

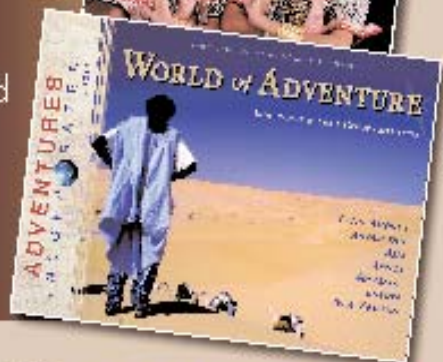
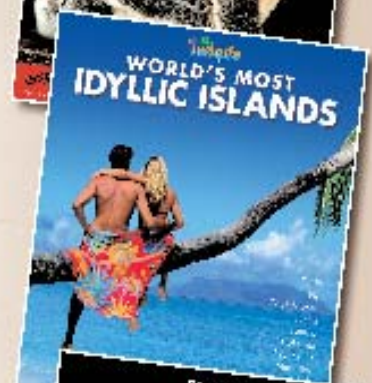
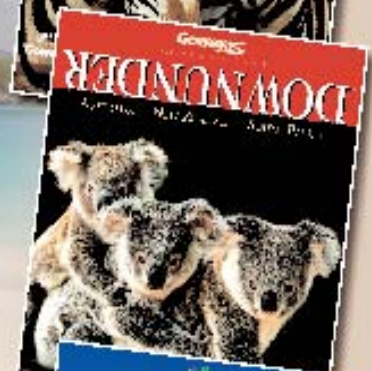


*'Kia Orana'*

WELCOME TO THE COOK ISLANDS

ASIA-PACIFIC  
TRAVEL WORLD NEWS - SECTION FOUR - JANUARY 2008

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# 'Kia Orana' Welcome To The Cook Islands

On the Cook Islands, the hospitality is warm, the people are inviting and visitors are welcome to share the customs and culture of this rich, beautiful land.

JENNIFER M. LANE



The 'Vaka Eiva' Canoe Regatta.

**L**ying in the center of the Polynesian Triangle are the beautiful and charming Cook Islands. Composed of 15 islands with a total population of approximately 19,000, they are scattered over some two million square kilometers of the Pacific Ocean.

The islands north to south are Penhryn, Rakahanga, Manihiki, Pukapuka, Nassau, Suwarrow, Palmerston, Aitutaki, Manuae, Mitiaro, Takutea, Atiu, Mauke, Rarotonga and Mangaia. The islands range from low coral atolls to the mountainous majesty of Rarotonga, the largest island of the group and home to the capital, Avarua.

The first Europeans to the Cook Islands were the Spanish explorers Alvaro de Mendana, who sighted Pukapuka in 1595 and Pedro Fernandez de Quiros who sighted Rakahanga in 1606. There was no further European contact until over 160 years later in 1773, when Captain James Cook, for whom the island group was eventually named, sighted Manuae atoll which he named Hervey Island. On a later voyage, he also discovered Palmerston, Takutea, Mangaia and Atiu in 1777.

Discovering the Cook Islands today is much easier, as the international airport in Rarotonga handles daily connections by modern jet aircraft.

## A Rich Culture and Lush Tapestry of Traditions

The Cook Islands is an authentic and refined Pacific experience encased in a lifestyle that exudes warmth, happiness and respect. A proud people live here, with a rich culture and

a lush tapestry of traditions that entwine with their daily lives.

The beauty and charm of the islands is matched only by the friendliness of the people. Here guests will find the hospitality warm and spontaneous, the music and dancing exuberant, the mood relaxed.

Polynesian identity can be found in everyday life, in the many art galleries around the island of Rarotonga who exhibit local artists, in the carvings that adorn the buildings and homes, and in dance and drama at various events throughout the year. However, it is the songs of the Kaparima, the hymns of the Sunday choir, and pride in traditional crafts that exists in the day-to-day lives of the people.

## The Heart of the Cook Island's Culture

What most defines the Cook Islands and leaves a lasting impression on tourists is the grace, art and skill demonstrated in song and dance, particularly a traditional dance known as the Ura.

Unlike most western dancers, the islanders tell a story with their bodies that matches the words of the song. The dancing, accompanied by rhythmic drumming, is taken very seriously, with each island having its own unique songs and dances. There are many competitions throughout the year between each island.

Close harmonious singing can also be heard in churches along with the powerful and emotional impact of chants and hymns during weddings and funerals. This range and talent of popular singing can be found at numerous festivals

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

throughout the year.

String bands that play at restaurants, hotels and concerts, using combinations of modern electronics with traditional ukuleles made from coconut shells also provides tourists with a uniquely Cook Islands experience.

### Festivals and Events

Many celebrations are held throughout the year. Some of the festivals have a cultural or historical significance, such as the Te Maeva Nui Celebrations held each year in July. This is perhaps their largest celebration, with colorful parades, drumming and dancing competitions, choir singing, sports and more.

Other celebrations and events of note are the Te Mire Kapa 'Dancer of the Year' competitions during April and May; the Miss Cook Islands Pageant, held every two years; Cook Islands Gospel Day, which takes place in October; and The Tiare Festival or Flower Festival celebrated each year in November.

Other events include the Cook Islands Tourism International Food Festival, Cook Islands Tivaivai Exhibition, All Souls Day 'Turama,' Kumete Sports, 'Vaka Eiva' Canoe Regatta and much more.

### Romantic Escapes

The Cook Islands are a haven for romantics. Many visitors come for weddings, honeymoons, renewal of vows, or to just

take time out to be with the one they love. If you could choose one of the most romantic places on earth to escape to, it would surely be the Cook Islands.

There are professional and friendly people who are skilled at adding that personal touch to a wedding. Celebrants, florists, designers, beauty specialists, caterers, photographers, serenaders, solo dancers, even complete cultural dance teams are on hand to make the day unforgettable. Hand-crafted rings and famous black pearls provide long lasting treasured keepsakes.

### Born of the Sea

Cook Island people are born of the sea. In this immense aquatic environment they not only make a living from its abundant waters, but also consider its shoreline their marine playground.

The outer reefs surrounding Rarotonga and Aitutaki could be described as the best kept secrets from the wider diving community. They offer a variety of experiences for the discerning scuba diver looking for a new place to dive. The outer islands also provide rare and untouched locations for diving.

The turquoise beauty of the lagoons beckons snorkelers. A prolific abundance of tropical marine life, colorful fish and interesting corals can be viewed. Ask locally for the most interesting and safest places to visit and remember to protect this fragile environment.

Visitors can also view the colorful marine life by cruising the lagoon by glass-bottom boat, or perhaps by a semi-submersible that also takes you beyond the reef. For fast, breathtaking fun, high-speed tours beyond the reef will get you close to whales (in season) and provide stunning views.

Windsurfers, sailboats, catamarans and kayaks are available for hire. On Rarotonga, the most popular place for sailing activities is at Muri Lagoon. There are several hire facilities available on both Rarotonga and Aitutaki. Many beachside accommodation establishments have kayaks for guests use.

### Come to the Cooks

The Cook Islands enjoy lovely weather all year round. Some of the best times to visit are around the Christmas-New Year festive season through to April and May. Their Winter falls between July and September and Summer is from December to April but the difference in temperature is only a few degrees.

The Cook Islands offer something for everyone, whether it is a romantic getaway, down time with the family, or just getting away from it all. Escape the rush of city life, relax, and explore. Time spent in the Cook Islands will do wonders for your body and soul.

