

Business Traveller **Poland**

MAY-JUNE-JULY 2021 N°5-6-7/2021 (115) 9,60 PLN (8% VAT included)

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MAY-JUNE-JULY 2021

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THE ISLAND PHENOMENON

The world is gradually opening up in these post-pandemic times, both for business and travel. What is the most alluring destination for your first air travel in a long time? An island, obviously! With its limited space providing a sense of security and tranquillity, time on an island seems to flow more casually, in its own pace, usually more slowly. It's much easier to live there a more fulfilling life and unwind effortlessly, since the possibilities are limited by the area of the island. You can't help, but think of the reference to a human being as an island, with its own shores, a distinct line, boundaries. Also with a sense of loneliness and endless drifting.

Before we set off for an island, we try to imagine what it's like. I usually start with the associations its shape evokes. I've just noticed that Curaçao resembles an exotic fish. The island attracts tourists with its dry tropical climate and an average annual temperature of 30°C and cooling trade winds that blow constantly from the east, picking up in the spring months. It's worth visiting here the lively town of Willemstad, which is a UNESCO World Heritage City, as well as try the delicious local fare and spend a day on one of its 35 sandy beaches. Time it right, and you just might have your own private beach. To learn more about Curaçao's attractions, read our cover article and enjoy your stay on this charming island!

Marzena Mróz

MARZENA MRÓZ
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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TRAVELLING ON ONE SWISS TRAVEL PASS

A good news for numerous Polish fans of Switzerland and its attractions. The obligatory quarantine for visitors from Poland travelling to Zurich, Bern, Lausanne or Geneva, has been lifted. This means a whole lot of new, exciting holiday opportunities. The country of 11 large lakes, 4 official languages, 5 UNESCO sites, 1280 kilometres of amazing views - is simple the perfect option for your 2021 summer holiday.

We recommend in particular the Grand Train Tour across Switzerland. You will travel by a very comfortable panoramic train, reaching the most beautiful spots of the country at our own pace, and stopping at destination you have planned to visit in advance.

On this journey, there is no specific schedule or travel itinerary. Importantly, you can plan it all by yourself, taking into consideration your own interests and the number of days you have devoted for a holiday in Switzerland this summer. This is because you can get on off the train at any time.

What is there to see on the way? Well, a whole lot. You will take in the views of the picturesque Alpine passes, historic bridges and viaducts, as well as scenic Zermatt or iconic St. Moritz, the cantons of Ticino or Lavaux, and waterfalls on the Rhine or Lake Lucerne. On the train you will also have the chance to experience the culture, flavours and history of this extraordinary country. Best of all: you can make the entire journey with just one ticket - the Swiss Travel Pass.

With the pass you can hop on the famous Bernina and Glacier Express trains, and many more. The Swiss love to travel by rail and the country's range of railway connections is very extensive. To see most of the attractions on the Grand Train Tour, you should plan at least a whole week; mojaszwajcaria.pl

Our summer plans

PAULINA GOSK, Corporate Communications Manager at Wizz Air
What holiday destinations will Wizz offer to Polish passengers this summer? The whole industry has had a difficult year, we are looking forward to the future. Our flight network from Poland now features more than 200 routes from 10 Polish airports. Where will we fly with Wizz Air? There is a wide range of destinations to choose from. Connections operated from Chopin Airport this summer will include Dubrovnik, Malaga, Rhodes or Thessaloniki, while passengers departing from Lublin will be able to fly on holiday to Burgas, Bularia or Split, Croatia. At Gdańsk Airport, Wizz Air offers connections to Mykonos, Crete, and from Krakow Airport you can fly with us to Nice and Rome. Passengers departing from Wrocław can choose among Larnaka, Kutaisi and Split, while the summer offer of our connections from Poznań



Airport will be expanded by flights to Burgas, Paris and Split. From Katowice, from where the first Polish Wizz Air flight took off 17 years ago, you will be able to travel to such exciting destinations, as Malaga, Alghero, but also Spanish Castellón, Corfu, Malta or Majorca. What are the airline's plans for the expansion on the Polish market in 2022? We are constantly expanding and this won't change. We continue to looking for new, interesting destinations, open our new bases, launch new routes and educate our customers. We want to provide our services and we believe that governments will be successful in stopping the spread of the COVID virus, making fuss-free air travel possible again. Wizz Air remains a financially stable airline with a fleet of the most efficient and sustainable aircraft.

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HOLIDAY ON A CATAMARAN

No doubt, this year's summer holidays will be different than before. Planning a holiday these days, we often look for cosy spots and safe ways of travel. Bearing this in mind, it seems that a yacht or catamaran cruise ticks all the boxes for a safe, but also exciting summer adventure. If you aren't an experienced sailor, the best choice is to use the services of a company that will organize the cruise for you, tailoring it to your needs.

Such fuss-free and safe catamaran and yacht escapades - not only for seasoned sailors - are offered by "Słoń na horyzoncie" tour operator. Founded out of the fascination with sailing, the company offers various cruises for families or groups, giving you a unique opportunity to see the beauty of the world, as seen from the perspective of a catamaran. Importantly, the company caters for those with no sailing experience, planning each cruise

individually. The company's owner, captain **Barbara Mrozowicz**, has extensive experience in this field and many times takes the helm herself.

There are many reasons nowadays that make a yacht or catamaran cruise a particularly attractive option. Most importantly, it's a truly safe way of travelling, without hardly any risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. After all, aboard the boat, you can cook your own meals, and it's up to you whether you want to call at a given port or not. For the duration of the holiday, the boat will be your home and navigating it is an unforgettable experience. Add to that the sense of freedom that comes with sailing through endless waters, and the adventure experienced together with your loved ones. Her water is always within your reach. You can literally jump into the sea straight from your bed! slonahoryzoncie.pl



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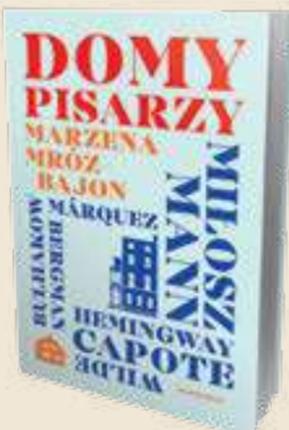
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BUSINESS TRAVELLER RECOMMENDS

No doubt, all of us have their favourite writer. But how many of us wonder about this person's dwelling: their house and neighbourhood he or she lived? Can you find there the traces of the protagonists from the author's books? Business Traveller's editor-in-chief Marzena Mróz, who for years has been documenting the changing world with her camera, has decided to visit the homes of her favourite writers. She went to Lithuania to see the view from the window of the house where Czesław Miłosz was born. She checked the height of the barn in a Mississippi town, where William Faulkner, armed with a bottle of bourbon, wrote his novels; and admired the afternoon play of sunlight in Konstandinos Kawafis' apartment in Alexandria. She also went to Lübeck, where Thomas Mann used



to race through narrow streets, as well as to Anichiano, where Leonardo da Vinci's house still stands. Admittedly, Ezra Pound's apartment in Venice was out of bounds, but she did manage to visit Vargas Llosa's house in Lima. She also spent the night in the bed where Oscar Wilde died. Finally she arrived in Macondo - the colour-washed but butterfly-filled town of Aracataca, Colombia, where Marquez created the world from scratch. To all those asking, why she was keen to leave her peaceful domestic life, she replies, quoting Marquez himself: "All I am came from that journey." Published by Marginesy publishing house, this fascinating book gets our highest recommendation.



KLM - NEW DESTINATIONS

After the previously announced expansions in Europe for summer 2021, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines will also be adding new destinations to its intercontinental network. The new destinations that will be in the carrier's winter schedule (October 31, 2021 to March 26, 2022) include Orlando, Cancun, Bridgetown, Mombasa, Port of Spain and Phuket. The launch of more destinations is part of KLM's strategy to quickly recover from the pandemic by offering passengers the widest possible choice of destinations.

KLM travellers will be able to fly to Mombasa, on the beaches of the Kenyan coast, twice a week on a Boeing 787-900 Dreamliner. The same type of aircraft will serve the route from Amsterdam to Orlando, Florida (four times a week) and to Cancun, Mexico (three times a week). Flights to Bridgetown, Barbados (three flights per week) and Port of Spain - the capital of Trinidad and Tobago (three flights per week) will be served by Airbus A330s aircraft. The island of Phuket will be served by four weekly flights operated on board a Boeing 777-300.

"As many as 99 destinations in Europe will be served during summer and, with this latest expansion, KLM's intercontinental network will also be significantly strengthened for winter," said the airline's CEO Pieter Elbers.



PRESS MATERIALS

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CURAÇAO FEEL IT FOR YOURSELF

Bon Biní and welcome to the island where it's summer year-round and you will always feel at home. We know you can't wait to soak up the sun on our tropical beaches and enjoy our hospitality and laidback island vibe.





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Curaçao has reopened to many parts of the world and we're thrilled to welcome back our dushi friends from abroad. We have measures in place for both our locals and our visitors to ensure Curaçao is a safe sanctuary where you can relax and feel re-energized.

Curaçao is located on the outer fringes of the hurricane belt with average temperatures between 25–28 degrees year-round. A Caribbean island of azure-blue bays, rich cultural heritage and characteristic pastel-colored historic buildings. Whether you're in the mood to take on a new adventure, or in dire need of a lazy beach day Curaçao has got you covered. With so much to do on the island, you'll be able to indulge in as many or as few activities as you like.

TEMPERATURE

Located in the tropics, just 12° north of the Equator, Curaçao has a warm, sunny climate year-round. The average temper-

Curaçao is a land of deep-blue waters, over 35 sandy beaches and gentle trade winds.

ature is about 30° C (in the mid 80° F). Cooling trade winds blow constantly from the east, picking up in the spring months. The rainy season, between October and February, is usually marked by short, occasional showers at night and sunny weather during the day.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Curaçao is a melting pot with more than 50 nationalities. Afro-Caribbeans make up the majority of the population of 160,000 inhabitants. One result of the historic slave trade is a rich cultural heritage, embraced today by islanders and visitors alike. To the present day, Afro-Caribbean traditions continue to shape Curaçao. Examples include the colorful language (Papiamentu, Dutch and English), Tambú music (Curaçao blues), cookery and spirituality.

PRESS MATERIALS

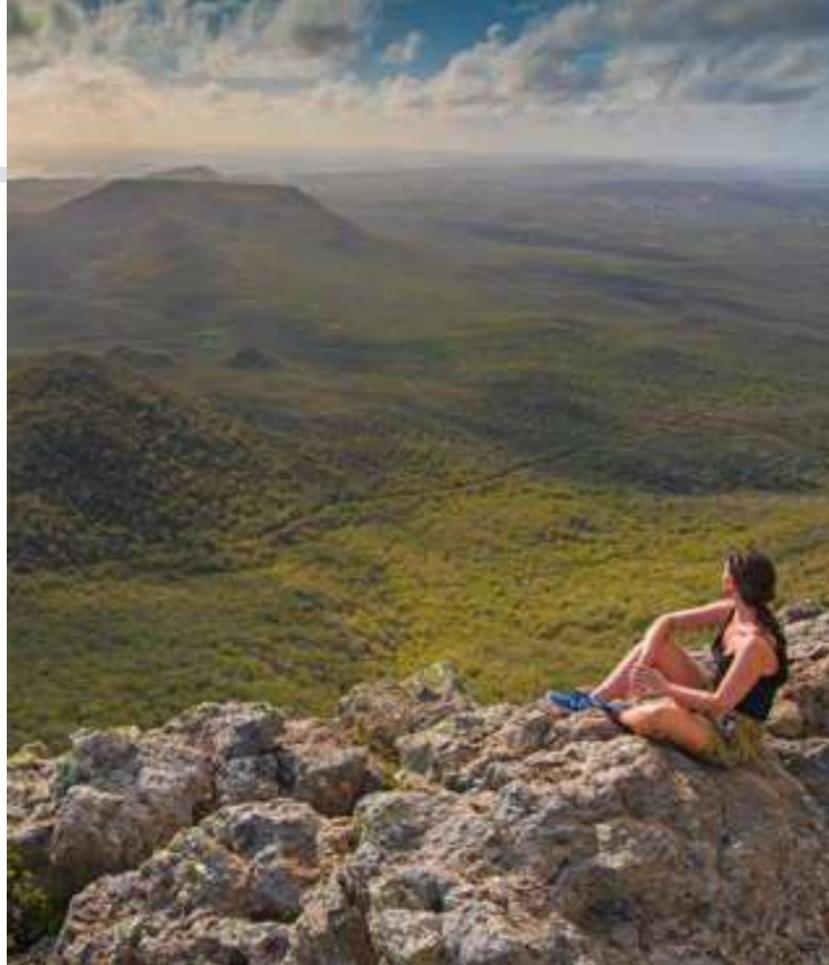
WILLEMSTAD

Lively Willemstad is a UNESCO World Heritage City. St. Anna Bay divides the city in two with Punda in the east and Otrobanda to the west. The two are linked together by the Queen Emma Bridge. In the past, Willemstad was known as a trading port for products from the surrounding Spanish, French and British colonies. In total, the districts of Punda, Otrobanda, Pietermaai and Scharloo are home to some 765 listed buildings.

