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ASEAN 50th ANNIVERSARY

50 MOST ENDURING ASEAN TRAVEL AGENCIES • THE FUTURE OF ASEAN TOURISM
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ESPA at Resorts World Sentosa





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Travel Hall of Fame

Since 2002, TTG Asia Media has honoured luminaries that have won the prestigious TTG Travel Award for at least 10 consecutive times for the same award title in the Travel Hall of Fame.

At present, these exceptional organisations and their years of induction are:

- Singapore Airlines (2002)
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- Hertz Asia Pacific (2005)
- Royal Cliff Hotels Group (2006)
- Star Cruises (2008)
- Sabre Travel Network Asia-Pacific (2009)
- SilkAir (2010)
- Lotte Tour (2011)
- Hong Kong International Airport (2013)
- Raffles Hotel Singapore (2013)
- Regal Airport Hotel (2015)
- Banyan Tree Spa (2015)
- Qatar Airways (2016)
- Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (2016)
- Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (2016)



TTG Asia Media is pleased to announce that it has set up a virtual TTG Travel Hall of Fame (www.ttctravelhof.com), which will enable us to showcase the accolades, artefacts and memorabilia of the region's most exceptional travel organisations in a far more effective way and to a global audience.

Happy birthday ASEAN

TTG Travel Trade Publishing is delighted to join AirAsia, MasterCard, ASEAN Tourism Association, GOASEAN, and ASEAN Centres in China, Japan and South Korea as strategic partners of Visit ASEAN@50 Golden Celebration 2017.

Based in Singapore, our relationship with the ASEAN public and private sectors goes back to 1974, our year of inception. We were there when ASEAN tourism cooperation was first formalised in 1976 with the establishment of the ASEAN SCOT (Sub-Committee on Tourism), when the first ATF was launched in 1981, when the first Visit ASEAN Year was flagged 25 years ago in 1992, to name just three of numerous milestones that bring back great memories of the personalities and events that shape ASEAN tourism. We are committed to supporting

Visit ASEAN@50 Golden Celebration throughout this year, starting with two special editions – this one which is debuting at ATF in Singapore and another in conjunction with TTGmice which was launched at IT&CMA last October. I'd like to thank our editors Raini, Karen and Xinyi for conceptualising and producing these special issues, and the whole team that worked on them. Throughout the year, you'll see us do more. But rest assured our commitment to ASEAN is for the long term, not just this year.

Congratulations ASEAN for the Golden Jubilee – many happy returns.

Darren Ng, Managing Director



The A-List stars of ASEAN tourism



Over the decades, ASEAN has produced its own 'A-List' stars in tourism. Under the ASEAN skies of politeness, diplomacy, camaraderie and joviality, travel & tourism has risen as a serious economic contributor to the 10 nations.

The hardest thing we've had to do with this special edition is to come up with the A-Lists, i.e. our ASEAN lists of achievements – 50 travel agencies that stand the test of time, 50 ASEAN homegrown hotel groups and 50 ASEAN tourism personalities who helped to shape ASEAN tourism. These are hard to do because for each category, there are of course more than 50 and it is inevitable we may miss out on that special someone in this edition.

But this is not the end of our effort to salute ASEAN tourism stalwarts. TTG Asia will have a dedicated ASEAN@50 page in each issue in 2017 and if you can think of

more agencies, homegrown hotel groups and personalities we should salute, please send us a note (ttgnewsdesk@ttgasia.com, subject line: ASEAN@50).

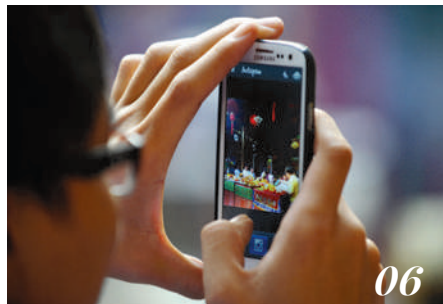
Our first issue, January, kickstarts the dedicated ASEAN@50 page with 50 best travel experiences, as seen by tour operators worldwide.