**Cook Islands Tourism Corporation,**  
[www.cookislands.travel](http://www.cookislands.travel)

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**Palau Visitors Authority**  
 P. O. Box 256 Koror, PW 96940  
 Tel.: (680) 488-2793 or 1930  
 Fax: (680) 488-1453  
 Website: (680) 488-1382  
 E-mail: [pva@visit-palau.com](mailto:pva@visit-palau.com)  
[pva@palau.travel](http://pva@palau.travel)

## MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK OFFERING GROUP KAYAKING TRIP TO PHILIPPINES

Experience undisturbed tropical wilderness, secluded sandy coves and unique limestone formations in the Calamian Archipelago with California-based Mountain Travel Sobek's 11-day 'Kayaking the Calamian Archipelago' package, available for two departure dates, April 6 and April 20, 2008.

Starting at \$3,745 pppo (for a group of eight to 10), travelers will receive six nights of camping and four nights of resort accommodations, seven days moderate sea kayaking (some previous experience recommended), snorkeling, swimming, easy hiking and touring, as well as all meals. The trip is lead by expert kayaking guide and world traveler, Joe Toback.

Guests will spend the first night at the Busuanga Island Paradise, a small inland resort set within a private nature reserve. Enjoy amenities including comfortable air-conditioned casitas, swimming pool and Jacuzzi. Kayak for three days in and around Coron Island, one of the world's great limestone islands, camping at a secluded beach. At Sangat Island Reserve, stay in a native-style eco-resort set near a beach and coral gardens ideal for snorkeling. Certified scuba divers can opt to spend the afternoon exploring some Japanese wrecks from World War II. Explore the town of Culion, a former leper colony, visiting its museum. Snorkel at historic Dynamite Point, Calambuyan Island and the Pamilican Islands.

On Black Island, spend the day exploring a cave and circumnavigating the limestone island by kayak. Enjoy a mid-afternoon paddle along Busuanga River through a diverse environment filled with nipa palm, mangroves, farmland and forests. Visit the Calauit Game Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary to view native animals like the Palawan Bearcat as well as some protected African wildlife species. Visit Maquinit Hot Springs to enjoy floating in the salty volcanic, salt-water springs.

Mountain Travel Sobek is responsible for all arrangements in the field, including camp meals, group gear and kayaking equipment; airport transfers; ground transportation; and basic medical and evacuation insurance.

"While unspoiled wilderness is at the heart of most Philippines' vacations, this special tour from Mountain Travel Sobek is so 'off the beaten path,' one needs a kayak to transverse it," said Rene de los Santos, Director of the Philippines Department of Tourism in San Francisco.

Mountain Travel Sobek, 888-MTSOBEK (687-6235),  
info@mtsobek.com, www.mtsobek.com

## EXPLORE AUSTRALIA BY TRAIN WITH EXPERIENCE AUSTRALIA

Experience Australia is the newest travel division of The Great Canadian Travel Company Ltd. This destination specialist offers a wide array of travel programs across Australia.

Australia's signature trains cover the entire country, offering a truly premium train experience. They are a satisfying way to explore the sprawling land, offering comfortable compartments, elegant dining cars and convivial lounge cars. Travelers may choose to purchase point-to-point fares for single journeys or a variety of

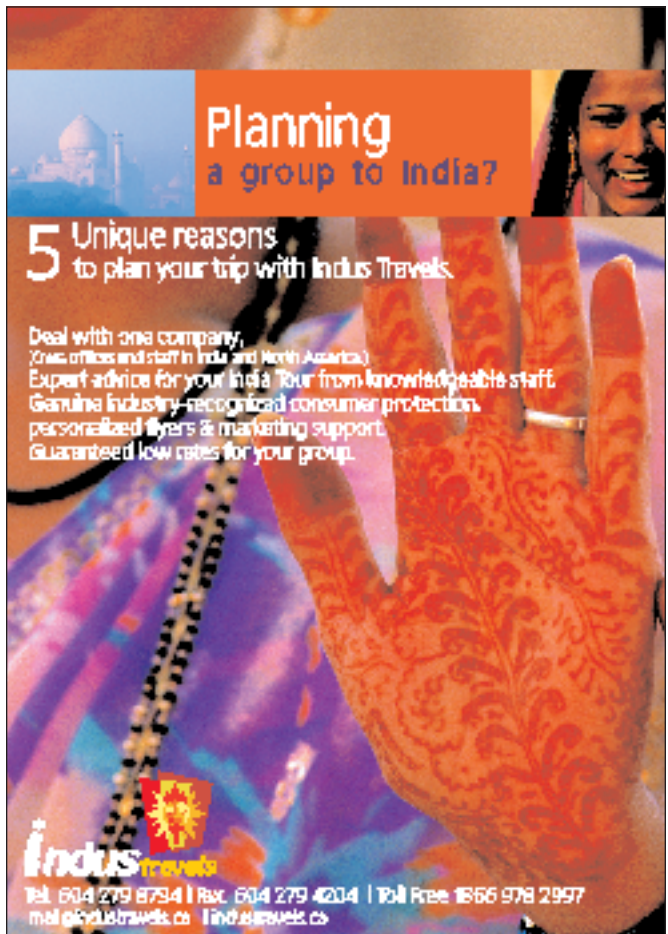
passes. These passes range from a 15- or 22-day "all system" pass that allows unlimited travel throughout the network to a series of "route passes" valid for travel on a single east-coast route over a six-month period. Enticing packages are available on Australia's signature trains: *The Indian Pacific*, *The Sunlander*, and *The Ghan*.

Spanning Australia from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, from Sydney to Perth, the journey on board *The Indian Pacific* covers 2,704 miles. No other train journey in the world passes through so many different types of terrain in a single country. The Indian Pacific passes through the Blue Mountains, the Outback and the historic town of Broken Hill. These and many more dramatic outposts make up this three-night train journey. Prices range from \$629 (Red Seat), \$1,219 (Red Cabin), and Gold Cabin (\$1,649.)

Running between Brisbane and Cairns, *The Sunlander* provides a two-day leisurely passage to tropical Queensland. Relax as the train weaves its way north to Cairns, where rain forest meets the barrier reef. Prices range from \$199 (Economy Seat), \$379 (First Class Berth), and \$689 (The Queenslander.)

When *The Ghan* first departed from Adelaide to Alice Springs it was intended that the rail line continue to the port city of Darwin. Now, some 70 years later, the dream is a reality. Covering 1,851 miles, this journey takes guests through the heart of the continent. Two nights are spent on board this twice-weekly train, with the option to stop over in Alice Springs. Prices are from \$639 (Red Seat), \$1,279 (Red Cabin), and \$1,769 (Gold Cabin.)

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## JOHN MCGONIGLE JOINS GOWAY TRAVEL



JOHN MCGONIGLE

Goway Travel has announced the appointment of industry veteran John McGonigle to the position of Business Development Manager USA, based in Boston. John most recently was Director of Business Development USA & Canada for Rail Australia. Previously he had been a Senior Account Executive northeast USA for Grand Expeditions (former parent company of Travcoa, Park East, International Expeditions and others) and

Director of Sales for Wildlife Safari (USA).

"John not only brings a wealth of industry knowledge to the position, but has also experienced many of our destinations first-hand," commented President and Founder, Bruce Hodge.

In the role of Business Development Manager USA, McGonigle is responsible for overseeing the Goway Special Agent (GSA) preferred agent program, conducting Goway Expos across the USA, and working with the trade to grow business for the Downunder (Australia and New Zealand), the World's Most Idyllic Islands, Africa, Asia and Goway's World of Adventure. McGonigle was awarded Tourism Australia's Opal Award for leading Rail Australia to be named "Best Australian Experience" in 2006. A former presenter at the Certified Travel Counselor (CTC) National Forum, McGonigle also has been a featured speaker at various Adventures in Travel Expos, Adventure & Exotic Travel Seminars across the U.S., the Non-Profit Travel Conference and Bank Travel Conference.

Goway Travel Ltd., [john.mcgonigle@goway.com](mailto:john.mcgonigle@goway.com), [www.goway.com](http://www.goway.com)

## MAJESTIC INDIA TOUR FROM INDUS TRAVELS

Indus Travels is offering a 13-night/14-day Majestic India Tour. Visit Delhi (arrival) – Udaipur – Ranthambore – Jaipur - Agra – Delhi - Mashobra – Delhi (depart). This is a private tour that departs any day. Price is \$6,598 per person twin sharing. This tour is valid until March 2008, except from December 20 to January 5, 2008.