The basic layout of the area of Punda, with its grid of narrow streets, retains its original character. Handelskade is the familiar face of Willemstad. Its Dutch colonial architecture from the 17th and 18th centuries sports a uniquely Caribbean color scheme unlike anywhere else in the world. The district of Otrobanda, which means 'the other side', was first settled in 1707 when they simply ran out of space in Punda. The buildings in the Bredestraat were constructed to mirror those in Punda, with commercial space downstairs and living quarters above. Over the last few years community

building projects, street parties and street art have revitalized the neighborhood, especially the Ser'i Otrobanda area. Just like Otrobanda, Pietermaai was built at the beginning of the 18th century due to a lack of space within the Punda city walls. Today's Pietermaai is a trendy, bohemian neighborhood on the rise. Its lively art scene and nightlife make it popular with tourists and locals alike. Most of the monumental buildings have been restored into their original state and transformed into boutique hotels, restaurants, and bars.

The Scharloo area was originally used for farming, then partly for shipbuilding. After a strong hurricane destroyed many of the villas of wealthy Jewish families in Pietermaai in 1877, they looked for a safer location and moved to Scharloo to build large mansions for their families. Most of these buildings have been beautifully restored and are being used as museums, a hotel, and offices. Scharloo is slowly but steadily becoming the creative district of Curaçao. Several innovative startups, eateries, and art galleries have settled in the neighborhood.



There are many ways to get around Curaçao.

It is impossible to miss the large floating bridge when you take a walk-through Willemstad. When the bridge swings open, two ferries spring into action to bring pedestrians across the water. The ferries are also free of charge. The bridge is also known as The swinging Old Lady.

GETTING TO KNOW THE ISLAND

There are many ways to get around Curaçao – and you're never far from anywhere on an island that stretches a mere 40 miles long and 10 miles wide. The best way to get to know the island is by renting a car to take you wherever you want to go, whenever you like. Car rental companies operate at Curaçao International Airport, such as Hertz, Budget, Avis and Alamo. An international driving license is not required, and a valid driver's license is sufficient.

Many hotels offer an airport transfer service. Some also offer regular shuttle services to the beach and downtown Willemstad. For excursions elsewhere on the island, ask about shuttles before booking your own transportation. Diving schools, for example, will usually offer a pick-up and drop-off service.

CULINARY

The island's culinary offering is as diverse as it is delicious, whether you're dining out or just grabbing something on the go. Options range from Asian-Caribbean delicacies to Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Dutch. Willemstad is a major shipping hub, so markets and supermarkets are well stocked with imports from Europe and North and South America – making it easy to cater to every taste.

The diversity of the population is also reflected in the local cuisine. The influence of Spanish rulers, Dutch merchants, Venezuelan and Indian contract workers and Portuguese Jews

have all left their mark on the island's culinary traditions. The highlight of the rich local cuisine are its delicious stews, like 'karni stobá' (beef) and 'kabritu stobá' (goat).

It doesn't get more authentic than lunch in one of the food markets of Willemstad. Or try one of the excellent fish restaurants in the Koredor area where the fish is served delicious and fresh for local clientele.

Driving around Curaçao, you'll find small, essential shops everywhere along the way, usually with a bar and chairs outside where the locals stop for snacks. These are Curaçao's famous 'snèks' (snack bars). Stop by for a coffee, a beer, and some tasty treats, like 'pastechis' (savoury pastries) or "Saté Ku Batata" (Chicken skewer with fries).

STREET ART

Our people certainly aren't afraid of a little color and this is carried on in local art.

Museums and art galleries are scattered around the island. Dive into a world of creativity on the world's most colorful island where art is not only found in museums. Street art, easy to spot in some of the areas in Willemstad will give you a peek into the creativity, background and culture of the artist.

BEACHES

Curaçao is a land of deep-blue waters, over 35 sandy beaches and gentle trade winds it's easy to find your ideal beach here. With secluded and picturesque cove-like inlets and calm, crystal blue waters, many consider Curaçao's beaches to be the is-

land's best-kept secret. Every beach has its own character, and most are protected by peaceful cliffs and coves. Time it right, and you just might have your own private beach. You can find an overview of the beaches on curacao.com.

KLEIN CURAÇAO

Don't be fooled by the name. Klein, or 'Little Curaçao,' is the longest and whitest beach around. Located eight miles off the southeast coast, you can reach this uninhabited island by boat in less than two hours. Explore the old lighthouse and stranded shipwrecks or just relax on the soft white sands. Transportation can be booked through diving schools or boat tour operators, who offer snorkeling, refreshments, and usually a barbecue or picnic lunch.

DIVING & SNORKELING

The gentle sea and trade winds make Curaçao ideal for all sorts of water sports. It's the perfect place to try your hand at wake boarding, water skiing, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, jet skiing, windsurfing, and kite surfing. Then there's the underwater world to explore. Curaçao is one of the most popular destinations for snorkeling and scuba diving.

Once you've seen underwater Curaçao, you won't be able to stop talking about it. The natural treasures that lie just beneath the surface, are rare and remarkable. Crystal-clear waters offer outstanding visibility to explore healthy coral reefs, sloping walls and sunken shipwrecks. Curaçao features easy shore access to most dive sites. The sites are protected from strong currents and the waters are warm year-round. You can see pilot whales, dolphins, rays, sea turtles, lobsters under large corals and of course more colorful reef fish than you can imagine. The majority of dive sites are



located along the calm, southwest coast. Advanced divers should head to the rugged north when conditions permit.

Curaçao also offers ample opportunity for snorkeling. The island has very little river run-off which makes the visibility of its waters excellent. Almost all of the snorkeling on the island is easily accessed from beaches. Snorkelers from all levels can safely enjoy the marvels of the underwater world. Top snorkeling spots include Klein Curaçao, Tugboat, Shipwreck, Playa Kalki, and Playa LARGO (known as Playa Piskadó). ■

DUBAI NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Here everything is the best. The tallest buildings reflecting mad visions of prominent architects, the most sophisticated restaurants offering all the dishes of the world, as well as fancy art galleries displaying the works of the best artists. Under the Orient sky you will also find a real tourist paradise - all this to create an alternative source of income to the shrinking oil pools.

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FROM LEFT:
Burj Khalifa; desert
safari; Burj Al Arab

WORDS MARZENA MRÓZ



17

It's one of the richest and fastest-growing places in the world. To say that the human imagination is the only limit in Dubai seems to be true. Only 30 years ago, the area was dominated by one-storey houses, and people earned their living off pearl diving and the trade. It was only after the discovery of oil deposits in 1966, the emirate has undergone an incredible transformation. The Sheikh who ruled Dubai at that time, decided that the region should focus on tourism industry and he started investing in the infrastructure and the promotion of the area, realizing that one day the oil supplies will run out. When in the late 1960s the British withdrew from the Middle East, six emirates - Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Umm Al Quwain, Ajman and Al-Fujairah merged in 1971, forming the United Arab Emirates. One year later they were joined by the seventh emirate - Rasal-Khaimah.

Today, the main sources of income of over 3 million Dubai citizens are services, the duty-free zone (the duty-free seaport), trade (foreign companies are exempt from tax), tourism and international investment, transport and export of crude oil. It's interesting to know that this is the place where many cultures interact with one another, of which only 16% are the local emirati, that is the descendants of Bedouins. They have lots of privileges: they don't pay bills for electricity and water, they are offered free education up to undergraduate level, receive council houses (villas with a

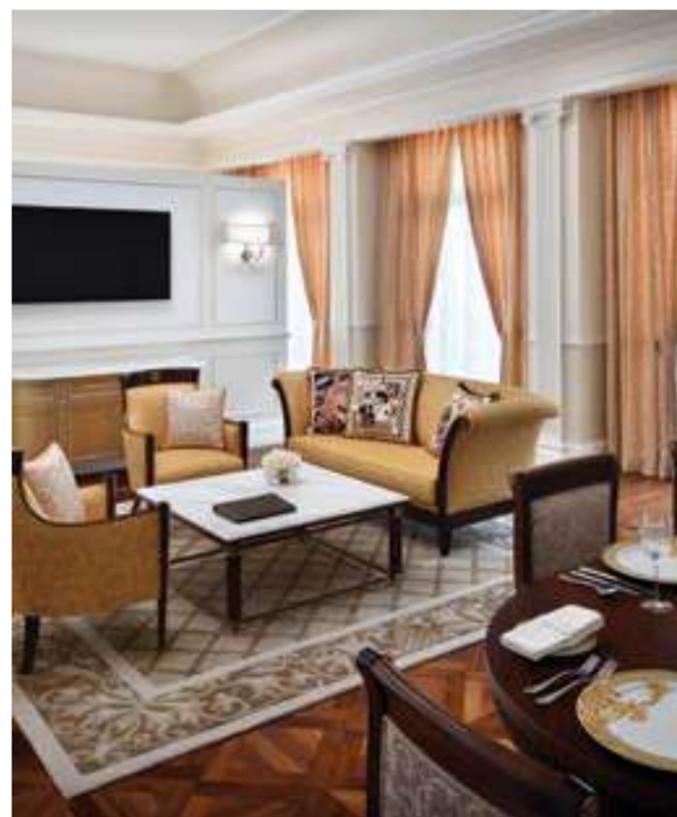
garden) or a plot of land with an interest-free loan to build a house and after a few years the loan debt is cancelled. Other residents are people coming here from all over the world, attracted by the unusual dynamics of this place.

What's the best place to start your afternoon in Dubai? Probably in the renowned Atmosphere Lounge situated on the 122nd floor of the world's tallest Burj Khalifa building. Here you can enjoy lunch or afternoon tea while taking in the panorama of this unique city.

PALAZZO VERSACE

Conveniently located on the Dubai Creek canal in the heart of the Cultural Village, Palazzo Versace hotel is simply one of Dubai's best addresses. It takes less than 15 minutes to reach it from the airport and only 8 minutes to get from the property to the city centre. Palazzo Versace is an ideal venue both for a business stay and a family holiday. Its building is reminiscent of 16th century Italian palaces, while the overall quality of service is second to none. Guests of Palazzo Versace can choose from 215 rooms and suites, as well as 169 residences. All the furniture and fabrics adorning the interiors were specially designed and made by the House of Versace. No wonder, the hotel was opened by Donatella Versace herself. The hotel also features a luxury spa, swimming pool and fantastic plant filled courtyards, where you can spend some quality time in the evening. The superb

DESTINATIONS



menu of the hotel's eight on-site restaurants and bars is geared towards real gourmets. We particularly recommend the one specializing in Iranian cuisine and boasting a fully-deserved Michelin star. In the morning it's worth visiting one of the three outdoor pools set amongst palm trees and flowers, and lined with intricate Italian mosaics; palazzoversace.ae

Pallazzo Versace is one of Dubai's most spectacular hotels.