Our wish for ASEAN tourism? For the next generation to contribute towards the sustainable development of the industry in the next 50 years, just as their parents had.

Happy birthday, ASEAN.

Raini Hamdi, Senior Editor

Xinyi Liang-Pholsena, Editor



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Luxury Vacations Reimagined

Dream Cruises – the first-ever Asian luxury cruise line – brings your luxury vacation dreams to life with the grand debut of its inaugural ship Genting Dream in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, China. Here are some of the inspiring experiences you can look forward to.

1 | Cruise in comfort

The stunning 151,300-ton Genting Dream offers 1,674 well-appointed staterooms, and is capable of serving 3,400 guests, with a leading crew-to-guest ratio of 1 to 1.7. Besides spacious comfort and luxurious amenities, over 70% of staterooms come with their own balconies, so you can wake up to an ocean sunrise. There are also over 100 connecting staterooms to accommodate the needs of extended families and larger groups.

2 | All-new experiences

Holiday-makers can look forward to sublime experiences across the 18 decks: party under the stars at the first-ever Zouk club at sea; immerse in whisky culture at the world's first Johnnie Walker House at sea; and enjoy lavish productions such as "China's Got Talent – The Dream Experience". Or explore the ocean depths in a luxury submersible, and be dazzled by fireworks displays – the entertainment is non-stop!

* Subject to weather conditions



First-ever Zouk club at sea



Submersibles for ocean exploration

3 | Sheer rejuvenation

For those seeking pampering and energising moments, Crystal Life will surpass your every expectation. Featuring the largest Asian reflexology spa at sea, and 20 private rooms for Western spa and massage treatments, this is your destination for truly rejuvenating spa experiences. There's also a beauty salon, state-of-the-art fitness centre, and wellness cuisine to help you look and feel your best.



Over 35 restaurant and bar concepts

4 | Feast the world

Genting Dream is a gourmet's paradise at sea, serving up the finest Chinese regional, Asian and international cuisine. Indulge your palate at over 35 restaurant and bar concepts, including Bistro by Mark Best – the internationally-acclaimed Australian chef's first restaurant at sea. Many of these restaurants are located along the Boardwalk, a 610-metre wraparound promenade where you can dine al fresco to ocean views.

5 | Fun for families

Brace yourself for serious fun on Genting Dream. Take the plunge at the 6-slide Waterslide Park, master the ropes course, or scale the mountainous rock climbing wall. Young children will be immersed in an exciting range of activities and classes at Little Pandas Club. And with cinemas, bowling alley, video arcade and more – this is where memories are made.



6-slide Water Park

6 | Dream Palace

The ultimate luxury cruising experience

Dream Palace is an exclusive enclave on Genting Dream, composed of its own suites and private facilities. Offering style and impeccable service at every turn, this is luxury cruising at its finest.



The 142 elegantly furnished suites provide the perfect setting for an incomparable experience at sea. They include two Garden Penthouses that are 224 square metres each – among the most spacious duplex suites at sea.

Dream Palace guests will also experience an exceptional level of hospitality from our dedicated European butler service, on call 24 hours a day to cater to your every comfort.



Dream Palace Privileges

- 24-hour personal European butler service
- Priority reservations for specialty restaurants, shows and spa treatments
- Exclusive access to Genting Club, with private lounges and complimentary dining
- Inclusive menu in a specialty restaurant each night
- Dedicated private outdoor deck and pool

A common vision for a brighter future

As ASEAN marks its golden jubilee this year, tourism experts and industry observers assess the bloc’s strengths and challenges so far, and share their thoughts on ways to secure a brighter future for the region



Clockwise from top left: Joesayhello; 1000 Words; Ekkachai; Ikumi; Stephanie Bidouze (Shutterstock.com)



Reflecting on a golden anniversary

Fraser Thompson

Taking stock at ASEAN’s progress so far, the director of strategy advisory firm AlphaBeta offers his recommendations on what else is needed for the region to achieve full integration

ASEAN has enjoyed remarkable economic progress in recent years. If it were a single country, it would be the sixth-largest economy in the world. Combined GDP has doubled since 2007 and now stands at almost US\$2.5 trillion.