This tour package includes luxury accommodation on twin sharing basis; daily buffet breakfast; transportation by air-conditioned deluxe vehicle; return airport transfers; elephant ride at Amber Fort, Jaipur; boat ride in Udaipur; Jeep safaris at Ranthambore; service of English speaking local guides; entrance to monuments; and all presently applicable taxes. The luxury tour itinerary includes a morning sightseeing tour of Old Delhi visiting the Raj Ghat, the site where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated; Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India; and the Red Fort - once the most opulent fort and palace of the Moghul Empire.

There is also a sightseeing tour of Udaipur, stopping first at City Palace. Here, marvel at rooms with mirrored walls and ivory doors, colored glass windows and inlaid marble balconies; and the Peacock Courtyard. Also visit the lovely Sahelion-ki-Bari Gardens; the Jagdish Temple; and the local folk Museum. On a morning ex-

ursion to Amber Fort, make your ascent to the palace fortress on the gaily caparisoned elephant back. Tour the chambers and hallways of the palace which are famous for the excellence of their design and decoration. Your clients can visit the unique Jantar Mantar Observatory, which was built in the 1700's, yet even today still looks futuristic or almost surrealistic; the City Palace and its Museum, the Hawa Mahal or the Palace of Winds. Or than can enjoy a sightseeing tour of Agra city visiting the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort.

## Total Solar Eclipse Package to China from Indus

Indus Travels is offering an eight-day China Total Eclipse 2008 Tour, Beijing, Dunhuang, Hami, Dunhuang, Beijing. Guaranteed departure is July 27, 2008 with a maximum of 20 group members

The tour starts from Beijing with a tour of the Great Wall of China. Then guests fly to Dunhuang to visit the grottoes, dunes and crescent lake. The tour continues to Hami the base for the eclipse. On the eclipse day, drive to the Yiwu area and the chosen eclipse site. From here, return to Dunhuang and fly to Beijing.

This eight-day/seven-night package includes seven nights accommodations in China; all airport transfers; sightseeing as per the itinerary; daily buffet breakfast; 16 meals; services of local English speaking guide; all entrance fees; eclipse viewing at Yiwu; air tickets Beijing / Dunhuang / Beijing; and all local taxes. The package price is \$1,995 per person, single supplement is \$895. Tour package does not include China Visa fee, international flights, personal expenses, and beverage during meals.

Indus Travels, 866-978-2997, [mail@industravels.ca](mailto:mail@industravels.ca)

## KOSRAE VISITORS BUREAU LAUNCHES NEW WEB SITE

The Kosrae Visitors Bureau has launched a new web site, [www.kosrae.com](http://www.kosrae.com), to provide travelers and the travel trade easy access to information about the island, one of the Federated States of Micronesia. According to Kosrae Visitor Bureau Director Grant Ismael, this Web site was designed to provide a real sense of the island's people and attractions via the Internet. The site covers Kosrae's interesting culture, spectacular coral reefs and undersea world, and its' diving, hiking and eco-tourism programs, as well as accommodations and dining options that are available to island visitors. It also includes a calendar that lists important and interesting island events.

Kosrae is a lush 42-square-mile Pacific island of 7,000 people located a few hours southeast of Guam and southwest of Hawaii. The island is known among diving enthusiasts for its virgin fringing reef and pristine waters, with visibility up to 200+ feet and an amazing variety of hard and soft corals, fish and marine life. It is an underwater playground for wreck divers as its natural harbors are the final resting place for two sunken whaling ships, two WWII shipwrecks and several airplanes. On land, the majestic 2,064 feet high Mt. Finkol is an ideal location for hiking and jungle trekking.

The native Kosraen culture is alive and well. Traditional singing and chanting, weaving, woodcarving, canoe building and fishing are still practiced by many Kosraeans today.

Kosrae, [www.kosrae.com](http://www.kosrae.com)

## YVES GENET APPOINTED VP CHINA OPERATIONS AND GENERAL MANAGER OF REGAL HONGKONG HOTEL



YVES GENET

Regal Hotels International, one of the largest hotel operators in Hong Kong, has announced the appointment of Yves Genet as Vice President – China Operations cum General Manager of Regal Hongkong Hotel, the flagship hotel of the group in the territory.

Bringing with him a wealth of hospitality experience, Mr. Genet is in charge of the overall operations of the five-star Regal Hongkong Hotel while also overseeing

development projects in China and hotel operations in Shanghai where the Regal Group manages Regal International East Asia Hotel and Regal Shanghai East Asia Hotel.

Mr. Genet joined the Regal Group in 1987 when he started off as Executive Assistant Manager of the former Regal Meridian Airport Hotel (Regal Oriental Hotel). He was the Manager – Project & Development at the Regal Hotels International corporate office and later Director of Group Food & Beverage in the 90's before his engagement in the two Shanghai Regal Hotels as General Manager. Prior relocating back to Hong Kong, Mr. Genet spent eight years in Shanghai.

Mr. Genet says, "I feel superb to take up these new assignments at both corporate and hotel levels where we have embarked on series of new initiatives. At the corporate level, we have been active in searching and identifying potential projects and partners in 1st and 2nd tier cities in China with a target to further expand our hotel network in the form of offering hotel management services and even acquisition and partnership."

"At the hotel level, the Asset Enhancement Program is due to complete in the fourth quarter. We are expecting a brand new rooftop swimming pool, Zeffirino Ristorante and three Regal Royale executive floors soon. I and my team are excited about the launch of these new facilities and will continue to provide high levels of service and quality facilities to our guests along the Regal Hospitality."

Regal Hongkong Hotel, [RegalHotel.com](http://RegalHotel.com)

## VICTORIA CRUISES INTRODUCES WINTER SPECIALS TO CHINA

Offering visitors the opportunity to experience the breathtaking beauty and intriguing history of China's Yangtze River at a fraction of the cost, Victoria Cruises, the leading innovator and pioneer on the Yangtze, has introduced a variety of winter specials on select sailings yielding savings of over 40 percent off the regular season rates.

For Chongqing – Yichang (four-days/three-nights downstream) and Yichang – Chongqing (five-days/four-nights upstream) rates start at \$450 per person in a standard cabin (including accommodations, meals, entertainment, onboard lectures and port taxes), valid for departures December 2007 through mid-March 2008. A

favorite among travelers, the Three Gorges Highlights cruise program provides an opportunity to sail through the verdant valleys that comprise the Three Gorges as well as a tour of the Three Gorges Dam Site.

For Chongqing-Yichang-Chongqing (eight-days/seven-nights) rates start at \$800 per person in a standard cabin (including accommodations, meals, entertainment, onboard lectures and port taxes), valid for departures December 2007 through mid-March 2008.