BAB AL SHAMS RESORT

Located less than an hour away from Dubai International Airport, Bab Al Shams Resort takes you to the Land of 1001 Nights. The place is the essence of what the Orient is all about. Resembling a traditional Arab fort, it's a full-blown five-star hotel, offering its guests a wide choice of luxuries and amenities. Nestled among Dubai's sand dunes, Bab Al Shams features courtyards with fountains, swimming pools, a spa, gardens and stone alleyways that lead to Arabian-style rooms and suites. In each one there is a comfortable bed, a modern bathroom and a private terrace. The desert surrounding the site can be explored by jeep, on horseback or camelback. Guests staying at this unique hotel can also try their hand at archery and falconry, as well as go for a desert tour in search of oryxes - rare antelopes on the verge of extinction. It's one of the biggest attractions offered by the resort.

→ ABOVE FROM LEFT
At.mosphere Lounge, Burj Khalifa; Palazzo Versace - living area at Palazzo Suite, Palazzo Versace - the eastern pool

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DESTINATIONS



There are four on-site restaurants at Bab Al Shams, serving traditional specialties and international cuisine. The open-air Al Hadheerah Restaurant serves Arabic cuisine at dinner time.

DUBAI - NEW OPENINGS

Expo 2020 Dubai or the first World Expo to be held in the region of MEASA (Middle East, Africa and South Asia) will begin on 1 October 2021 and run until 31 March 2022. This major international event, will focus on platforms for collaboration, innovation and inspiration. Expo 2020 will host more than 200 exhibitors and millions of visitors to help shape a better and more sustainable future; expo-2020dubai.com/en/pavilions-premiere.

The Address Beach Resort was launched in December 2020. The hotel's 77-metre twin towers have transformed the skyline of Jumeirah Beach and the Gulf, creating a new architectural symbol on the Dubai map. The first tower features 217 rooms and suites, including deluxe rooms, one- and two-bedroom suites, as well as three-room presidential suites. There are also several excellent restaurants, The Lounge (serving light snacks and refreshments), as well as extensive leisure facilities. The second tower houses Address Residences - 443 fully furnished apartments and 478 unfurnished luxury flats. The property also includes a 100-metre private beach. Guests can enjoy modern meeting rooms, a gym and the award-winning The Spa at Address. At the end of March, the resort earned two Guinness World Records. It now boasts the world's highest outdoor infinity pool (located on the 77th floor, at 294m) and highest occupiable sky-bridge floor where the two towers that make the hotel and the Address Beach Residences join at 294 metres in the air.

On 7 April 2021, Nakheel, one of Dubai's leading development companies, opened to the public The View terrace located on Palm Jumeirah Island. The platform situated on the 52nd floor (240 metres above the ground) offers stunning 360-degree views of the surrounding area, allowing visitors to enjoy a previously unknown panorama of Palm Jumeirah and the Gulf.

The entrance to the observation deck is located on the second floor of The Palm Tower and accessible directly from Nakheel Mall. The experience also includes a Starbucks café, The View exhibition, interactive aquarium tunnels and a gift shop. The View Exhibition tracks the journey of Palm Jumeirah, revealing details about how the island was conceptualised and developed. The View at The Palm also offers a VIP lounge that spans 120 sqm and features an outdoor terrace with views of Dubai.

The Alserkal Avenue is one of the main art centres in the region. It's worth visiting one of its 60 galleries, cafés and concept stores established in old warehouses in the Al Quoz district. The place also features dance studios and public spaces that host exhibitions, talks, panel discussions, film screenings and festivals.

Dubai Design District is dedicated to fashion and architecture. Here you will find numerous architectural studios, galleries, restaurants and cafés and a promenade with shops. ■



FROM TOP
Bab Al Shams Resort; Address Beach Resort; a gallery on Alserkal Avenue



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- Lofty wykończone pod klucz - industrialny styl

- Centrum konferencyjne i food hall w budynku

- Partnerski model współpracy z Inwestorem

- Bezpieczeństwo środków Inwestora - rachunek powierniczy



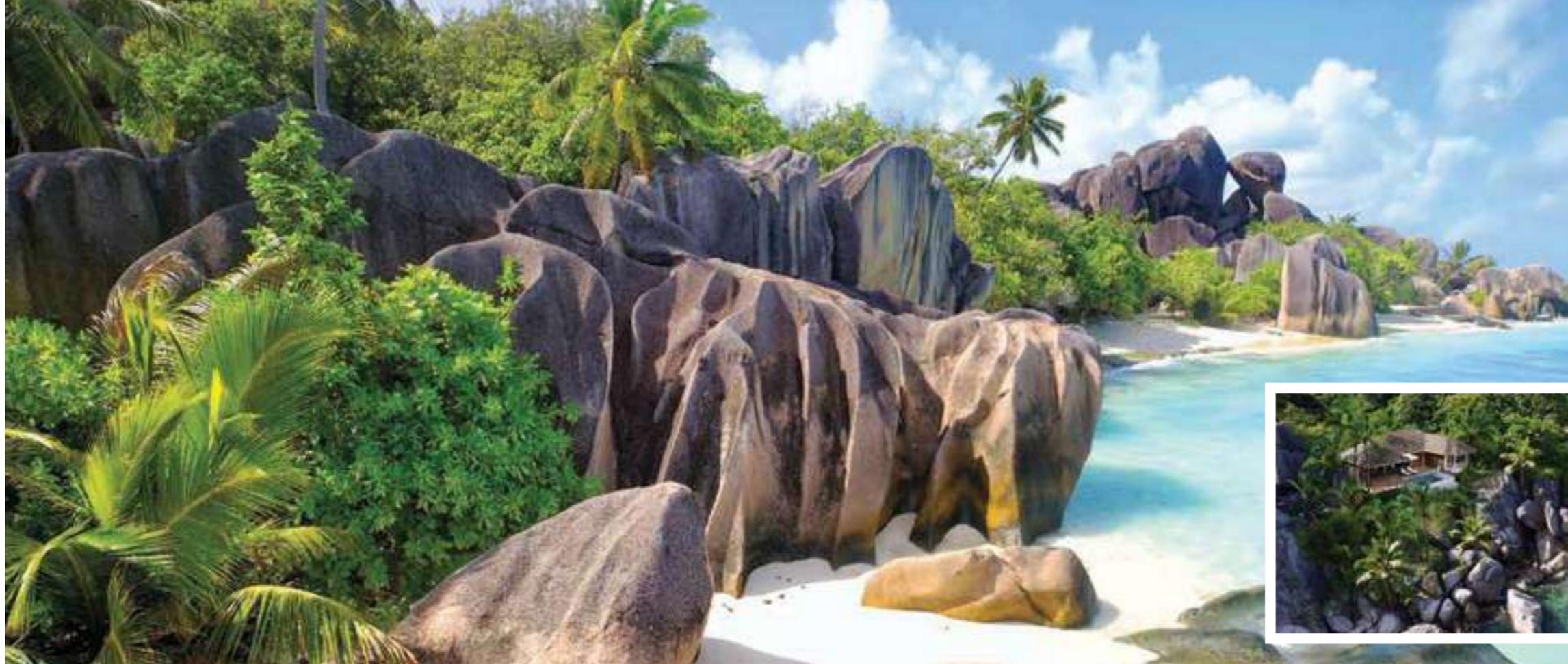
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THE NEW HORIZONS

After the long months of lockdown we all need an idyllic escape. The islands of the Indian Ocean should be on your wish list. The Indian Ocean trio of Seychelles, Mauritius and the Maldives may all share the vast expanse of azure water that laps at their shores, but that's where the similarity ends, with each country having its own unique culture and natural appeal, plus a distinctive array of superb hotels.

PICTURED:
Patina Maldives,
Fari Islands

WORDS APRIL HUTCHINSON, MARZENA MRÓZ



magnificent Cosmoledo Atoll, where Blue Safari Seychelles takes care of conservation and preservation. Cosmoledo has always been the domain of fly fishing, but Cosmoledo Eco Camp means adventurous, conservation-minded souls can now stay there in one of eight converted shipping containers, or “eco pods”.

Seychelles boasts a clutch of desirable resorts that have private islands all to themselves, such as North, Denis, Desroches, Cousine and Fregate. The last of these plays a crucial role in conserving the critically endangered magpie robin as well as hosting the archipelago’s second-largest gathering of giant tortoises, more than 3,000 of them. The highest number live on Aldabra, where there is a 150,000-strong population of these ancient creatures.

If you’d rather stay on a larger island with a bit more going on, opt for a resort on Mahé, home to the capital, Victoria, and the international airport, along with hotels from the likes of Ba- →

FROM TOP: Six Senses Zil Pasyon, Seychelles; Four Seasons Seychelles at Desroches Island

The 115 islands of Seychelles are perhaps the most wildly paradisiacal of them all, with endless chalk-white crescents and stretches of beach hemmed by enormous granite boulders so big that they must surely have been dropped by giants. There’s a population of only about 100,000 people spread across these scattered islands, so you can expect plenty of peace and space.

From hiking Morne Seychellois – the country’s highest mountain is a challenging mission that you should allow a good half-day for – to diving in hopes of seeing some of the 850 species of fish that can be found here. Seychelles also prides itself on its rich Creole culture, and there’s no better time to see this come alive than for Festival Kreol, which is usually held in October.

In the Maldives, it’s more of a numbers game – both in terms of the volume of people who flock to its Robinson Crusoe-style islands, and in the plethora of classy resorts they get to choose from. It’s also a game of innovation – top properties constantly try to outdo each other with engineering feats such as the Muraka, a

two-level residence at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island with an underwater bedroom that means you can literally sleep with the fishes.

Mauritius, meanwhile, has a population of about 1.2 million and a history woven with tales of colonisation and sugar plantations. The nation is made up of many islets and sister islands include Rodriguez, but the bulk of travellers will explore the large main island of Mauritius, which has a strong Indian and Chinese heritage, a wonderful untamed interior and a dramatic coastline. Resorts tend to be on beaches that are a struggle to peel yourself away from, but you should try and explore what this island has to offer. Today, due to the pandemic, the island is inaccessible to tourists.

SEYCHELLES

Of the three countries, Seychelles is the one where tourism is most low-impact and its development carefully measured, with islands maintaining a land-that-time-forgot look about them. Sustainability is a way of life here, with almost half of this Eden-like paradise set aside as national parks and reserves. As a visitor, you can expect to come across plenty of wildlife-saving projects and conservation-first resorts.

Seychelles is made up of two island groups – the inner group of more than 40 mountainous granitic islands, which form the cultural, economic and tourism hub and include the three main islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue; and the 70 or so outlying, largely uninhabited, flat coralline specks known as the Outer Islands. One new option in that area is a small eco camp on Wizard Island, set within the



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nyan Tree and Hilton. Bringing some recent global pizzazz is Minor Hotels' top-notch Anantara brand, which took over management of the Maia resort on Mahé last summer.

Another property worth thinking about is Six Senses' Zil Pasyon resort, which sits on about one-third of Félicité Island and is a natural wonderland for kids and adults alike – it's a short speedboat ride from La Digue or Praslin, or you can catch a helicopter from Mahé.

Meanwhile, Four Seasons has two dashing resorts in the country, one on Mahé – it recently added a whopping seven-bedroom residence if you want to go all-out in the search for space and privacy – and a newer one on Desroches, in the idyllic Outer Amirante Islands, a 35-minute flight from Mahé.

One must-do, if you can fit it in, is the Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve on Praslin, a UNESCO-recognised site with a preserved prehistoric palm forest that is home to the legendary coco de mer – the largest seed in the plant kingdom, found only in Seychelles. On Praslin you could opt to stay at Accor's exquisite Raffles Seychelles resort, but for a more low-key slice of life do also make a day trip to sleepy La Digue. Local tour companies usually include the cost of the boat trip and bike hire so you can cycle around this virtually car-free island, past vanilla plantations and giant tortoises, discovering beaches such as little Anse Patates,



Petite Anse, Grand Anse and the blinding white sand of Anse Source d'Argent, one of Seychelles' best-known.

THE MALDIVES

If ever there was a time for some clever thinking on how to attract travellers back on to planes, it's now – and the Maldives has come up with a novel option: the Maldives Border Miles initiative. Thought to be a world-first for a destination, the loyalty programme encourages you to spend more time there with the offer of points across three tiers, earned depending on the frequency of visits and whether you're travelling for a special occasion such as an engagement, birthday or honeymoon.