Perhaps more impressive is what has not happened. Given the incredible diversity of languages, religions, culture, economy and political systems in ASEAN, it is remarkable that not only has there been an absence of regional conflict, there’s been steady albeit slow progress towards further integration.

As ASEAN turns 50, now is an opportune time to reflect on how far it has come and where the unfinished business in integration lies. Four areas are particularly worth highlighting:

Infrastructure

Following the Asia Financial Crisis of 1997–98, a significant infrastructure deficit emerged as ASEAN member states sought to rein in current account deficits and capital account flows.

Investment as a share of GDP

has not returned to pre-1997 levels in most ASEAN economies and more than US\$110 billion – roughly two to six times the annual spend – has to be invested yearly to address infrastructure needs.

Both expenditure and productivity have to improve, while new approaches to dealing with the growth of middle-weight cities need to be implemented. Fortunately, The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 is addressing key bottlenecks, including the lack of a clear pipeline of projects.

Movement of people

While restrictions on intra-regional travel are largely a thing of the past, many non-ASEAN nationals still require visas, even for short-term business or leisure stays. Airline routes are also restricted across the region.

Beyond tourism, there is still significant need to progress on enhancing mobility of skilled labour in the region.

Trade

Two thousand non-tariff measures remain despite a survey of

businesses naming such barriers the top priority area to enhance regional economic integration.

Further attention is also needed to improve the competitiveness of customs and logistics networks, where costs remain far higher than international benchmarks. Progress on border agency cooperation, advanced rulings, single windows and other policy initiatives will be crucial for ASEAN to become a truly connected regional powerhouse.

Geopolitics

Pertinent issues include overlapping territorial and maritime claims, e.g. South China Sea; rising defence spending; displacement of people; domestic political processes; and other transnational issues. The goodwill built by ASEAN over 50 years will be more keenly tested than ever.

The potential of ASEAN is enormous. How ASEAN deals with the four key challenges highlighted above will determine to a large degree whether its 100th anniversary is as golden as the 50th.



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IS HONORED TO BE
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ASEAN ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

The world recognises ASEAN as one of the most preferred united yet diverse and exciting tourism destinations.

As the world's leading hotel operator offering the largest brand portfolio in the hotel industry, our Feel Welcome brand promise reflects the commitment to offer the warmth of ASEAN hospitality to all travellers.

AccorHotels has 14 brands with 240 hotels across 9 countries in ASEAN, ranging from great value economy, popular midscale and the ultimate in luxury.



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SEBEL

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Greater push for responsible tourism

Graham Harper

As director of Educational and Responsible Travel, a specialist arm of Buffalo Tours, Harper states that the development of ASEAN's growing ecotourism sector must be matched with real actions and responsibility

Environment-friendly tourism has rapidly become an all-encompassing term, describing vague ideas that have little to do with ecological concerns.

When "ecotourism" is merely used as a buzzword to describe a certain brand of adventure or low-budget tourism, it becomes "green-

washing". This kind of marketing ends up becoming counterproductive to sustainability and leaves the traveller disappointed.

If the expected growth of ASEAN tourism takes place, today's actions must be considered to ensure a thriving tomorrow. ASEAN needs to promote environment-friendly development through responsible tourism initiatives, which take into account the economic, social and environmental challenges of tourism. The importance of this cannot be stressed enough.

People are unlikely to constantly think about sustainability issues while on vacation. However, they expect their travel agent to have already considered these issues and taken steps to provide a safe, green and fun vacation.