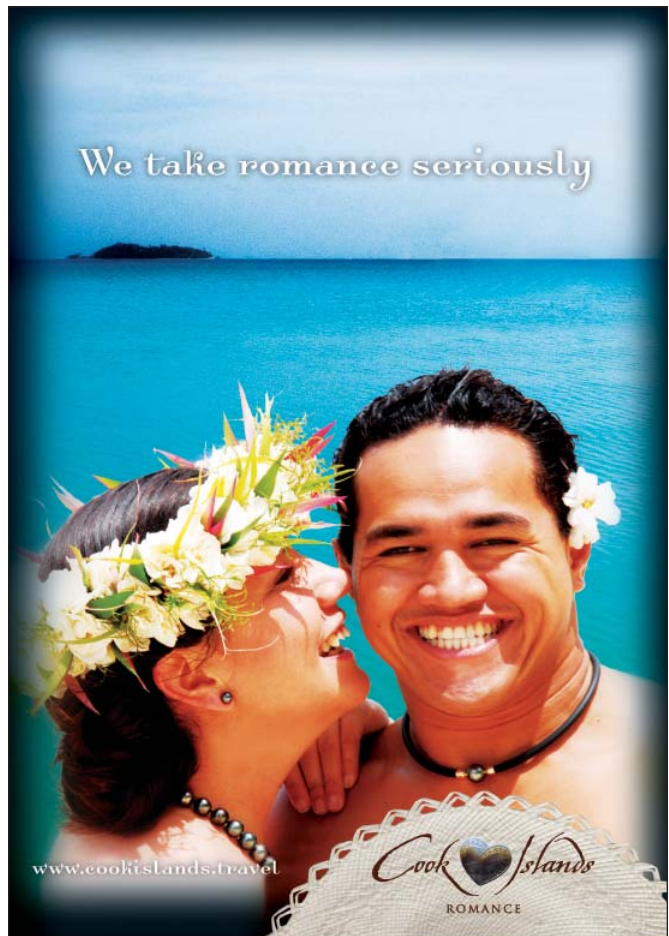
The Three Gorges Explorer roundtrip program provides different daily shore excursions in each direction in order to showcase an in-depth Yangtze River experience.

Travelers will experience the Three Gorges and Three Gorges Dam project in addition to old cities steeped in culture and new cities built to accommodate those people who relocated because of the rising Yangtze waters.

Rates quoted are p.p.d.o, may change without notice and are subject to space availability. Shore excursions cost an additional \$60 per person on the Three Gorges Highlights cruise and \$175 per person on the Three Gorges Explorer program.

Itineraries are subject to change based on river conditions. Bookings are commissionable at 10 percent for travel agents. Victoria Cruises will be using its five-star vessels (rated by the China National Tourism Administration) for the winter sailings.

Victoria Cruises, 800-348-8084, [www.victoriacruises.com](http://www.victoriacruises.com)



## GUAM ATTENDS PATA MICRONESIA CHAPTER MEETING



Seated from left to right: Judy Torres, MVA; Kiki Stinnett, Truk Stop Hotel; Jae Medina, Guam PDN; Cynthia McDowell, Advance Managements; Gina Kono, GVB; Mason Fritz, CVB. Second row left to right: Al Galang, YVB; Darin De Leon, PVA (Chapter Chairman); JM Guerrero, MVA; Cindy Mori, CVB; Monty McDowell, Advance Managements; Lou Sanchez, Continental Micronesia; Myron Hashiguchi, Truk Transportation Co., Inc.; Bermin of FSMVB. Third row: Yuki Unokuchi, Treasures Chuuk Micronesia; Keisuke Yokota, Treasures Chuuk Micronesia; Jim Pinson, GMI Wholesale; Bill Stinnett; Truk Stop Hotel; Pilar Lagunaña, GVB; CL Cheshire, Pacific Business Center.

The Micronesia Chapter of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) held their 4th Quarter meeting in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, on December 3 and 4. Twenty members of the Micronesia Chapter were present, representing the islands of Guam, the CNMI, Palau, Yap, Pohnpei, and Chuuk.

The marketing, education and executive committee meetings were held the afternoon of December 3 and the general membership meeting was held the morning of December 4. All took place at the Truk Stop Hotel Conference Room. The Chuuk Visitors Bureau served as host for this 4th Quarterly Meeting. The members discussed issues pertaining to tourism in Micronesia, including the new Magnificent Micronesia brochures. Distribution of this brochure to all Micronesia NTOs/STOs will be completed soon. A major topic of discussion was the Micronesia Product website, being developed and offered to the PATA Micronesia Chapter compliments of Pacific Business Center.

The new site will feature local products from each island member of the PATA Micronesia Chapter, including Guam. Visitors to the Magnificent Micronesia website ([www.magnificentmicronesia.com](http://www.magnificentmicronesia.com)) can access this new site and will be able to learn about local products and make safe purchases online. The next PATA Micronesia Chapter meeting will be held in Pohnpei from March 28 – April 1, 2008.

Guam Visitors Bureau, [visitguam.org](http://visitguam.org);  
Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), [www.PATA.org](http://www.PATA.org)

## EXCITING NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR VISITORS TO GUAM

Guam, an island territory of the United States, is the largest island in Micronesia and the gateway to the region. It has an array of accommodations including luxury resorts, business hotels, family-style accommodations and a bed and breakfast inn. Hilton, Westin, Hyatt Regency, Outrigger, Nikko, Pacific Islands Club (PIC), Hotel Okura, Marriott, and other hotel chains have beach

front properties on the island.

The Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort is Guam's newest luxury resort, offering five-star accommodations and amenities, and beautiful water features, including a lagoon, waterfall, and an infinity pool with ocean view. It features five restaurants including La Cascata, The President, Bayside Barbeque, The Point, and The Atrio. Guam Hotel Okura is adding 23 individual luxury villas each with its own pool or Jacuzzi.

Guam's newest attraction is the Isla Horse Ranch & Garden, offering horseback riding through a botanical garden setting, and also featuring a petting zoo. It is located in Tumon, across from the Guam Hotel Okura. New dining options include Margarita's Burritos & BBQ, located next to the Acanta Mall, Tumon; Ruby Tuesdays, located in Tamuning at the Guam Premier Outlets, one of the island's most popular shopping malls; Colors Restaurant Red in the Acanta Mall in Tumon; and Chili's, which will be located in the Tumon/Tamuning area.

In other news for Guam, the newly opened Home Depot Guam location is one of the largest Home Depot's in the world, and Northwest Airlines is now providing Airbus A330 service between Japan and Guam. Sports enthusiasts will enjoy world-class scuba diving, as well as snorkeling, windsurfing, fishing, parasailing and swimming. Water activities are not the only pastime on the islands. Whether it's a romantic wedding, experiencing traditional Chamorro culture, or an irresistible shopping environment, Guam is the perfect holiday destination.

Guam Visitors Bureau, [visitguam.org](http://visitguam.org)

## THE NAM HAI VIETNAM APPOINTS WAYNE DUBERLY NEW GENERAL MANAGER



WAYNE DUBERLY

The Nam Hai, a luxurious oceanfront resort managed by General Hotel Management (GHM) Limited, has announced the promotion of Mr. Wayne Duberly to the position of General Manager. Previously the Executive Assistant Manager (EAM) at The Nam Hai, Wayne has over 17 years of hospitality experience and joined The Nam Hai as part of the pre-opening team in January 2006. Set amidst landscaped tropical gardens, The Nam Hai is the most exclusive luxury resort that resides along the beautiful coast of famous China Beach.

The Nam Hai is the award-winning Asian flagship of GHM, a luxury hotel development and management company. The market leader in conceptualizing, developing and operating a selection of exclusive hotels and resorts worldwide, GHM manages a portfolio of three brands including highly regarded properties such as The Datai in Langkawi, The Setai in Miami, The Chedi hotels and The Serai hotels worldwide. A five-star resort, The Nam Hai is a member of the prestigious The Leading Small Hotels of the World and Design Hotels.

The Nam Hai, [www.ghmhotels.com](http://www.ghmhotels.com)

## IAGTO AWARD HERALDS BANNER DAYS FOR VIETNAM GOLF

The International Association of Golf Travel Operators (IAGTO) has named Vietnam its 2007 "Undiscovered Golf Destination of the Year." The announcement capped the organization's annual Awards Gala held on December 6.

The award was a crowning moment in a pivotal golf year for Vietnam. Development of the Ho Chi Minh Golf Trail, launched July 1, signaled a coming-of-age for the country's international golf standing. A month later, representatives of the VN golf community met in Hanoi to form the Vietnam Golf Association (VGA), the country's first such governing body.