There are already plenty of reasons to visit the country, from the beautiful marine environment of its 1,200 islands to the middle-of-nowhere escapism of its luxury resorts. The best of the islands try to bring a slice of everything to you, from boduberu, an intoxicating dance to drums, to lessons on cooking spicy Maldivian curries or keeping mind and body occupied with a constant rota of visiting or on-site marine biologists and wellbeing gurus.

And when it comes to the hottest new thing to try in the Maldives, how about skydiving? A modified Cessna 208 is now in the country at Dhaalu airport, marking one of the first steps to establishing permanent skydiving drop zones in the country.

Under the water, one of the newest phenomena is spending the night down there, with Conrad's Muraka – a three-bedroom ocean residence with a master suite located five metres below the surface – leading the way. Accor's Pullman Maldives Maamutaa has two new Aqua Villas featuring underwater bedrooms so you can relax while the fish swim by your floor-to-ceiling windows.

If actually being in the water is more your thing then the Maldives is the ultimate destination, with incredible dive sites. One of the most ingenious options can be found at Como Maalifushi, the only resort in the remote Thaa Atoll, which runs a "whale shark hotline" at night. The resort has teamed up with Ecocean, which monitors these majestic creatures, to give guests the chance to swim with them. You're given a mobile phone, wait on high alert and as soon as a whale shark is spotted in a known feeding area, you're whisked out.

The best choice for couples, families or groups is Club Med Kani located on Baa Atoll. With traditional waterfront cottages and beachfront apartments featuring beautiful, modern interiors, the club offers guests sports activities such as gymnastics, yoga, trapeze, catamaran trips, snorkelling, scuba diving courses and a mini-club for children, as well as an all-inclusive option including sophisticated lunch, breakfast and dinner in 3 restaurants. The Club Med atmo-

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE FAR LEFT: One of Soneva Fushi's new Water Retreats in the Maldives; Hilton Seychelles Northolme; Como Maalifushi, the Maldives; giant tortoise at Four Seasons Seychelles at Desroches Island

DESTINATIONS



28



sphere, well known to its fans around the world, here in the Maldives - is simply second to none. In the evening guests enjoy various performances, and the quality of the dishes and the service of the young, committed staff are the club's strongest points.

It's worth noting that recently the chain has built a new Club Med Finolhu Villas on the neighbouring islet, catering for even more discerning tourists. It's a good idea to visit both clubs to experience what true luxury is.

The Ritz-Carlton Maldives Fari Islands is set to open the following month and has been designed by Kerry Hill Architects. Just as prestigious will be Capella Maldives, which is due to be launched next year and will feature interiors by André Fu. You will also be able to enjoy the Fari Marina, home to a beach club, boutiques and restaurants, while boats will shuttle you between the various restaurants on the islands.

MAURITIUS

Mauritius is all about fields of sugar cane swaying in the wind, little churches nudging up next to pastel-coloured Hindu temples, bustling little towns, and people who are a friendly mix of Indian, Creole and Chinese, its past peppered with Dutch, French and British colonial influence.

That's not forgetting some outstanding resorts from the likes of Four Seasons (temporarily closed but due to reopen in August) and One and Only, and an extensive range of water sports - if it can be done on or under the water, it's probably available somewhere in Mauritius. The island's 177km coastline is fringed by coral reef, a barrier running virtually the whole way around, so it's little surprise that this is one of the top diving destinations on the planet, loved for its warm waters, good underwater visibility and abundant marine life.

PICTURED:
Club Med Kani, the
Maldives

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FROM TOP LEFT:
Many guests visit the Maldives for its abundant marine life; the Muraka at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island; One and Only Le Saint Géran



At 61km long and 47km wide, nothing is ever too far away in Mauritius, and hiring a car to explore is a nice option. The north lays claim to some fantastic white beaches and proximity to the capital, Port Louis, making this area a tourism hotspot, especially around Grand Baie.

On the east coast you'll find some of the best beaches, such as the 10km Belle Mare, making it obvious why this area gave life to many of the island's original luxury hotels, such as Shangri-La's Le Touessrok (temporarily closed) and One and Only Le Saint Géran. Then there's the "sunset coast", covering the west from Port Louis down to Le Morne Peninsula, the latter home to another cluster of top resorts, excellent kite surfing and the monolith of Le Morne Brabant, one of the island's best climbs.

The mountain has a deeper significance, having once been a refuge for escaped slaves, or "maroons". It is said that when the maroons saw soldiers approach the mountain – who were in fact coming to inform them that slavery had been abolished and they were free – they jumped to their deaths rather than risk recapture.

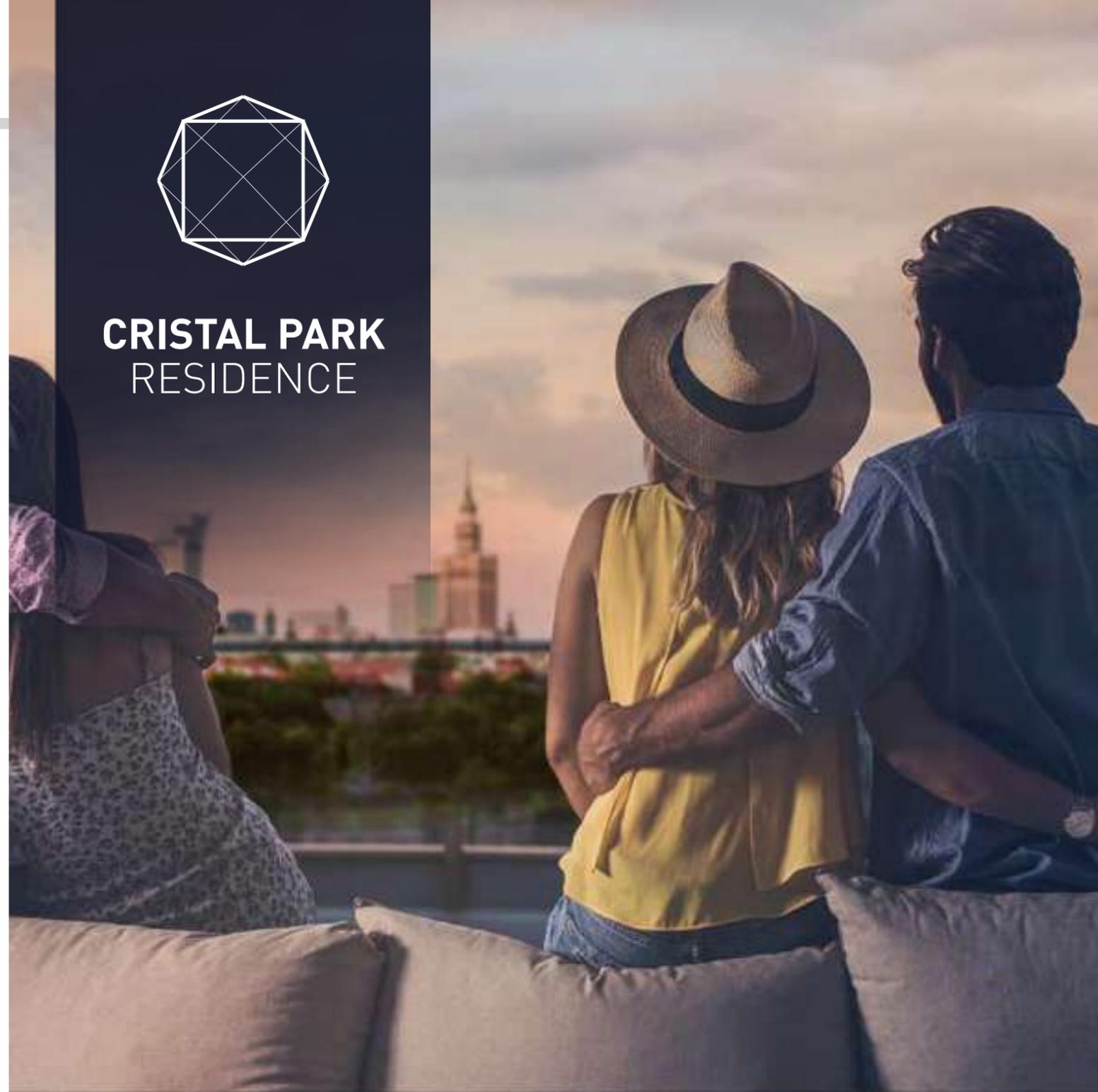
You can visit the new Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Port Louis to dig deeper into this part of the island's past. Close to Le Morne is the Black River Gorges National Park, home to the country's highest mountain, Little Black River Peak.

Historically, the south is less developed, with empty beaches and fishing villages, but several domaines or sugar estates, such as the one at Bel Ombre, have now been turned over to nature and activity-driven tourism.

A phased easing of travel restrictions is expected from the end of June 2021 and international visitors will be required to present valid Covid-19 vaccination certificates to enter the country. Mauritius is also still dealing with an oil spill last July that affected its southeast coast. With this in mind, it might be worth hanging on until later in the year, when the Lux Grand Baie Resort and Residences opens in November. This will be probably the most impressive debut on the island for a while, from a brand with a track record for innovative lifestyle resorts.



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Cascade Residence: Przestronne i jasne lofty z panoramicznym widokiem

Kłopotowskiego 11: Postindustrialne apartamenty w sercu artystycznej Pragi

Dwie Motławy: Lofty z widokiem na Motławę



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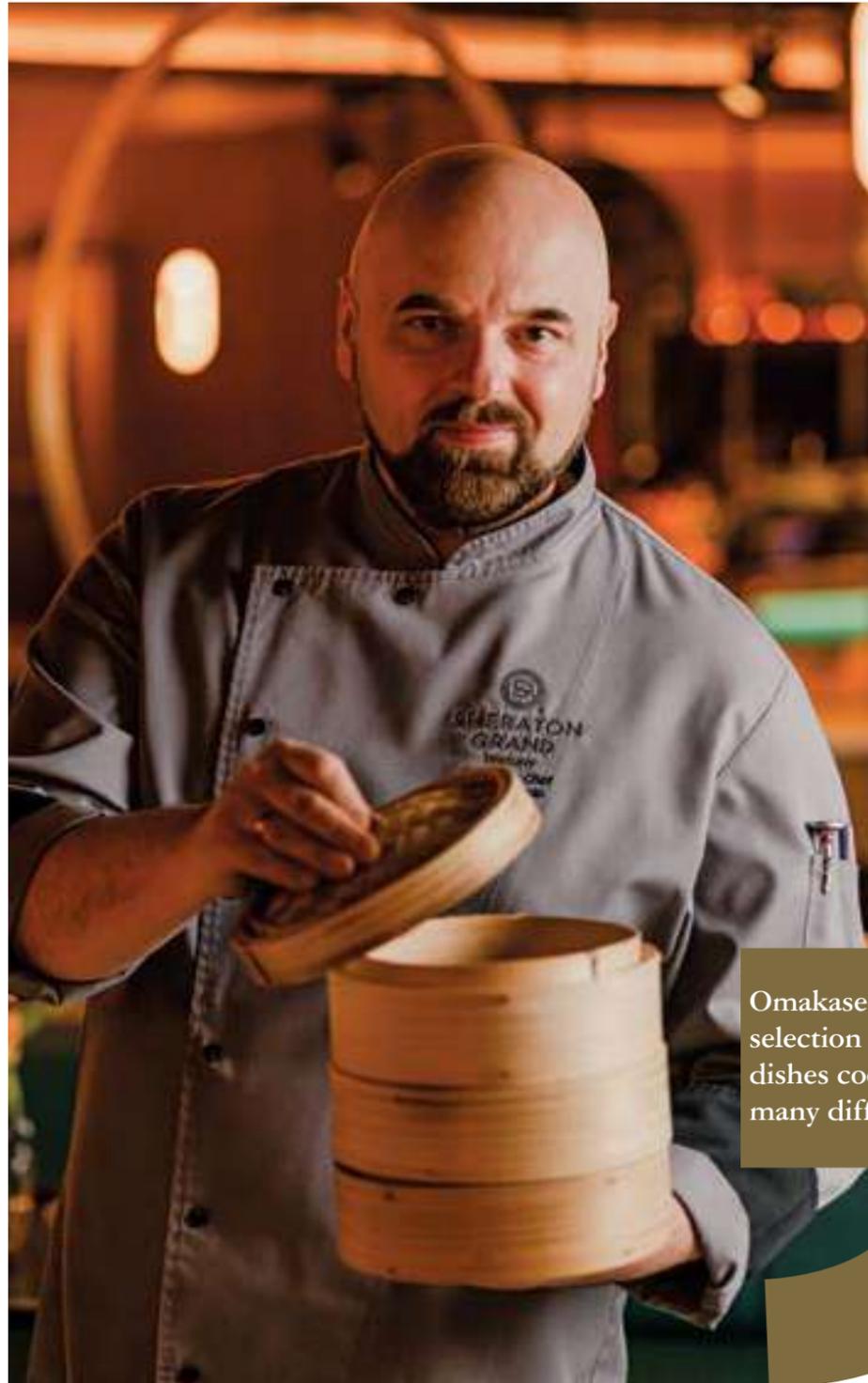
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Omakase - the world of choices



Omakase is a selection of small dishes cooked in many different ways.