"Greenwashing" is the marketing spin on products and services to make them seem eco-friendly, when the actual case may be far from that. Ecotourism, eco-lodges and even eco-transport are all susceptible to this.

There is no doubt that marketing is important in any competitive industry, but if what is inside the package does not live up to the decoration on the outside, the result is disappointment and unmet client expectations.

To meet client expectations and ensure a sustainable future, ASEAN must go beyond mere spin.

The first step is to clean up

our act by using fewer resources, becoming more efficient and lowering energy consumption. This is at the heart of environment-friendly tourism development. Any company can do this by taking part in one of the many compliance programmes currently available – ISO 14001, ASEAN Tourism Standards and Travelife are just a few examples. ASEAN already supports such standards through national and regional tourism authorities and must continue to do so.

Next, we need to look at the bigger picture and the entire supply chain. Supply chain analysis allows a company to ensure their products are in fact beneficial, with no hidden side-effects. Child-protection, animal-protection and anti-human trafficking are just a few examples of the wide range of issues that need to be considered.

Purchasing and contract processes are crucial to ensuring suppliers can meet and exceed minimum targets and standards. Assisting groups such as International Tourism Partnership provide excellent toolkits, so companies can take in the big picture to ensure that tourism development is not just green, but also proactive and just.

In 2015, Buffalo Tours made animal welfare and the protection of elephants a top priority. We conducted an audit of all the camps we work with, across sev-



Competition creates strength and pushes us all to be better, but it does not necessarily mean cut-throat practices – it also means being generous.

en countries, and implemented marketing strategies to promote the demand for humane elephant experiences.

That brings us to the final, and perhaps most challenging step: be generous.

Let's face it, tourism is a competitive industry. Companies, attractions and even countries within ASEAN compete for tourism revenue. Competition creates strength and pushes us all to be better, but it does not necessarily mean cut-throat practices – it also means being generous.

Generous enough to pay taxes and fees to ensure governments have the revenue to invest in infrastructure. Generous enough to pay competitive salaries and compensation packages to attract skilled and dynamic employees. Generous enough to support local initiatives that improve our communities, protect nature and help preserve local cultures.

By being generous we can create success for our company and for our wider communities and the environment.

And going beyond the spin, cleaning up our act, looking at the big picture and being generous, ASEAN can succeed with environment-friendly tourism development. The economic, social and environmental challenges of tourism can be met by proactive measures today for a strong industry tomorrow.



Infrastructure a determinant of future development

David Scowsill

The president and CEO of World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) urges additional infrastructure investment in order to meet the needs of ASEAN's projected tourism growth

supports over 32 million jobs across the 10 countries.

ASEAN's prospects are strong. Tourism growth is stimulated by the region's favourable climate; proximity to large outbound markets like China; good connected hubs for travel within and outside of the region; price competitiveness by standards of developed economies; and good infrastructure by standards of emerging economies.

Nevertheless, a WTTC report currently ranks ASEAN travel and tourism infrastructure only ahead of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. As the region's tourism sector continues to grow, it is important to invest ahead of the curve to meet future demand.

Travel & tourism investment in ASEAN

The *Travel & Tourism investment in ASEAN* report shows that over the next 10 years, ASEAN will see US\$782 billion in tourism investment, making up 7.4% of all investment in the region and one in 10 of all global tourism investment dollars.

We estimate 95% of current investment spending to be dominated by five major destinations – Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia – which together account for over 80% of



ASEAN travel and tourism infrastructure currently only ranks ahead of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. As the region's sector grows, it is important to invest ahead of the curve to meet demand.

ASEAN's international arrivals and contribution to GDP.

Investment requirements differ from country to country. Our research shows that Myanmar, Cambodia and the Philippines, are classified as infrastructure-constrained by poor existing infrastructure and high forecast demand growth, hence they are at risk of under-investing.

In comparison, Singapore and Indonesia are classified as 'stars' – the former for its high-quality existing infrastructure and the latter due to the government's prioritisation of tourism that translates into investment.