In July 2007, seven top courses joined forces and formed the Ho Chi Minh Golf Trail, a marketing cooperative that, in the few months since its launch, has succeeded in generating news coverage in more than 100 different publications worldwide. Currently, there are 15 golf courses operating in Vietnam, with more than 30 projects in some stage of construction. The country's rising popularity as a golf destination mirrors similar developments for Vietnam on the world stage. In the past year, the nation has



joined the World Trade Organization and its leading hotels, such as The Nam Hai in Hoi An and La Residence in Hue, have garnered international acclaim from such travel authorities as Condé Nast Traveler and Travel+Leisure magazines.

From left: Jussi Jaakonkari, incoming IGTWA President; Pham Van Que, Vietnamese Ambassador to Mexico; Dan Poppers, outgoing IGTWA President; Peter Walton, Chief Executive/IAGTO.

IAGTO, [www.iagto.com](http://www.iagto.com);

Ho Chi Minh Golf Trail, [www.hochiminhgolftail.com](http://www.hochiminhgolftail.com)

## PACIFIC DELIGHT NAMES PATRICIA LUK CHAIRMAN AND CEO; SOPHIA LUK NAMED PRESIDENT



PATRICIA LUK

Pacific Delight Tours' Patricia Luk, who worked beside her late husband, company founder Francis Luk, has been named the company's Chairman and CEO. Sophia Luk, a 28-year veteran of the company and its COO, has been promoted to the position of President. One of the foremost and largest tour operators to China, the Orient and Southeast Asia, Pacific Delight has always been a family-run travel company, established 37 years ago, offering a wide range of choices for travelers interested in exploring the cultural history and stunning scenery of these ancient lands. All of the company's senior management is based in their New York offices.



SOPHIA LUK

Patricia Luk took on the reins of the company several years ago as her husband spent more time fostering new destinations so the promotion to chairman and CEO is one of title as she continues to do what she has always done – overseeing the

company's financial performance as well as ensuring the continued growth of the company by working alongside and guiding the management team.

Sophia Luk has been with Pacific Delight Tours for 28 years, heading the U.S. sales force, directing marketing and sales before being promoted in 2001 to Senior VP, responsible for the company's marketing, product planning and pricing, and then COO in 2005,

adding oversight of reservations, sales and inventory control. Her new position will have her involved in every aspect of the company and working closely with their many vendors and suppliers.

Pacific Delight Tours, 800-221-7179, [www.PacificDelightTours.com](http://www.PacificDelightTours.com)

**Top 5 Reasons To Visit GUAM**

- 1. Guam: Where America's Day Begins**  
The island is the westernmost territory of the United States and 15 hours ahead of the eastern seaboard time zone. So, you are still in America but at the gateway to Asia. And major Asian cities are only a 3 hour flight away.
- 2. Break up a Long Haul Trip**  
Take a break from a long haul trip. It is less than the USA and superior in the relaxing, warm, and friendly hospitality of our island.
- 3. Some of the World's Best Diving**  
Divers can explore the only shallow reef life where two trips from two different world war sites on the ocean floor touching each other. The German ship SMS Condor from World War I and the Japanese fighter USS Aoba from World War II.
- 4. Be in the Deepest Ocean in the World**  
Take a boat ride south of Guam and swim in the deepest ocean in the world, the Mariana Trench.
- 5. Climb the tallest Mountain in the World**  
No one can reach the top of Mt. Lamlam, the highest point on Guam, in about 30 minutes and be rewarded with a panoramic view of the island's bay infers stretching out toward the north and a spectacular view of the southern coastline. The base of Mt. Lamlam Bay is a beautiful view of the Mariana Trench. So you can also tell your friends you climbed the tallest mountain in the world!

Guam: Where America's Day Begins  
1000 Pacific Drive, Honolulu, HI 96813  
Tel: (808) 534-0070  
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[www.pacificdelight.com](http://www.pacificdelight.com)

## AQUA-TREK'S BEQA SHARK DIVE WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD



Skal International of Spain have announced the winners for the 6th Annual Skal International Ecotourism Awards. Tourism businesses from all over the world applied for these prestigious awards, which represent the highest honors for best practice in travel and tourism.

Primary criteria for the award include conservation of nature, preservation of cultural heritage, community involvement, educational features, business viability and innovation.

Aqua-Trek Beqa's Fiji Shark Dive was declared the Winner of the Ecotourism Award for Tour Operators worldwide. In 1999 Aqua-Trek created a world-class Shark Dive in Beqa Passage near Pacific Harbour, Viti Levu.

The dive has attracted shark enthusiasts from around the world who can view up to eight species of shark, including multiple Bull Sharks and Tiger Sharks.

Since starting the dive Aqua-Trek has worked with Wainyabla village and the Fiji government to establish Locally Managed Marine Protected Areas to protect the sharks. A per-diver fee is paid to the village in exchange.

This award, along with Aqua-Trek's recent honor as one of the top three in the 2007 WTTC's Tourism for Tomorrow Conservation Awards, brings international recognition to both Aqua-Trek and the Fiji islands. Skal, a member of the World Tourism Organization, was founded in 1934 and is the largest organization of travel and tourism professionals in the world. Skal's international organization of industry leaders serves as a powerful force in the travel and tourism industry to initiate change and encourage the conservation of the environment in order to promote tourism and travel.

Aqua-Trek, [www.aquatrek.com](http://www.aquatrek.com)

## CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL VACATION FROM PLEASANT HOLIDAYS

Pleasant Holidays is inviting travelers to experience Japan during one of its most beautiful times of the year- Spring. One of the season's highlights occurs during the world-famous Cherry Blossom Festival, where visitors can observe the stunning, albeit brief, cycle of life as these trees bloom to signify the start of the spring.

Pleasant Holidays' nine-day/seven-night Cherry Blossom Festival vacation begins at \$2,690 ppdo and departs April 4, 2008.

This rate includes the Pleasant Holidays "Hot Deals" discount of

\$150 per booking.

The Cherry Blossom Festival vacation provides the following: round-trip airfare from Los Angeles, San Francisco or Seattle; three nights at the Keio Plaza, Tokyo; full-day Tokyo city tour; one night at the Hotel Kowakien, Hakone; full-day Mt. Fuji and Hakone tour; three nights at the New Miyako, Kyoto; half-day Kyoto city tour; full-day sightseeing including Hanami (Cherry Blossom viewing) party in Kyoto; daily breakfast, four lunches and one dinner; round-trip airport transfers; all service charges and hotel taxes; mileage credit on United Airlines; and \$100,000 automatic flight insurance.

Pleasant Holidays can customize any itinerary to suit a traveler's individual vacation tastes or budget. Additional hotels, travel dates and departure cities, as well as last-minute bookings, are also available to the destinations Pleasant Holidays serves. Certain taxes and restrictions apply.

Pleasant Holidays works with travel agencies nationwide and offers individual and group travelers a broad range of value-added, customized vacations featuring more than 1,100 leading hotels, 35 airlines, car rental options, and hundreds of activities in Hawaii, Mexico, Tahiti, Fiji, Cook Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Las Vegas. Travel professionals can earn reward points and cash from the Pleasant Holidays Travel Reward Incentive Program (TRIP), with more points and bigger rewards if they book clients' reservations at [PleasantAgent.com](http://PleasantAgent.com).

Pleasant Holidays, 800-448-3333, [www.pleasantholidays.com](http://www.pleasantholidays.com)

## KURT WACHTVEITL CELEBRATES 40 YEARS AS THE ORIENTAL, BANGKOK'S GENERAL MANAGER

Kurt Wachtveitl, legendary General Manager of The Oriental, Bangkok recently celebrated his record-breaking 40th anniversary with a lavish champagne party, hosted by guest relations veteran, Mrs. Ankana Kalantananda, who has herself been at the hotel for 60 years. Kurt Wachtveitl, or "Khun Kurt," as he is fondly known to his 1,000 strong staff, embarked upon his hospitality career at the age of 30, when he was appointed General Manager of the historic Oriental. With deep passion and a long-term vision, he has skillfully and successfully guided the hotel to international acclaim during his 40 year tenure. His dedication and commitment to the highest standards of service and hospitality at The Oriental, Bangkok recently earned him the most prestigious accolade at the Hotel Investment Conference Asia Pacific (HICAP), where he was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006.