Omakase is the opposite of okonomi, but out of the two, the former one is much more popular. Omakase has been known in Japan for ages. The rest of the world had to first learn and grow to love Japanese cuisine, to be able to explore its secrets.

"I'LL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU"

One of those secrets is Omakase, which literally means "I'll leave it up to you". We simply had to evolve to the point where in a restaurant instead of checking the menu, we leave the chef to decide what dish they will serve us. Well, maybe with a small exception, as first you talk to the waiter, telling him what you are allergic to, what you don't like or what you simply don't feel like eating today. In this way, you can be sure you won't get anything you aren't a big fan of.

BEAUTY ON A PLATE

In Japan, Omakase is primarily the way sushi is served, but you can't say it's a term reserved only for this dish. An Omakase-style dinner in a Polish restaurant is a selection of small dishes prepared in many different ways. In Japan, you will also have an Omakase dinner, which will consist of many kinds of fish, but also meat, vegetables, sorbets, tofu. Everything is served at intervals and in small portions, with exceptional care. The dishes look so stunning that you simply don't know whether to eat them or post a snap of them to Instagram.

"WHATEVER YOU LIKE"

Okonomi is the opposite of Omakase and roughly trans-

lated means "whatever you like". In simple terms, this is the traditional way of ordering food a la carte. Well, but what does "Okonomiyaki" mean then? When you break the name of this dish into two parts, you have "okonomi" meaning "just as you want it" and "yaki", which means "cook" or "grill". In other words, okonomiyaki is a Japanese-style pizza with a variety of toppings chosen to the guests' liking.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND IT?

Where is the best Omakase in Warsaw? This way of serving dishes was popularized by inAzia - Sheraton Grand Warsaw's on-site restaurant and the best Warsaw establishment serving Asian cuisine according to Tripadvisor. Headed by renowned chef Marcin Sasin, inAzia was thoroughly renovated in 2019 and now features two new tables that the hotel staff have dubbed the "Omakase window tables". The tables are situated directly next to the food serving window, and are so popular that it's worth booking them in advance. The cosy atmosphere and at the same time the feeling of enjoying a seat at a Chef's Table is what guests at inAzia like most. This and the food, of course. It's worth noting that the quality of the food served at the Sheraton is second to none, and each dish is a small work of art, in line with the principles of true Japanese Omakase.

ENJOYING FOOD

Interestingly, in Japan, if you want to take a picture of a dish, or take a snap of the chef who has created it, you should ask for permission. But above all, visit the place to enjoy food that tastes as good as it looks. In June, inAzia restaurant at Sheraton Grand Warsaw is open Tuesday through Saturday from 5 pm. ■

Sheraton Grand Warsaw, restauracja inAzia ul. Bolesława Prusa 2.
Telefon: 730 307 150
warsaw.restaurant@sheraton.com
www.bookatable.co.uk/inazia-restaurant-at-sheraton-grand-warsaw



This way of serving dishes was popularized by inAzia - Sheraton Grand Warsaw's on-site restaurant





Siedliska – a real Masurian retreat

Nestled in the Masurian wilderness and surrounded by nature, Siedliska is a dream come true for a holiday destination, providing maximum comfort and privacy.

Tired of sitting at home and home office work, most of us dream of venturing out into nature and getting some positive energy. A stay in one of the 14 luxuriously furnished villas called "Siedliska" in Dylewskie Hills is the perfect choice for those seeking an exceptional and safe spot for ultimate relaxation for families or groups of friends. In addition, guests of Siedlisko are participants of a unique project. The recreated stylish villas were built on the site of a former Masurian village with the picturesque surrounding landscape commonly referred to as the "Little Tuscany".

COMFORT AND NATURE

The villas are part of the five-star SPA Hotel Dr Irena Eris Dylewskie Hills complex, and offer their guests ultimate rest and relaxation in nature. They are fully and comfortably furnished, providing all necessary amenities. Each Siedlisko features 3 or 4 double bedrooms with separate bathrooms. The spacious



living room with fireplace and lounge/ tv area, which leads directly out onto the terrace, is the ideal space to relax in good company. There is also a dining room connected to a fully equipped kitchen. The villas are pet-friendly, so you can come here with your furry friend.

UNIQUE SPOT

Immersed among the greenery and hills, the villas are a perfect place to detach yourself from the rest of the world and spend a few days leisurely, on your own terms. You can enjoy here vast open spaces, reset your mind, spend time actively either on your own or taking part in animations and activities prepared by the hotel located 20 minutes away on foot. Guests staying in the villas can also enjoy the hotel restaurant and cafes, the extensive SPA Centre with swimming pools, saunas and jacuzzis, as well as numerous treatments at the Dr Irena Eris Cosmetic Institute. Undoubtedly, it's one of just few such unique places in Poland, which are truly worth visiting. ■
DrIrenaErisSPA.com

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RIFFELALP RESORT

The origins of this iconic hotel date back to the 19th century. Officially opened in 1884, over the years this five-star property has hosted a number of prominent guests, including the famous mountaineer George Mallory (the only participant in all three British expeditions to Mount Everest between 1921 and 1924). "A day well spent in the Alps is like some great symphony", said Mallory on his visit to the Riffelalp, nailing the true essence of this property.



And just like a century ago, today the hotel continues to offer stunning views of the Alps and the striking Matterhorn mountain. The hotel's last refurbishment was completed in 2016.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Due to the hotel's location, you can't reach its main entrance by car - you need to leave it in a car park in nearby Täsch, on the outskirts of Zermatt. Note that the town is a no-combustion vehicle zone; meaning only electric cars are allowed in. At Zermatt, you are met by the hotel porter, who escorts you to the Gornergrat railway, just opposite the train station. After a 20-minute ride, you arrive at Riffelalp station. From there, in summer, Europe's highest tramline takes you

the last 500 meters to the hotel. In the winter, after reaching the mountain station, you are transferred to the resort by snowmobiles with trailers operated by friendly staff. The nearly 0,5 kilometer route runs through a beautiful, snowy and dense forest. The property itself is decorated in the original Alpine style.

WHERE IS IT?

The historic Riffelalp Resort sits exactly at 2222 metres above sea level. Situated in a secluded area with several ski slopes literally at your doorstep, it's a real oasis of serenity, offering spectacular vistas of the towering mountains, including stunning view of the majestic Matterhorn. The town of Zermatt can be reached by train in less than 20 minutes with regular departures until 11 pm.

HOTELS

ROOMS

The hotel offers 70 rooms, all with the typical Alpine décor with plenty of wood everywhere. This traditional design is combined with modern equipment and amenities, such as electric curtains, Ethernet sockets and large, flatscreen TVs. The property has 65 rooms classified in 6 different categories, as well as two suites called Monterossa and Matterhorn. Offering 75 and 103 sqm floor space respectively, they both come with king size beds, a large living room, as well as a spacious bathroom. In addition, there are two large, 120 sqm apartments, each with a well-equipped kitchenette and situated next to the ski slopes to provide an exceptional ski-in, ski-out experience. All suites come with a wonderful view of the Matterhorn you can enjoy even from your bed. The room service is top-notch.

RESTAURANTS

There are three on-site restaurants. Known for the cuisine of the Italian and Swiss Alps, as well as a fabulous, vast terrace overlooking the mountains, Ristorante al Bosco is especially popular with guests at lunchtime. Alexandre restaurant combines a cosy atmosphere and a spectacular view of the Matterhorn with the exquisite cuisine of regional and Mediterranean specialities. Perched at an altitude of 2222 metres and offering a wide range of delicious options, the Walliserkeller is known for its rustic and cosy chalet and mountain hut atmosphere. Its menu includes selected Swiss specialities such as cheese fondue, raclette and various grilled dishes. The iconic Bar 2222m is the place to go for your favourite cocktail with views of the Matterhorn and live music. Resembling a cosy museum, the hotel's Vinothek is a real paradise for wine lovers. The property also has a separate, rustic-style smoking room, where you can sit back and indulge in a cigar in the peaceful and warm atmosphere, preferably accompanied by a glass of whisky or cognac.

SPA AND RELAXATION

Europe's highest Spa 2222m boasts an outdoor swimming pool with water heated to 35 degrees Celsius and a view of the Matterhorn. The spa of-

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Riffelalp Resort
3920 Zermatt,
Szwajcaria
Tel. +41 27 966 05 55
riffelalp.com

fers a vast array of massages and other treatment procedures performed with Alpine herbs and handmade oils. A visit here is a great way to soothe your body and mind, especially after the whole day of skiing or mountaineering. The Wellness Zone also features two types of steam bath, the Chriiter-Grotta with a pool filled with salty warm water, a jacuzzi, an indoor swimming pool, as well as two Finnish saunas with varied humidity, a solarium, a gym and a relaxation room. The spa is open from 7 am to 9 pm.

VERDICT

Riffelalp Resort is the perfect choice for

those seeking to experience the Alps in an exclusive way. The property offers a wide range of activities in both summer and winter, including climbing, walking, cycling, skiing, as well as exquisite cuisine, wine tasting and much more. There is also an on-site ski rental shop and a ski room - a great news for skiers staying in the hotel. Riffelalp complies with all sanitary requirements during the pandemic. The hotel is pet friendly, so you can take your dog or cat there, knowing they will enjoy their stay there as much as you will. ■

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SPECIAL TASK ROBOT



Radisson Blu Zurich Airport is the most convenient option for passengers. Perfectly linked to the airport, the hotel remarkably offers direct access to all terminals. The rooms are very comfortable, feature contemporary décor, as well as panoramic windows with the view of the runway. This means you can watch planes take off and land from your hotel bed, while the excellent room soundproofing ensures that no outside noise reaches your ears. However, what particularly invites you to spend a night at Radisson Blu Zurich Airport is the fully automated JEEVES robot at service of the hotel guests.

UNIQUE SERVICE

Radisson Blu Zurich Airport is the first hotel in Switzerland to use JEEVES robot to offer its guests a truly unique service. The project was launched in February 2021, immediately attracting great interest. The service robot delivers drinks, snacks, small meals like burgers, pizza and salad and a range of other items. This contactless service, which takes the items direct to the guests' door, supports hotel staff in their day-to-day work. The hotel is using the latest model of the smart helper, which ensures full compliance with all performance, safety and hygiene requirements.

NEW POSSIBILITIES

The successful launch of the service robot at the hotel in Zurich marks the first foray of the Munich-based technology enterprise Robotise into the Swiss market. Robotise is known for designing innovative robots for companies and public institutions. The core ambition is to solve everyday challenges where service robotics can achieve great

Radisson Blu Zurich Airport now uses the innovative JEEVES service robot.

benefits - such as improving service performance, relieving staff, compensating for skill shortages and opening up new opportunities for customers. The project also opens up completely new opportunities for customers.

PERFECT HELPER

"The Radisson Hotel Group's commitment to a digital assistant shows just how relevant digital transformation is for the international hotel industry", says Daniel Twerenbold, Regional Director Switzerland, Italy, Austria & South East Europe at the Radisson Hotel Group. He sees JEEVES as the ideal addition, allowing contactless services for guests: "When I saw JEEVES in a video for the first time, I was instantly convinced that this robot, with its technical capabilities, could provide the ideal support for our room service. We are delighted to be using JEEVES to provide our guests with an exclusive, contactless and secure service that fully complies with our Radisson Hotels Safety Protocol," he adds.

