics with glass and metal, which combined with the curved screen in Edge and Edge+ versions make for an electrifying effect on the user. It is simply hard to imagine what else you could improve in this model design-wise. Modernity with sophisticated elegance

- it is the most accurate term one should use to describe those smartphones. Note: S6 Edge+ lying on a table can distract attention from the main topic of any conversation.

PLEASURE TO LOOK AT

Although attractive to look at, Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+ is also a perfect observer itself, as it is equipped with the front and rear camera stabilizer and Video Collage function that enables fast recording and intuitive editing of videos. With Full HD streaming it is also a perfect tool for those who like to upload videos. Also those who appreciate taking high-quality pictures will not be disappointed, because the photos taken with the S6 are almost perfect regardless of the time of day or night. You could write books about other useful features and applications that come pre-installed with this model and everyone will find here something that comes in handy.

UNIQUE FEATURES

I was personally captivated with two remarkable features: the first one is the so-called "do not disturb" mode where you can set times of the day or specific hours in which all calls and alerts on the device will be muted; and the second one - the function of muting a ringing phone. If you want to quickly stop/silence the ringer, you can use your palm to cover the S6 screen, or turn Galaxy S6 over (i.e., make screen face downwards). In an era when the phone is no longer primarily used for its main purpose, namely making voice calls, and has become our inseparable life companion, it is extremely important that it is not only helpful, but also inspirational. At least aesthetically.

Marta Wilk





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4 HOURS IN... LOS ANGELES

Tom Otley explores LA's historical Hispanic heart, located in the city's rejuvenated Downtown area.



UNION STATION

For a City of Dreams, Los Angeles has had a lot of nightmares, most of them environmental.

Currently suffering a decade-long drought, floods and earthquakes have caused many problems during its relatively short history. This tour offers a whistle-stop guide to LA's origins by the Los Angeles River in the late 18th century, through to the past decades' rebuilding efforts.

Start at one of the last great railway stations built by the US government – LA Union. Opened in 1939 at 800 North Alameda

Street, it is designed in the Mission and Dutch Revival style with arches, chandeliers and art deco touches.

Although it's been on the National Register of Historic Places for more than 35 years, and has appeared in many TV series and films – including *Blade Runner*, *The Dark Knight Rises* and *Pearl Harbour* – it is still a working station, with more than 60,000 passengers a day.

AVILA ADOBE

Cross North Alameda Street to reach Los Angeles Plaza. The city's centre for most

of the 18th century, it later fell out of favour and was marked for demolition to make way for Union station.

In the event, the rail terminal was built across the road in the residential Chinatown area, while the Old Plaza, as it became known, became the centre of a heritage district (El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument, to give its full name).

Chinatown was then moved to its present location northwest of the Plaza – old timers still think of it as New Chinatown as a result. Just off the plaza, on Olvera Street – originally Wine Street, a clue to the former



The cathedral is a wonderfully quiet, contemplative place to pause before exploring the rest of the rejuvenated downtown area.

olive groves and wineries in the area, irrigated from the now cemented LA River – you’ll find plenty of shops to pick up souvenirs.

Also along this street is Avila Adobe. The oldest house in LA, it dates from 1818 and has been restored as an example of the Californian lifestyle of the 1840s.

Traditionally built from tar, wood and clay, the house is now open to visitors as a museum, with free entry and guided tours. elpueblo.lacity.org

LA PLACITA CHURCH

On the plaza, at 535 North Main Street, is the pale yellow-and-red church of Our Lady Queen of Angels, more simply known as La Placita.

Older than Avila Adobe, it dates from 1781 – although was mostly rebuilt in 1861 – and was founded when the Los Angeles area was part of Mexico (under Spanish rule).

Today, it serves the local community with ceremonies in English and Spanish. The square features plaques and statues commemorating everyone from King Carlos III of Spain to Felipe de Neve, the Spanish governor of the Californias who laid out the town.

PICO HOUSE

Just off the plaza, at 424 North Main Street, you’ll see an impressive Italianate building, the Pico House, which takes its name from Pío Pico, the last Mexican governor of Alta California, who wanted a luxury hotel for the developing city.

Designed by architect Ezra Kysor, the 80-room Courtyard (nothing to do with Courtyard by Marriott) operated from 1870 until the 1890s. After decades as a boarding house it was closed down, then, following flood damage, was bought by the city and turned into commercial space.

Continue along North Main Street and turn right on to West Temple Street and you’ll pass the 1925 Hall of Justice, where everyone from Bugsy Siegel to Charles Manson stood trial.

It was damaged in the 1994 earthquake and only reopened this year as offices for the district attorney and sheriff’s operations.

CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS

The 1994 earthquake also damaged the city’s Catholic cathedral – St Vibiana’s, again de-

signed by Kysor – to the point that it was condemned. Since it was too small for LA’s four million Catholics, and too expensive to repair, a land swap was organised.

The result was the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels at 555 West Temple Street, which opened in 2002, and features the old altar of St Vibiana’s and its stained-glass windows.

The 2.3-hectare site provides peace and calm, despite its location next to a freeway (which architect José Rafael Moneo viewed as the city’s “river of transportation”) in the middle of the downtown area.

Through striking bronze doors designed by Mexican-born Los Angeles sculptor Robert Graham, walk along to the end of the south ambulatory, where you’ll see a 17th-century, gilded, black walnut Spanish-Baroque retablo, purchased from Spain in the 1920s and installed in the cathedral with help from LA’s Getty Museum.

The cathedral is a wonderfully quiet, contemplative place to pause before exploring the rest of the rejuvenated downtown area. olacathedral.org; discoverlosangeles.com; dtlawalkingtours.com



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@businessstraveller.pl

Flying with no-frills airlines

My boss often flies with low-cost airlines. He prefers direct flights, as he isn't fond of plane changes. I always buy him the cheapest tickets, but usually encounter problems in case of any changes in the itinerary. Sometimes there are no seats available or you need to pay extra for luggage. Is there any special offer that airlines have for business travellers? I'm especially interested in more flexibility as to luggage and booking changes.

Aneta

Dear Aneta

The so-called low cost carriers by definition aim their offer at the tourist market segment. They are, however, also sometimes used by business passengers, especially when the aircraft lands at a centrally located airport, is the only direct connection or when the frequency of flights on a given route allows for changing reservation should business duties require it.

Low cost airlines have quickly realized that they also need to introduce a convenient product for their business customers. That is why, apart from standard fares (starting even with PLN 1 plus significant surcharges for any additional services), they have decided to introduce a new offer that would meet the demands of business travellers.

Ryanair offer Business Plus fare. This includes one free piece of luggage up to 20 kilograms, free Premium seat, airport check-in, the option to change the date of the flight (but the ticket remains non-refundable) and Fast Track at some airports.

The offer of Easyjet is similar - the fares are called Flexi and have comparable conditions. You also get the seat at the front of the cabin and priority boarding (here called "speedy boarding"). The tickets are non-refundable, as well.

Then there is WIZZ Flex service offer by Wizzair. This can be purchased while booking the ticket. The service allows you to make charge-free changes at a certain time before departure. It however does not include free checked luggage, so you must pay for it anyway.

Please, note that a ticket booked with a low-cost airline cannot be exchanged into a flight with any other airline. This can be a significant problem in case of business travels.

New fare

The head office of our company is located in Germany and I often book European flights for the members of the Supervisory Board. Recently I have had a problem with Lufthansa tickets, because the conditions for different fares have been changed. For example, I couldn't change my reservation and had to book a new ticket. Previously I could always change it for a fee. Now my agent tells me that I need to buy a Business Class ticket to be guaranteed full flexibility. Unfortunately our employees aren't allowed to fly in this class on European routes. What are my options?

Barbara

Dear Barbara

Lufthansa and all member airlines of the Lufthansa Group have indeed introduced an entirely new offer of fares. The first airline to implement these changes on European fares was Brussels Airlines in 2014, followed by SWISS in June 2015 and Austrian Airlines and Lufthansa in October. The prices of European fares were reduced and their terms and conditions modified. In Economy Class there are now three basic fare types: Light, Classic and Flex.

The Light fares are most affordable, starting at €89 for a return ticket, but at the same time they are the most restrictive. They do not allow for changes and refunds and the ticket is only valid for the booked flights. In case of any changes, you need to buy a new ticket. The price includes only hand luggage - for the checked luggage you need to pay extra. You also need to pay for allocating you a seat on board in advance.

Classic fares are much more convenient. Ticket prices are here almost 50% higher when compared to light fares and tickets are still non-refundable, but you can change the date and time of your flight for a fee. You can also take checked luggage up to 23 kilograms for free, as well as select your seat in advance.

Flex fares are the most convenient option, especially for business travellers. The prices of tickets in those fares can be from €60 to €160 higher than in Classic fares. You can, however, change such tickets free of charge (there may be price difference involved), and they are refundable with a charge (usually €120). The luggage and seat are included in the price. Additionally, travellers can earn here 50 percent more miles in Miles and More loyalty programme.

Indeed, the only fares that include full refund for a ticket are Business Class ones. However Flex fares in Economy Class seem to be the most optimal solution for business travel and will meet your expectations.

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