Khun Kurt's 40-year legacy at The Oriental is indeed both unique and irreplaceable, and with typical reserve, he attributes his success to the commitment and dedication of the staff at this legendary hotel. "The inhabitants of great hotels are the most pampered creatures on earth. As a hotel manager you have no choice but to develop your staff. I am lucky that Thais have great potential for the hospitality industry because of their warmth and caring attitude. We are all looking forward to the future and to many productive years ahead."

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, [www.mandarinoriental.com](http://www.mandarinoriental.com)

## SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, CHENGDU CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING



Shangri-La Hotel, Chengdu opened as Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts' first hotel in Southwest China. More than 400 VIP guests gathered to commemorate the occasion, including acclaimed Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi.

Chengdu is not only the hometown of the panda, but is also home to the only panda breeding and research center in the world. One of China's top tourism cities, Chengdu offers many World Heritage listed scenic areas and various direct transportation into Tibet. Chengdu is the capital of Sichuan Province and was designated by the State Council as Southwest China's center of science, technology, commerce, trade and finance, and hub of transportation and telecommunications.

The 593-room hotel offers the largest guestroom size in the city center. Each room includes a spacious working area, a full marbled bathroom and wall-mounted LCD TV. The deluxe rooms feature views of Jinjiang River. In addition, 26 serviced apartments cater to the special needs of long-term guests. The Horizon Club rooms and suites offer guests panoramic views, personalized service and extensive privileges, such as use of the meeting room and

business center, a dedicated concierge, complimentary American buffet breakfast, afternoon tea and evening cocktails at the Horizon Lounge.

Inspired by the legend of Shangri-La in the novel *Lost Horizon*, CHI, The Spa at Shangri-La offers treatments and therapies based on Chinese and Himalayan well being rituals and traditions. In addition, the hotel's health club facilities include a gym, indoor swimming pool, outdoor tennis court and sauna.

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts,  
[www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com)

## NOBEL PRIZE RECIPIENT TO KEYNOTE PATA'S CEO CHALLENGE

Dr. RK Pachauri, Chairman of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize-winning United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), will be a keynote speaker at PATA's 'CEO Challenge 2008: Confronting Climate Change.'

PATA President and CEO Mr. Peter de Jong announced this development at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)'s Ministerial Summit on Tourism and Climate Change.

Building on the solid work conducted by the UNWTO through the many forums and conferences focusing on climate change, PATA's CEO Challenge will focus on sharing best practices and committing the travel and tourism industry to action.

Decision-makers from both the private and public sectors of the industry will gather in Bangkok, Thailand, next April to be challenged over a day and a half of interactive discussions to agree and commit to practical climate change solutions.

The IPCC is the co-recipient (with former

U.S. Vice President Al Gore) of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

As a respected academic and an articulate advocate of sustainable development, Dr Pachauri's participation will bring considerable substance and authority to the Challenge. Other industry leaders have also endorsed the CEO Challenge. Virgin Group Chairman Sir Richard Branson welcomes PATA's initiative to address the issue of global warming from the perspectives of both aviation and tourism. "Global warming is the biggest challenge facing mankind today and we must all do everything possible to reach a consensus on how to meet it," said Sir Richard. "PATA's CEO Challenge comes at a very timely moment."

Hosted by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and organized in partnership with the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) and the Burma Hotel Network (BHN), PATA's 'CEO Challenge 2008: Confronting Climate Change' will take place in Bangkok, April 29-30, 2008.

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), [www.PATA.org](http://www.PATA.org),  
[www.PATA.org/ceochallenge](http://www.PATA.org/ceochallenge)

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COVER PHOTO CREDIT: Cook Islands Tourism Corporation

## THE FARM AT CAPE KIDNAPPERS OPENS IN NEW ZEALAND



The Farm at Cape Kidnappers is now open. Located on the North Island in Hawke's Bay, one of New Zealand's most important wine districts, Cape Kidnappers has a rich history beginning with its discovery by Captain James Cook in 1769. The new lodge, or 'The Farm' as it is called, promises to be a five-star experience like its sister lodge Kauri Cliffs. Cape Kidnappers is set on a 6,000-acre sheep and cattle farm, which encompasses land reminiscent of Montana but plunges 800 feet straight into the sea.

The exterior of the lodge resembles a cluster of farm buildings, designed to blend with rustic feel of the area. The spacious cottages fanning out from the main building boast breathtaking views, with high ceilings, fireplaces, and large luxury bathrooms. There is a four bedroom owner's cottage with fireplaces, decks, pool, and butler's kitchen. Graceful French doors lead to large outdoor porches looking out at a stunning 180 degree Pacific panorama stretching from Art Deco city of Napier all the way to Black Reef to the south. There is a links-style golf course designed by Tom Doak, a spa and fitness center, and heated pool. Guests can enjoy wine tasting, hiking, and farm tours. Area activities include wine tours, fly fishing, hot air ballooning, Art Deco tour, horseback riding, river kayaking and biking.

The Farm at Cape Kidnappers, [www.capekidnappers.com](http://www.capekidnappers.com)

## AIR TAHITI NUI OFFERS INCLUSIVE ESCAPE TO TAHITI

From October 30 through April 9, travelers can embark on a "Great Escape" with a new package to Moorea that includes virtually everything needed for a leisurely holiday, including, for a limited time, complimentary meals. The almost-all-inclusive package features roundtrip air on Air Tahiti Nui from Los Angeles or New York, inter-island connections, and free breakfasts and dinners for two daily.

Air Tahiti Nui offers daily nonstop service from Los Angeles International Airport and twice-weekly direct service from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

In Tahiti and Her Islands, waters shimmer year-round and the air is warm. Though all the islands are stunning, Moorea is often described as the most beautiful place on earth. The mountains, volcanic spires and valleys make for a background not to be found

elsewhere, and slow currents, abundant marine life, and shallow waters make it a snorkeler's dream.

The new "Great Escape" package includes roundtrip international air on Air Tahiti Nui from LA or NY to Papeete, Tahiti, flower lei upon arrival, all transfers, inter-island ferry transportation and daily breakfast and dinner.

The six-night Great Escape from Los Angeles includes one night in Papeete at Sofitel Tahiti Resort in a superior mountain view room, five nights in Moorea at the Sofitel Moorea Beach Resort and Spa in a deluxe garden bungalow, and complimentary breakfast and dinner for two daily. Rates are from \$1,995 ppdo.

The five-night Great Escape from New York features five nights in Moorea at the Sofitel Moorea Beach Resort and Spa in a deluxe garden bungalow, and complimentary breakfast and dinner for two daily. Rates are from \$2,099 ppdo.

Sales period is valid through March 31, 2008 with travel from October 30, 2007 through April 9, 2008.

Air Tahiti Nui, 866-456-6000, 877-824-4846,

[www.airtahitinui-usa.com](http://www.airtahitinui-usa.com)

## GOWAY OFFERING AGENT CASH INCENTIVE FOR SELLING 'DOWNUNDER'

Goway Travel, North America's largest and most experienced tour operator to the South Pacific, is the only company to offer the "Waltzing Matilda," a 22-day guided exploration of the best of Australia and New Zealand.

Goway is offering agents the opportunity to earn cash for their sales. For all new bookings from December 1, 2007 until January 31, 2008, agents can earn up to \$100 per booking (\$50 per person) on any guaranteed departure of the Waltzing Matilda. For any subsequent bookings on the guaranteed departures, Goway will double the cash to up to \$200 (\$100 per person).