PIONEERS OF INNOVATION

To allow JEEVES to autonomously serve all 330 rooms and suites at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Zurich Airport, the control

system of the Schindler lifts was upgraded. Now, thanks to innovative cloud technology, the lifts communicate directly with the robot, allowing JEEVES to provide streamlined service on all floors. "Working hand-in-hand with Robotise and Schindler, we view ourselves as innovation drivers and I am very grateful for this joint project," says Daniel Twerenbold.

SMART DEVICE

By equipping the first hotel in Switzerland with its clever robot, the Munich-based technology company is paving the

way for further expansion in the neighbouring country. The desire for contactless, yet outstanding service in the hospitality industry has boosted the demand for the smart service robot.

"We are thrilled about the partnership with Radisson Blu Hotel at Zurich Airport," says Oliver Stahl, CEO Robotise. "It proves that innovative, forward-looking technologies are here to stay in the hotel industry. As an extremely popular tourist destination, Switzerland is an important market for us for the use of service robotics in the hotel industry. We are proud to have been the first to do so," adds Oliver Stahl.

HOTEL AMENITIES

Once you have had a snack or a drink and you have taken a selfie with the robot, it's time to unwind, preferably in the on-site gym or sauna. One of the hotel's most useful services for business guests is the 3-hour express laundry. The hotel restaurant's menu features a choice of international dishes, while the bar has a selection of over 4,000 bottles of wines and champagnes. Don't spend too much time there, though, if you don't want to miss your flight in the morning! ■ [radissonhotels.com](https://www.radissonhotels.com)

Unforgettable holidays at Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen

Looking for a great holiday spot? What about a swish hotel nestled in the very heart of the Alps, where you can enjoy the attractions of the Andermatt region, admire nature at its finest and get inspired by it.

A stay in this unique, modern property located just a 1.5-hour drive from Zurich is a great choice for those wishing to explore the essence of Swiss Alps. Warm and cosy atmosphere of the place was created using natural materials: wooden floors, natural fabrics and original pieces of furniture. It's an example of successful blend of Swiss highland style and Scandinavian design.

CHARMING ANDERMATT

Situated in the heart of the Swiss Alps, halfway between Zurich and Milan and just 30 kilometres from Lake Lucerne, Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen boasts a beautiful location in the centre of Andermatt village that sits between the famous ski slopes of SkiArena Andermatt, Sedrun and Disentis with the famous Gemsstock. In summer, the slopes turn into green and flowery meadows.

ROOMS AND SUITES

The hotel is made up of two interconnected wings. One of them contains 244 elegant and spacious rooms and suites, while the other one is occupied by residences. All sport large windows offering unique views of the Alpine landscape.

You can only imagine how rewarding it is to wake up in the morning to the view of picturesque valleys and enjoy the crisp air, while sipping freshly brewed coffee on the terrace! Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen Andermatt is an ideal starting point for hiking enthusiasts. It also offers easy access to a variety of summer sports activities.



Enjoy the attractions of the Andermatt region, admire its nature and get inspired by it!

The hotel is also known for its well-equipped conference facilities. The largest 466 sqm meeting room can accommodate up to 700 delegates.

SWISS FLAVOURS

The hotel's restaurant serves buffet, à la carte and American breakfast. However, a stay at this unique property won't be complete without visiting the on-site restaurant. Using the finest regional produce, chef Gerd Rentz translates Andermatt's cultural complexity into the culinary realm, providing a unique

taste experience with Rhaeto-Roman, Italian and French influences. After a long day of exploring Andermatt, the atmospheric Bärbar, situated around the fireplace, is the perfect place to relax.

UELA SPA & POOL

After a mountain hike, it's a good idea to warm up your muscles at the Uela Spa featuring a 25-metre swimming pool with view of



the mountains, a large fitness zone with Technogym equipment, as well as two saunas and a steam room. You can also opt for a massage with products based on Alpine herbs, honey and water from an Alpine spring.

LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

Explore mountain biking trails, hike through the countryside or follow the four river springs in the region. Since the hotel is within walking distance of Andermatt, you can quickly reach the village centre and the 18-hole Ander-



matt Swiss Alps golf course is just a few minutes away. Admittedly, the course fits well with the nature of the Ursern valley and offers its services to both recreational enthusiasts and ambitious golfers. Its Alpine elements: rock formations, flower meadows, streams and lakes make up the fairway designed by renowned architect Kurt Rossknecht. Strong gusts of wind in the valley present a sporting challenge and add to the enjoyment of the game. This is the ultimate alpine golf experience. ■ [radissonhotels.com](https://www.radissonhotels.com)

Come, feel, enjoy... and remember!

Siedlisko Morena is a piece of Masurian paradise, tucked away on a hilly peninsula on Ulówki Lake. The biggest highlights of the property are its unique location, wonderful microclimate and the large forest and water areas surrounding the peninsula, where peace and quiet aficionados will find ideal conditions for rest, recreation and exploring the beauty of nature unspoiled by civilisation.

The hotel's mission is to create an environmentally sustainable place, through a strong focus on eco-friendly activities and attention to the surroundings in daily work. We have been systematically introducing sustainable solutions for years.

At Siedlisko Morena, we use, among other things, reusable dispensers for room cosmetics, which reduce the use of plastic bottles.

Drinking water in our rooms is provided in glass and returnable bottles, while our staff use filter jugs. We have our own deep well and regularly test the water there. We provide biodegradable straws in restaurants and bars, avoiding the use of plastic packaging and cutlery.

We use a solar energy system as an ecological and economical way to heat water and support central heating.

Moreover, electricity in the property is partly obtained from solar radiation. The vast area of the site was a perfect spot for installing photovoltaic panels without interfering with the environment and in a way that doesn't affect the comfort of leisure of our guests. With proper care of bed linen, towels and other hotel fabrics in the hotel's own laundry, we make sure they last longer than usually.

A stay in Siedlisko Morena is a unique chance to enjoy dishes of excellent cuisine. The menu is inspired by nature and seasonal products, harmo-



CONTACT
siedliskomorena.pl
tel. +48 603 222 003
Jeziorowskie 11A
19-330 Stare Juchy

nously combining tradition with the ever-trendy fusion style. Our guests can enjoy crops from our own plantation, including large courgettes, juicy radish, fresh lettuce and many other aromatic vegetables. Other fresh ingredients used in our restaurant kitchen are sourced from local producers

and farmers. The menu includes traditional Polish dishes as well as international fare. The restaurant also has an impressive wine list.

It's difficult to express the charm of Siedlisko Morena in just a few words. Come and visit us to see it for yourself and fall in love with it... ■



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WORDS DAVID PHELAN

The latest laptops combine power and portability, with all of the features you need for work and play both at home or on the move

Choosing a laptop usually comes down to three priorities – weight, power and price. For business travellers that has often meant accepting a smaller display and a slower processor because portability is the most important factor. However, our period of working from home has changed the dynamic, with our laptop becoming our go-to gadget for domestic work and play. So if it's a machine you're going to be using more at home, then a bigger screen may be more important than portability.

Greater power has certainly become paramount, although the importance of a laptop you can carry easily will still be front of mind. Is it possible to find the ideal notebook computer, one that has a display big enough for easy home use and sufficient speed to keep everything motoring along, but is not too heavy to carry? While battery life is less important if the computer can be plugged in all day, that won't always be the case, so it's still an important factor.

Here are the best laptops around, with choices for everyone, no matter which priority is most important to you. There are three operating system choices: Microsoft Windows is on all of the laptops here except the Macbook Pro and Google Pixelbook, which have their own operating systems and range of programs. All except the Macbook Pro have touchscreen displays.

ISTOCK, PRESS MATERIALS

LEAN MACHINES

APPLE MACBOOK PRO 13-INCH

From £1,299

apple.com/uk

The big news from Apple last year was the introduction of a new processor in its Macbook Pro and Macbook Air computers. Instead of using the Intel chips found in most laptops, Apple is now using its own silicon, with a chip called the M1 powering the Air and some 13-inch Macbook Pro models. If all of that sounds a bit boring, wait until you try it. The M1 means that the Pro is blazing-fast, offering a huge performance improvement, and it's not at the cost of battery life. The new 13-inch Pro lasts for seven hours longer than the previous one did for wireless web browsing – up to 17 hours. Apple's latest laptops also use what it calls a Magic Keyboard, which is dreamily comfortable to use. Although this model absolutely ticks the box for power, it is also lightweight (1.4kg) and thin (15.6mm). The power button includes a fingerprint sensor for extra security.



HUAWEI MATEBOOK X PRO

£1,600

consumer.huawei.com

Huawei's slick Windows laptop is slim (14.6mm), light (1.33kg) and well-equipped. A fast processor keeps everything ticking and there are plenty of special features. For instance, if you have a Huawei phone you can tap it on the laptop's touchpad and it will appear on the screen so you can transfer files between the two easily. The 13.9-inch display has such narrow bezels that there's no room for a webcam. Instead, this is hidden under a key, which means that when you're done Zooming you can be certain that nobody can see you – you simply press the key closed. The latest version, on sale from May, includes Wifi 6, which is capable of very high speeds, while ten hours of battery life means you needn't unpack the charger for even a decent-length international flight. Like the Apple laptop, there's a fingerprint sensor in the power button. Choose from Space Grey or Emerald Green finishes.

DELL XPS 15

£1,999

dell.com

This Dell laptop is a real powerhouse. Its 15.6-inch display is big enough to act as a desktop replacement but portable enough for your travels. It can handle even the most complex programs and is quick and responsive. Dell builds the computer you choose, so there's no end to the configurations – an extra £300 adds a 4K screen instead of HD, for instance. The edge-to-edge display and space-saving SSD storage means it's smaller than it might have been (18mm thin; from 1.83kg). Although this is a highly capable business machine, the XPS 15 is also fast enough for video games – if this is going to be your do-everything laptop, that could be useful. The design looks nifty and the keyboard is a joy to use. Battery life is more than ten hours.



MICROSOFT SURFACE BOOK 3

From £1,599
microsoft.com

Microsoft's Windows and Office software is ubiquitous but in the past few years the company has also made a select range of hardware. The Surface Book 3 is arguably its best yet: a handsome, efficient and deeply classy laptop with a clever hinge mechanism and a screen that lifts off to become a separate, 13.5-inch-screen tablet – there are batteries in both the display and keyboard sections. The Surface Book 3 is made of magnesium, which means it's sturdy and lightweight (1.5kg and 15mm thin), but it has enough power to run advanced programs easily. The keyboard is more comfortable than most with a sense of spaciousness and comfortable keys (although the Macbook Pro is still hard to beat). If the 13.5-inch display isn't to your liking, there's also a 15-inch version. Battery life is claimed to be up to 17.5 hours.



HP ELITE DRAGONFLY

From £1,738.80
hp.com

The HP Elite Dragonfly is a stylish business laptop that is thin (16.1mm) and light (0.99kg) – ideal for when travelling is commonplace again. In its priciest configuration, it has an option for a 4G SIM card slot. It also has options for a webcam with a sliding cover and display technology that makes the screen unreadable to anyone peeking over your shoulder. These make it secure, as does the fingerprint sensor. Like the Lenovo Yoga, this laptop is a convertible: you can fold the screen back so it's like a tablet or stand it up like a trestle table to watch a video. Battery life is up to 12 hours.



LENOVO YOGA 5G

£112.50 per month for 24 months
ee.co.uk

This is the world's first 5G laptop – that is, it has a SIM card slot with 5G capability. This means you can connect to the internet from anywhere with a mobile signal and you hardly need to connect to wifi. Since some public wifi networks are slow and insecure, that's a real bonus. The battery life is outstanding – Lenovo reckons it's 24 hours – and it's light (from 1.3kg) and slim (from 14.75mm). Of course, its Yoga name has a meaning: it's another convertible machine so you can fold the keyboard behind it like a tablet, for instance. The 5G element means it's priced like a mobile phone – EE's 24-month contract includes 80GB of data per month.



businesstraveller.pl

PRESS MATERIALS

ACER SWIFT 5

£1,100
store.acer.com

The 14-inch touchscreen display on the Swift 5 has tiny bezels, making for a pleasing all-screen effect. It feels so light in the hand that you may wonder if something has been left out (it's about 1kg). It's slim, too (14.95mm), which is appealing, even if you're only carrying it from the living room to the home office. For all that, it still packs a punch thanks to a leading-edge Intel processor.

There's also a special antimicrobial agent on the surface of the keyboard, plus a fingerprint reader. Battery life is reasonable at more than nine hours.



GOOGLE PIXELBOOK GO

From £629
store.google.com

When Google launched its own operating system, at first it really only worked well if the laptop was online. Things have changed over the years and laptops using Chrome OS, such as this one, have much more autonomy. The Pixelbook Go is thin (12.7mm), light (1.06kg) and effective with a 13.3-inch screen. It also has a remarkably silent keyboard – handy if you're working from home and the family are complaining about the clackety-clack as you tap. It's great for videoconferencing thanks to a front-facing camera that is higher resolution than most. Performance is decent and it comes at a competitive price. Battery life is good, at up to 12 hours.



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Avis not only for holidays

MARZENA MRÓZ talks to SASCHA HÜMMERICH, the General Manager for Poland and the Czech Republic at Avis Budget Group.

It has been over a year since the first lockdown was announced in Poland, and now hotels have reopened. What will this year's holiday season be like in Poland and abroad?

For the tourism industry as a whole, the past year has been extremely challenging. Avis Budget Group has acted quickly and decisively, primarily, to take care of the health and safety of our employees and customers, and secondly, to ensure that those using services of one of our brands can safely book their cars and travel.

Above all, renting a car remains a personalized, safe, flexible and convenient alternative to other means of transport, which makes it the perfect choice for Polish customers planning summer holiday somewhere in Poland or abroad.

If they choose a domestic destination, they can rest assured that both Avis and Budget brands will offer them the right car, a flexible booking policy should their plans change, a discounted Avis Inclusive insurance cover package, the option to check-in their car online before arriving at the rental station via Digital Check-In, as well as Avis Safety Pledge and Budget Safety Pledge of more thorough car cleaning procedures.

Despite many uncertainties regarding travel, the travel market and the car rental sector are now much more optimistic than they were last year. The vaccination programme continues - both in Poland and abroad - and this is very much likely to have a direct impact on this year's holidays. When all travel restriction are lifted, we will be ready to meet all the needs of our customers.

Renting a car remains the ideal solution for those who want a private, safe and comfortable travel - both domestically and internationally

How will hotel reopening affect the car rental industry? I guess it will certainly be a positive stimulus.

Definitely. In May, hotels in Poland reopened. This also meant opening up the whole tourism sector and has resulted in more domestic travel and greater mobility for Poles. The return of domestic and international travel is good news from the perspective of Avis and Budget brands. For customers that have opted for domestic holidays we have prepared a wide offer of cars to meet the needs of each and every one of them. Those who have chosen to take air travel to the destination of their choice will also be fully catered for, as our rental stations are located at numerous airports around the world. Of course, the reopening of hotels has also been an incentive for business



travellers, which is yet another great news for the car rental industry.

Do you predict that, similarly to last year, we will be more willing to travel domestically than abroad?

It all depends on the vaccination process, as well as potential travel restrictions. Renting a car remains the ideal solution for those who want a private, safe and comfortable travel - both domestically and internationally.

In your opinion, how different will this summer be from the previous one travel-wise?

Due to the restrictions caused by COVID-19, we are still living in a pandemic world. The vaccination process is a crucial factor for us to start travelling again. Customers still pay a lot of attention to safety measures. That is why, we are continuing our Avis Safety Pledge program.

Last autumn we spoke to Martin Gruber, who is now the vice president, commercial at Avis Budget Group, and we discussed the new trends in mobility that have emerged as a result of the pandemic. What trends are you observing now, after a few more months? Do you expect them to continue beyond the pandemic?

Even before the pandemic, our customers expected a fast service with limited contact. However, what was an intere-

sting option in pre-pandemic times, has now become a differentiator. This is why we have introduced the Digital Check-In option to allow our customers to complete the check-in process on our website, reducing transaction times. The concept behind this unique solution was to help our customers respect the principles of social distance. It also makes the car rental process much easier. Service digitisation is certainly a trend that will continue, because such services appeal to both private and business travellers. Last year we saw a greater popularity of domestic travel. It might seem that once the borders are reopened worldwide, this trend will disappear, but in fact the opposite may be true. Many travellers who were once more likely to travel abroad, might have discovered fantastic locations for a weekend or holiday getaway closer to home. Therefore, it may turn out that even if they have a chance to travel abroad, they will decide to explore Poland instead. This trend may stay with us for longer.

Business or holiday travel - which segment will recover first from the pandemic? How will this look from a car rental perspective?

In the mobility sector, much depends on the time of year. Spring and sum-

Corporate customers are given a fixed price guarantee

mer are always a hot time for Avis business in terms of leisure travel. This was also the case last year. Everyone is keen to travel and discover new places again, so we have high expectations for this year's summer season. The business travel segment will open with holiday trips, but will grow - after the holidays.

What incentives do you have in place to get customers to rent cars?

We are extremely proud of our flexible booking policy, where you can cancel or change your booking up to 24 hours prior to the start date, if you choose to rent a car with the "pay now" option, and up until the start of your rental if you book with the "pay later" option. We also offer a 10% discount for those who book their car online in advance. Meanwhile, corporate customers are given a fixed price guarantee. We offer them cost stability for short-term rentals - no matter when they decide to rent, the price remains the same for them.

Thank you. ■



TURBO CHARGED

It's all about electric and hybrid this year. Here is a look at the top new eco-friendly vehicles





FIAT 500 ELECTRIC

From £19,995

The cute little Italian baby is back – and this time it’s packing a plug-powered punch. Aside from new headlights, the new Fiat 500 may not look all that different on the outside, but under the skin there have been some huge changes. All of the petrol and diesel engine options have gone, replaced by the choice of just two batteries – 24kWh or 42kWh – that offer a 185km or 320km range respectively when fully charged. There’s a third body style to add to the standard hatchback and cabriolet, too – called the 3+1, it has a small rear-hinged door just behind the driver’s door to enable better access to the back seats. For the moment this is available only in left-hand drive markets, but if it proves popular don’t be surprised to see it in UK showrooms as well.

LAND ROVER DEFENDER P400E PLUG-IN HYBRID

From £65,915

Land Rover finally introduced its new Defender last year, and 2021 is no less busy for the iconic off-roader. For starters, it has a starring role in the new James Bond film, No Time To Die, and it has also launched this, its first Defender Plug-In Hybrid. Available only in five-door 110 form, the P400e has a 2.0-litre petrol engine allied to a 19.2kWh battery, which combine to provide an incredible power output of 398bhp. That gives it a 0-60mph time of only 5.4 seconds, as well as an all-electric range of 43km and emissions of 74g/km. Arguably the most advanced Land Rover Defender yet, the P400e should be a popular addition to the range.



KIA SORENTO PLUG-IN HYBRID

From £44,995

Kia won the 2020 World Car of the Year award with its brilliant Telluride, produced for the US market, and it would be a brave person to bet against the Korean firm repeating the feat this year with its latest large off-roader. The good news is that the all-new Sorento is a global car so is available in far more markets than the Telluride. Even better, this particular version is a plug-in hybrid, which means you get a large, seven-seater off-roader that achieves 38g/km emissions and about 64km on a full charge. Considering the Sorento’s size and towing capabilities, that will make it not only tempting for larger families but also for company car users looking to reduce their benefit-in-kind monthly tax bill.



CITROEN E-C4

From £29,180

It’s fair to say that Citroen’s previous offerings in the Ford Focus/VW Golf family hatchback market haven’t exactly flown out of showrooms. Admittedly, it’s tough in such a hotly contested sector, but the French company’s new C4 and this all-electric version, the e-C4, might just do the trick. With a 50kWh battery and a fully-charged range of 349km, the sharply styled e-C4 offers buyers a straight choice in the C4 range between a petrol or diesel engine or electric power, in the same five-door hatchback body style – similar to what the Peugeot 208 supermini from Citroen’s sister firm does. It looks great, too.



TOYOTA RAV4 PLUG-IN HYBRID

From £47,395

Toyota probably has the widest experience of hybrids of almost any manufacturer, but its background when it comes to plug-in hybrid technology has been limited to the Prius. With the huge growth in demand for eco-friendly vehicles, especially SUVs, Toyota has moved the tech across to its popular RAV4 to make it the flagship of its hybrid range. It uses the same 2.5-litre petrol engine as the standard RAV4 hybrid, which, along with a larger electric battery, produces a combined power output of 302bhp. That's enough to give it an impressive electric-only range of 74km, with 22g/km emissions.

JAGUAR I-PACE

From £65,195

We won't pretend that we're not big fans of the all-electric Jaguar I-Pace, which won three World Car of the Year awards on its launch in 2019. Now it has had a substantial refresh with faster charging, better connectivity and improved technology, including the ability to update its software remotely in a similar way to Tesla's models. The 470km fully-charged range continues as before, but there's a new infotainment system that does not need an extra SIM card on board. Cleverly, it has a smartphone pack that can pair two phones simultaneously, while a 100kW charger can add up to 126km of range in only 15 minutes.



VOLVO XC40 RECHARGE

Est. from £53,155

(First Edition £59,985)

As Volvo's first fully electric car, you'd expect the new XC40 Recharge to have something of an uphill task ahead of it – especially with the arrival of Volvo's luxury all-electric Polestar brand. However, the Swedish firm's strong position across the SUV sector and the success of the standard XC40 makes this all-electric version a strong contender. The hefty price tag might deter some, but a 401km fully-charged range should mean that it's practical enough for most drivers. A high-end First Edition of the Recharge will be the first to be introduced, followed by lesser versions with smaller batteries later on.



Premier Inn London Southwark (Southwark Station)

BACKGROUND This new property opened briefly in December 2020, when I stayed, and then closed from December 24, 2020, until April 12, 2021 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was developed with property company Frogmore and designed by Dexter Moren Associates, with a new public park and courtyard forming part of the project. It is Whitbread's fifth Premier Inn hotel in the borough of Southwark, joining those at Borough High Street, Tate Modern, Tower Bridge and Bankside. In addition, a 110-room Hub by Premier Inn opened on Soho's Berwick Street in April, with a 246-room Hub on Quaker Street in Shoreditch scheduled to open in late June.

WHERE IS IT? Between Ufford Street and the Cut, approximately 100 metres from Southwark Underground station and about a five-minute walk from Waterloo station.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The 274-room hotel is set across two buildings – the main one is slightly larger, with 145 rooms, and is linked by a glass-sided bridge to the other, which contains 129 rooms and the Bar and Block restaurant. When I stayed, there were plenty of hand sanitisers and floor signage to ensure a one-way flow of guests. You can check in either at reception or via one of the self-service machines. The bank of lifts takes you up to floors one to six, with more guestrooms on the lower ground floor. Vending machines in reception stock snacks and essential items, or there's a Tesco Express close by.

ROOMS All rooms are the same, with a smart yet functional look, although some are in slightly different shapes and sizes owing to the building layout. They come with either double or twin beds, and 27 rooms are accessible. There is a place to hang coats by the door and the wardrobe is an alcove behind an almost full-length mirror. The desk is spacious and there are plenty of power outlets, including USB charging by the bed. Wifi is free but slow, so you are encouraged to pay for faster access, which costs £5 per day. Tea and coffee facilities

Bar and Block steakhouse features attractive interiors and outdoor seating – my evening meal was delicious

are supplied but there are no minibars, fridges or safes. Bathrooms are either shower only or have a tub with an overhead shower. Attached to the wall is a not particularly nice combined body and hair gel, with hand wash also provided.

FOOD AND DRINK The hotel features Premier Inn's Bar and Block all-day steakhouse concept. The interior is attractive, with bare brick walls and unfinished wood, and there are comfortable booths with Perspex screens, plus outdoor seating in a paved garden area. My evening meal was delicious. Starters include sharing plates such as Korean BBQ pork ribs and salt and pepper squid, with mains ranging



from burgers and various cuts of steak to vegan options. The morning buffet has for the moment been replaced by an à la carte breakfast (£9). A good-value deal costs £25 for breakfast and a two-course evening meal with a drink, although there's competition along this stretch of the Cut.