Virtually everything is included on Goway's HOLIDAYS OF A LIFETIME, including international and domestic airfare (excluding taxes), specially designed fun themes, unique dining experiences, a twin share guarantee, sightseeing, and first class hotels. Goway's professional tour guide meets the group in Los Angeles and escorts the tour throughout.

The Waltzing Matilda starts from \$9,065 per person and includes 19 nights, most meals, all touring and airfare. Australia and New Zealand are generally considered two of the safest travel destinations in the world, and the people of both countries also are considered to be among the most hospitable and friendly.

"Our extremely high passenger satisfaction virtually guarantees future repeat business," stated Emma Cottis, Product and Marketing Manager of the 37 year old company. "It is not unusual to see past travelers booking on three or all four itineraries. They are even requesting we create more HOLIDAYS OF A LIFETIME itineraries," she continued, "and they are very easy for agents to sell in the first place, offering very lucrative commissions."

Full details of Goway's "Waltzing Matilda" and additional HOLIDAYS OF A LIFETIME tours can be found in their up-side-down DOWNUNDER catalogue and on their website.

Goway, 800-387-8850, [info@goway.com](mailto:info@goway.com), [Goway.com](http://Goway.com)

## PACIFIC DELIGHT OFFERS SUPERVALUE PACKAGES TO JAPAN



Pacific Delight Tours is featuring the seven-day "Tokyo & Kyoto" SuperValue tour and the 12-day "Japan In-Depth" package, highlighting the two cities as well as the hidden gems of Hakone, Hiroshima, Okayama and Kurashiki. The air-inclusive programs include stays in superior first-class and deluxe hotels, transportation between Tokyo and Kyoto on the bullet train and local guides, at fares ranging from \$2,378 to \$2,698, ppdo for the seven-day "Tokyo & Kyoto" package and \$4,238 to \$4,558 for the 12-day "Japan In-Depth." A two-night stay at Kyoto's Gion Yoshi-ima, a traditional ryokan (inn), at rates from \$378 can be added.

Government-imposed taxes and fees, including the September 11th Security Fee of up to \$155, are additional.

The seven-day program is a study in contrasts, with three days in modern Tokyo and three in the more historical Kyoto, once the country's Imperial capital. In Tokyo, guests visit the Imperial Palace; the Asakusa Kannon Temple, Japan's largest and oldest Buddhist temple; and the Pearl Gallery, for shopping and viewing pearl cultivation. Time is set aside for independent pursuits and optional tours, including a daylong excursion to Mt. Fuji. In Kyoto, ancient Japan comes to life in the hundreds of temples that dot the landscape, with the tour focusing on the Kinakuji Temple's Golden Palace, set in a lush park with a reflecting pond; Nij Castle, with its rings of fortifications; and the Kitano Tenmangu Shrine. The 12-night "Japan In-Depth" itinerary adds Hakone in the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park; Hiroshima and the

Peace Memorial Park and Museum, with an excursion to Miyajima Island, a sacred Shintoism and Buddhism site; Okayama, a castle-town in the 16th to 19th centuries; and Kurashiki, a former center for rice harvesting.

Year-round departures include transpacific flights from Detroit and San Francisco with air add-on from dozens of North American gateways, transportation in Japan, daily breakfasts, excursions, transfers (as noted in the itinerary), fuel surcharges, hotel taxes, service charges and baggage handling. Land-only fares are available. Travelers receive \$100,000 flight insurance and frequent flyer miles when PDT tickets the air.

Pacific Delight Tours, 800-221-7179,  
www.PacificDelightTours.com

## SPACE AVAILABLE ON BEIJING & SHANGHAI PROGRAMS FROM RITZ TOURS

Space is still available on Ritz Tours' Beijing in a Week and Shanghai in a Week winter special programs with value-added pricing starting respectively at \$999 and \$1,099 ppdo.

Popular sites in Beijing include Tiananmen Square, the ancient Forbidden City, the Summer Palace at Kunming Lake, the historic Ming Tomb Museum, the Temple of Heaven, and the Great Wall.

Two free days of leisure allow travelers to stroll along the city's streets, souvenir shop, enjoy an optional excursion to the Hutongs of old town Beijing, and absorb centuries of ancient culture.

Priced from \$999 plus taxes ppdo, the Beijing in a Week winter special features roundtrip airfare from Los Angeles or San Francisco (starting at \$1,149 plus taxes per person from JFK); five-star hotel accommodations at the New Otani for five nights; daily breakfast; sightseeing in air-conditioned motorcoaches; meals and entertainment per the itinerary; and the services of knowledgeable tour guides.

In Shanghai, travelers can appreciate the dramatic landscape of China's largest city plus shopping on Nanjing Road, Yu Garden, and the waterfront Bund, a mile-long stretch along the Huangpu River. The itin-

erary also features a tour to the "Garden City" of Suzhou, well-known for its network of canals and rich silk fabrics.

Guests can enjoy two days of leisure to explore the city, souvenir shop, savor local cuisine, and absorb Shanghai's culture.

Priced from \$1,099 plus taxes ppdo, the Shanghai in a Week winter special features roundtrip airfare from Los Angeles or San Francisco (starting at \$1,249 plus taxes per person from JFK); five-star hotel accommodations at the Jinjiang Hotel for five nights; daily breakfast; sightseeing in air-conditioned motorcoaches; meals and entertainment per the itinerary; and the services of knowledgeable tour guides.

Departures for both programs are available daily now through February 10, 2008. For both tours, weekend surcharges apply. Travel insurance can be purchased separately.

Add-on airfares are available for departures from various cities in the U.S. and prices start from \$150 per person depending on gateway.

Ritz Tours, 800-900-2446,  
china@ritztours.com, www.ritztours.com

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## LHI EXPANDS INTO SHANGHAI WITH ITS FIRST BOUTIQUE HOTEL



Langham Hotels International (LHI) has announced the signing of a new management contract with Shanghai Hengshan (Group) Corp. for the launch of its first boutique hotel, The Langham, Yangtze Boutique, Shanghai. This is LHI's fourth new hotel announcement in China within the past six months, which also marks the start of the group's new boutique hotel line under The Langham brand.

The Langham Yangtze Boutique is located in the heart of Shanghai's central business district, close to The People's Square and adjacent to Nanjing Road. The Hotel will undergo a multi-million dollar renovation and re-open in mid-2008 as Shanghai's only five-star art deco boutique hotel. The Langham Yangtze Boutique will re-emerge with the 140-year legendary luxury hotel heritage of The Langham brand, reflecting the splendor of history and romance of Old Shanghai. Combining yesterday's charm with today's amenities, the hotel will offer enchanting hospitality where guests can experience an exclusive haven away from the hustle and bustle of the outside world.

The hotel features 101 rooms and suites, including Chuan Residences which are directly connected to the hotel's signature Chuan Spa. Chuan Spa will pamper guests with a journey to wellness through treatments based on Traditional Chinese Medicine philosophy.

All five restaurants and bars in The Langham Yangtze Boutique will be designed as destinations with distinctive characteristics. Japanese Izayaka Restaurant & Bar explodes with flavors of Japan, while T'ang Court creates a new dimension of innovation in Cantonese cuisine. Their western offerings include Ciao, an Italian all-day-dining restaurant, and Palm Court, which offers authentic English afternoon tea. For guests looking for a more contemporary atmosphere, Main Street Deli offers the best in Barista coffee, pastries, deli sandwiches served in a relaxed street side setting.

The rooftop column-free Star Room hosting up to 250 persons will add a touch of enchantment and magnificence to all meetings and events with Langham service and state-of-the-art facilities surrounded by classic art deco grandeur.