MEETINGS No facilities.

LEISURE None, but the South Bank is close by for a riverside run.

VERDICT A well situated hotel for both work and travel, close to transport and the excellent nightlife and dining options around London Bridge and Southwark. Service was friendly.
Tom Otley

BEST FOR

A great location only a short walk or Tube journey from many of London's main sights

DON'T MISS

A drink and a meal in the steakhouse

PRICE

Internet rates for a flexible midweek stay in June started from £117 for a Standard room

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Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong

BACKGROUND Originally opened in 1991, the Island Shangri-La has recently renovated its Horizon Club rooms. I visited in March 2021 when restrictions were lifting in Hong Kong. Staff wore face masks, temperature checks were in place and guests were encouraged to use the Leave Home Safe app to log their movements.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The hotel is in one of the towers above Hong Kong's Pacific Place shopping mall and is more than 50 storeys high. Shangri-La's signature fragrance, with aromas of jasmine, lily and bergamot, engulfs you as you enter, a welcome relief from the fumes and humidity of springtime in Hong Kong. The public areas are very old-school glitz, with 770 chandeliers and 900 artworks hung throughout the property, including the world's largest indoor Chinese silk mural, The Great Motherland of China, which stretches 16 storeys.

55-inch TV, a soundbar and automatic blinds that open dramatically when you enter the room.

Decorative panels and artwork feature mist-veiled mountainscapes that reflect the vistas of Victoria Peak nearby. In the far corner, an upholstered day bed extends along the length of the window and is accompanied by a desk/dining table and chair. Each bedside has multiple charging sockets, USB ports and temperature and light control.

The most distinctive part of the room is its mirror- and marble-panelled pantry, filled with products such as pre-mixed cocktails from the Lobster Bar and Grill downstairs. There's also an assortment of Chinese teas, a boiling water tap and a Nespresso machine.

Bathrooms have hand-tiled mosaic walls in the separate bath and shower partition, with a vanity mirror, John Masters Organics amenities and the option to "frost" the glass between the bathroom and bedroom.

Club room guests can use the Horizon Club lounge on level 56 for private check-in and check-out, assistance from the Club Concierge and complimentary cocktails and canapés from 6pm to 8pm. Also included is one free suit pressing/laundry service, shoeshine and the use of meeting facilities for two hours per day.

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WHERE IS IT? In Admiralty, several escalator journeys up from Exit F of the MTR at Pacific Place.

ROOMS The hotel has 527 rooms – of which 92 are the newly renovated Club category – and 34 suites. Designed by France's Tristan Auer, the new 44 sqm Horizon Club Harbour View rooms (there are also 41 sqm Horizon Peak View rooms) blend understated chinoiserie in soothing hues of duck egg, grey and jade with lavish amenities including a motion-sensor, heated Toto washlet, a



FOOD AND DRINK The hotel's eight restaurants and bars are Café Too, featuring live cooking stations; the Waterside Terrace for poolside snacks; high-end Japanese outfit Nadaman; the Lobster Bar and Grill; the Island Gourmet patisserie; the Lobby Lounge; French restaurant Petrus; and the Cantonese Summer Palace – the last two of these are Michelin-starred. Breakfast is served in Petrus for Club room guests, where I also enjoyed a fantastic lunch of lobster in a green pea, lettuce and chicken jus concoction.

MEETINGS There's a 645 sqm ballroom and ten function rooms and spaces, each with an LCD projector, DVD player, multi-microphone system, multi-system VCR and videoconferencing facilities.

LEISURE Level 8 is home to an outdoor pool, gym, and health club and spa.

VERDICT The Horizon Club rooms are thoughtfully designed and elegant in all aspects – an ideal stay for those looking for something new and truly luxurious.

Marisa Cannon

BEST FOR

Escaping Hong Kong's heat and hustle by the city-centre pool

PRICE

Internet rates for a flexible midweek stay in June started from HK\$3,000 (£279) for a Horizon Peak View room and HK\$3,400 (£316) for a Horizon Harbour View room

CONTACT

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Kaohsiung

WORDS JEREMY TREDINNICK



Take in the cultural sights and waterside attractions of Taiwan's atmospheric southern port city

1 The Dome of Light

Your exploration of Kaohsiung's scenic points of interest begins in one of the city's main metro stations. This may sound bizarre, but inside Formosa Boulevard station, the transfer interchange for the Red and Orange lines, the main concourse is roofed by a 660 sqm dome constructed from 4,500 individual pieces of stained glass – one of the world's largest public art installations of its kind.

Supported by huge coloured pillars, it was created by Italian-born US artist Narcissus Quagliata and took nearly four years to complete. A kaleidoscopic panorama that stretches like a vast umbrella over commuters' heads, the dome presents four themes – Water: the womb of life; Earth: prosperity and growth; Light: the creative spirit; and Fire: destruction and rebirth – meant to bring a message of love and tolerance. At the least, it certainly brings a ray of colourful light into the lives of all of those who pass under it.

2 Lotus Lake

Jump on the Red line heading north to Zuoying Metro station (R16). Either walk down Mingtan Road to the northern edge of Lotus Lake, or catch a bus to the southern end, where the lake's best-known structures are located. Next to a shady park of ancient banyan trees stand the Dragon and Tiger Pagodas – a little gaudy perhaps, but entering the dragon's mouth and exiting the tiger's maw is said to bring luck, and proves great entertainment for children.

The man-made Lotus Lake has been a popular destination since the Qing Dynasty, and on its western side are numerous pavilions and temples, such as the Spring and Autumn Pavilions, where ponds are filled with vibrant carp and long-necked turtles sun themselves on tiny stone bridges. There's also a statue of the Goddess of Mercy riding a dragon within the complex – enter through the dra-

gon's fanged mouth and negotiate the ups and downs of its snaking belly, which is painted with colourful scenes of legend.

Other sites worth checking out include the Chi-Ming-Tang temple, an astonishing sensory feast of gold and red, incense smoke, booming gongs and the rattle of much-used fortune sticks; and the huge, intimidating statue of Xuan Tian Shang-di, the Supreme Emperor of the Dark Heaven.

eng.taiwan.net.tw

3 Love River

A ten-minute taxi ride south (costing about NT\$230/£6) will bring you to the last-mile stretch of Love River, which bisects the city and is its focal point. A decade ago it was a polluted and unsightly waterway but in the intervening years the river was cleaned up and the area underwent renovation and greening. Today it boasts riverside parks and promenades,

broad, tree-lined thoroughfares and a host of statues, coffee shops, cafés, restaurants and cultural sites, including the Kaohsiung Museum of History. Friendly, style-conscious youngsters mix with families, while joggers and cyclists use the bike paths. You can take a scenic gondola boat ride or hire water skis, and in the evening many bars open up, with musicians setting up along the riverside to entertain the crowds.

4 Cijin (CHICHIN) Island

Jump in a taxi for the short trip west to Gushan ferry pier, then hop on a boat for the five-minute ride (NT\$30/£0.80 one-way) across to Cijin Island, which protects Kaohsiung Harbour from the open sea and was the earliest developed area of the city once known as Takow.

A relaxed fishing hamlet, Cijin's many points of interest are centred around its northern end and can

easily be visited in a looping walk. Close to the Cijin ferry pier is the small but atmospheric Tianhou temple, which was built in 1673 and is Kaohsiung's oldest. Rows of pretty red lanterns create a shady "porch" area out front, while monks inside tend to the altars.

On a rugged bluff near the northern tip of the island you'll spot Taiwan's second oldest lighthouse. Descend the steep steps from here and you'll be treated to an unexpected sight – a series of huge cliffs against which the full force of the ocean smashes, waves breaking and shooting skyward in a ferocious outburst of water-borne energy.

A man-made tunnel through the cliffs will bring you to the northern end of Cijin Beach, a long, broad strand of black sand that is popular with surfers as well as families. Facing the beach is Seafood Street (Miaoqian Street), a classic set-up of stalls

selling everything from mussels to squid, octopus and myriad fish. Grab some barbecued squid on a stick to snack on as you wander back to the ferry through the entertaining communal bustle.

5 British Consulate at Takow

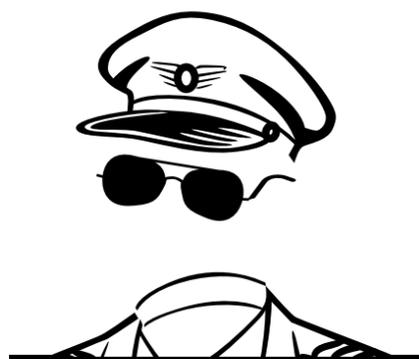
Back on the mainland, cross the nearby bridge and walk up the hill to finish your day with a classic British afternoon tea or a sunset drink at the perfectly positioned British Consulate at Takow. This meticulously preserved colonial building dates back to 1879 and contains historical exhibitions, a tea lounge, a verandah and gardens with fantastic views. It makes for a cultured end to your day in this surprisingly sophisticated city. The consulate is open Tues-Fri 10am-7pm (from 9am on weekends); entry NT\$99 (£2.50).

britishconsulate.khcc.gov.tw

FOT. JEREMY TREDINNICK; SHIH-WEI/ISTOCK; BRADLEYEBDON/ISTOCK

Ask the pilot

Our undercover captain reveals what it's like to fly for a living



Would you fly the Boeing 737 Max now it has returned to the skies?

The aircraft suffered two total losses with a significant number of deaths. For that reason, neither Boeing nor the Federal Aviation Administration would have allowed it to fly again until all of the issues had been resolved and it had undergone extensive simulator and flight testing without further incident.

If I think back over the years, this situation is not unique. In 1952, the De Havilland Comet entered service with BOAC. Within two years it had suffered three aircraft losses. It was found that the square-shaped passenger windows contributed to excess metal fatigue, resulting in an explosive decompression caused by structural failure. The aircraft was grounded and redesigned with oval windows. Thereafter, it operated successfully until its retirement in 1997.

I also remember when I was a first officer back in 1996 on the Boeing 747 Classic when a TWA aircraft of the same type I was flying crashed 12 minutes after take-off from New York, with a loss of 230 lives. It was discovered that an electrical short circuit had caused fuel vapour in one of its tanks to explode. From that moment on, we had special procedures implemented to avoid a further recurrence until the problem had been fixed.

The point I am making is that after any incident, particularly the loss of an aircraft, a thorough investigation always follows. Only when they are certain beyond all reasonable doubt that the situation is resolved will normal operations resume. So would I fly the B737 Max? Yes, without hesitation.

Do you ever worry about the computer systems on board aircraft?

The automatic/computer systems are placed on an aircraft essentially for three reasons. First, to make the management of the aircraft systems more effective. In the case of a system failure, rather than the pilot having to refer to paper checklists in an attempt to diagnose what has occurred, the computer will do it for him and automatically display the procedure to be followed on a screen. This avoids incorrect actions being taken owing to a wrong diagnosis and enhances the safety of the operation.

Second, computers assist the pilot, particularly during periods of high workload where important decisions may need to be made. Allowing the automatics to fly the aircraft creates thinking time for the pilots to formulate a plan of action, resulting in a more considered and safe outcome.

Onboard computer systems have greatly enhanced the safety and efficiency of airline operations

Third, the systems provide maintenance information to engineering to identify and rectify issues in a timely manner.

However, as we all know, computers do have limitations and at times don't always behave as we might expect. In these cases, the pilots will use their judgment and, when considered necessary, will revert to manual flying and procedures.

I have flown a whole spectrum of commercial aircraft, from those with basic computer systems to the high-tech airliners of today. These computers, in my opinion, have greatly enhanced the safety and efficiency of airline operations. This is reflected in the statistics showing a steady decline in the number of fatal crashes.

Is it true that pilots have to eat different meals from each other on board?

For most of my career, that has been the case. In recent years, this rule has been relaxed and we are now able to eat the same. It was felt that it was highly improbable that both meals would be defective bearing in mind the stringent measures in place in relation to food preparation.

There are, however, guidelines for what we should avoid eating and drinking in certain countries before we fly, such as avoiding some types of seafood or drinking only bottled water, for example.



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