Langham Hotels International, [langhamhotels.com](http://langhamhotels.com)

## TIE THE KNOT "ECO-STYLE" AT THREE CAMEL LODGE IN MONGOLIA

According to a recent survey in Brides magazine, "green weddings" are the new thing, with 60 percent of respondents factoring the environment into their plans and 33 percent looking forward to going green on their big day. For a couple embracing their environmental passions, they can head for the Three Camel Lodge, a luxury "ger" camp in the heart of the Gobi Desert from Nomadic Expeditions, the pioneer of authentic cultural and adventure travel to Mongolia and beyond.

The Three Camel Lodge blends effortlessly into the natural beauty of the Gobi Desert. The Lodge's 45 felt gers – traditional nomadic tents – and fully equipped main lodge are laid across the desert floor and sheltered by a 54 million-year-old volcanic outcrop. Each deluxe ger has space for two guests as well as ready housekeeping, with ecological western-style bathrooms and shower facilities.

The Three Camel Lodge's eco-friendliness plays out in myriad details. Unprocessed natural stone was used for the buildings, and clay collected from the Gobi was molded and dried on-site for making tiles. Local artisans crafted roofs in accordance with the canons of Mongolian Buddhist architecture without using a single nail. Round-the-clock electricity to power the gers, restaurant, bathrooms and bar is drawn from renewable resources, including solar panels and wind power, while water is heated by fire. The camp's energy consumption is constantly re-evaluated for efficiency and measures are taken to reduce usage as much as possible. The Three Camel Lodge also employs only native Mongolians, with over half of the staff coming from the surrounding region. All supplies of transportation and food are local as well.

Accommodations at the Three Camel Lodge start at \$175-\$300 per night, including meals and guide service.

Nomadic Expeditions, 800-998-6634,

[www.nomadicexpeditions.com](http://www.nomadicexpeditions.com)

## A GOOD YEAR FOR TOURISM IN NEPAL

As pioneers of tourism in Nepal and with over 40 years of experience, Tiger Mountain has become synonymous with first class travel throughout this diverse country. 2007 saw the number of tourist arrivals to Nepal increase over the last several years of political upheavals. The finest weather in years, with clear blue skies guaranteeing superb views of the mountains has trekkers returning home fully satisfied with their trip to Nepal.

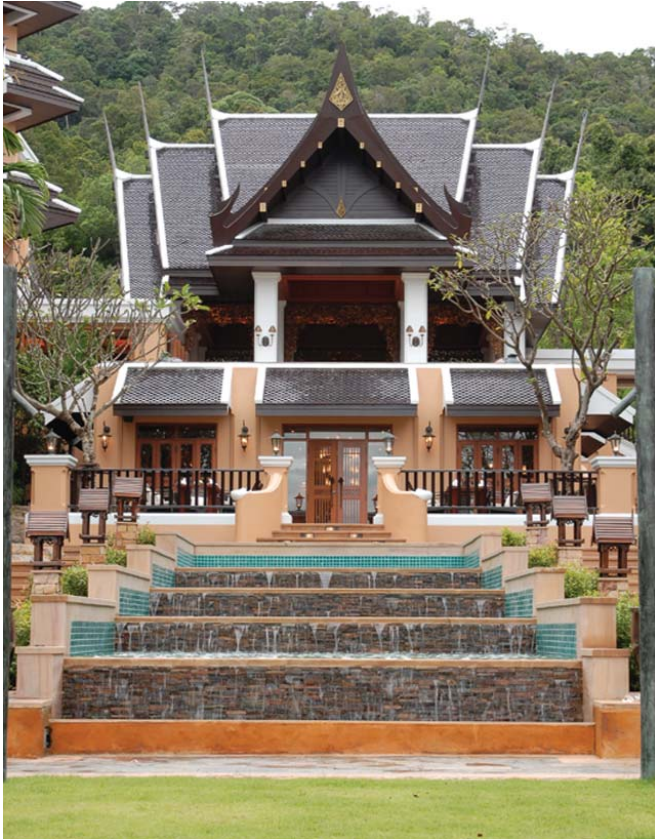
Tiger Tops Karnali Tented Camp in the Bardia National Park has been re-established. The camp is up and running and enjoys a grand view of the mighty Karnali River, where many migrant birds can be seen from early morning until dusk.

Mountain Travel handled more than 90 treks in Nepal alone and a record number of tourists to Tibet this year, which included the popular Mt. Kailash and Mansarovar Trek. Many walked in the footsteps of the great mountaineers of the early 20th century by trekking up to Everest Base Camp from the Tibet side. All in all, it's been a good year for tourism in Nepal.

Tiger Mountain, [info@tigermountain.com](mailto:info@tigermountain.com),

[reservations@tigermountain.com](mailto:reservations@tigermountain.com), [www.tigermountain.com](http://www.tigermountain.com)

## GUESTS ENJOYING NEW AMARI VOGUE RESORT, KRABI



The first guests at the new Amari Vogue Resort in Krabi were welcomed on November 1, 2007 and have been delighted with this new addition to Tub Kaek Beach.

Amari Vogue Resort is a newly built five-star Lanna-style resort on the beach, set amid tropical gardens. The resort offers 57 exclusive rooms, villas and suites, including 35 Deluxe, eight Honeymoon Deluxe and eight Royal Deluxe rooms, as well as four Ocean Villas and two luxurious Spa Suites. All rooms have private balconies or terraces, large comfortable beds and come complete with all modern conveniences for a perfect getaway.

Unique to this Amari property is a multi-level Sivara Spa, set over three floors, with spacious treatment rooms. The extravagant VIP room also features a Vichy Shower (or Rain Mist Shower) and the top floor is home to the spa suites, which have an adjoining personal treatment room. Outdoors, there is also a grand pavilion for Thai massage while enjoying the sea breezes.

Amari Vogue Resort boasts excellent restaurants and bars. Bellini Italian Restaurant, guests' favorite so far, specializes in Italian and seafood cuisine on the beachfront. Lotus Restaurant serves all-day Thai and international delicacies, while the Sunset Lounge is a great place for sundowners and offers a free internet service. The pool bar provides refreshments and snacks throughout the day.

The resort provides a fitness room, a steam room and a variety of swimming pools, including rock pool, Jacuzzi jet pool and children's pool.

Amari Hotels and Resorts, [www.amari.com](http://www.amari.com)

## YASAWA VOTED FIJI'S LEADING SPA RESORT

Yasawa Island Resort and Spa has been voted Fiji's Leading Spa Resort at the 14th World Travel Awards in Bangalore, India.

Dubbed the "Oscars of the Travel Industry," the awards are among the most prestigious available and are based on the votes of 167,000 travel professionals from more than 190 countries worldwide.

Last year Yasawa was named "Most Excellent Romantic Hideaway" in the Atlantic, Pacific & Caribbean in the *Condé Nast* Johansens Awards, while this year it was chosen among two of "Fiji's Best Hideaways" in the respected Andrew Harper's Hideaway Report and recognized by US magazine Forbes Traveler in a list of the world's Top Ten "beaches you've never heard of."

At Yasawa Island Resort and Spa families can take a tropical island escape without having to sacrifice luxury. Yasawa offers family time throughout the months of December and January, making it one of the only five-star resorts in Fiji to welcome families.

While parents relax, children will be able to enjoy all sorts of supervised games and activities, from water play, fish feeding and kite flying to crafts and songs drawn from the traditions of the Fijian people.

Special children's rates, children's meals and babysitting services will be available.

Yasawa Island Resort, [reservations@yasawa.com.fj](mailto:reservations@yasawa.com.fj),  
[www.yasawa.com](http://www.yasawa.com)

## NEW YORK PATA MEETING AND CELEBRATION



At the New York PATA (Pacific Asia Travel Association) meeting featuring a dinner presentation on "What's New in Thailand" and celebrating King Rama IX 80th birthday are from left to right: Isabelle Thompson, Global Travel, Brooklyn, NY; Jack Marraffi, Chairman, New York PATA; Diana Schneider, Snug Harbour Tours, NYC and Elizabeth Chin, ECI Travel, Fort Lee, NJ.

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