Malaysia is identified as a balanced market, while 'improving' Vietnam and Laos need to target future investment appropriately.

Thailand, on the other hand, must maintain a focus on investment and not be complacent as projected tourism demand is high.

Best practices in investment and moving ahead

In recent years, some ASEAN countries have prioritised investment in their tourism infrastructure.

Singapore built Universal Studios, Malaysia created the Langkawi Cable Car and Aquaria KLCC, while Thailand built the new Suvarnabhumi Airport and renovated Don Mueang Airport in

Bangkok.

However, a lot more can still be done. Tourism investment can take several forms and it is vital that each country determines an appropriate way forward based on its own needs and objectives.

Myanmar, Cambodia and the Philippines need to expand capacity, which means increasing accommodation, airport capacity and tourist facilities, while established tourism economies such as Indonesia and Singapore need to reinvest its tourist products to attract return travellers and catalyse additional demand.

Others need to ensure they continue investment in existing infrastructure in order to maintain and improve functionality and quality through refurbishment and upgrading.

What's more, investment in infrastructure does not just mean building new airports, roads and hotels, but also enhancing banking infrastructure, mobile penetration and healthcare systems.

WTTC hence calls upon the governments of ASEAN countries to acknowledge the importance of sustainable and smart investments into the tourism sectors for future demand growth, and create quality jobs and tax revenues that will contribute strongly to their economies.

Tourism is a vital part of ASEAN economies. Our sector accounts for over 12% of the region's GDP, nearly four percentage points above most other regions. It also



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4-NIGHT PHUKET CRUISE

Singapore Departures:
2017 Mar 11, Apr 6

5-NIGHT BANGKOK CRUISE

Singapore Departure:
2017 Mar 29

5-NIGHT PENANG AND PHUKET CRUISE

Singapore Departures:
2017 Mar 6, 19, 24



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A hotbed for travel startups

Tim Russell

The founder of Tineri, an interactive B2B mobile app for travel providers, illustrates why ASEAN is a fertile ground for travel startups

South-east Asia is renowned as a perfect base for startup companies. A combination of low cost of living, a large pool of local developer talent, an established and rapidly-growing startup ecosystem, and a large number of potential markets in a relatively compact area has made our region a hotbed for startup activities. This is also true in the travel

sector. Skift's 2015 *Manifesto on the Future of Travel* wrote that "the ASEAN nations are where the future of travel will be tested". As a Thailand-based startup founder, I couldn't agree more.

Growing visitor numbers

In 2009, over 65 million tourists visited the region, but by 2013 that number grew to just under 100 million. And between 2009 and 2013, intra-ASEAN tourist numbers grew from 31 million to 43 million.

It's a similar story for outbound markets. The region's increasing affluence, combined with a reduction in the cost of travel and the way the Internet has made research and booking a lot easier, means this is the first generation of South-east Asians for whom travel is a regular pastime.

Travel-obsessed location

South-east Asia's geography and the presence of numerous LCCs make it easy and affordable to visit various countries in the region. It's always been a popular backpacking destination, and also a great location for travel startups.

Travel is also a major GDP contributor to the region. There is already a huge ecosystem of tour operators/DMCs, travel agents, airlines, hotels, transportation

providers, and other ancillary sectors, all with numerous pain points waiting to be solved by innovative startups.

High mobile penetration

Already, mobile Internet search is outstripping conventional forms, and mobile booking is growing faster than other channels.

With technology such as mobile itinerary apps and travel companions, mobile hotel check-in, and keyless entry being rapidly adopted, mobile will soon dominate the industry.

Mobile penetration in ASEAN is over 109%, rising to 126% in Cambodia and 145% in Vietnam.

Social media penetration

The sharing economy and ubiquitous booking are two of the industry's biggest disruptors – and both are inextricably linked to social media. Many hotels already embed booking engines on their Facebook pages and TripAdvisor now offers live bookings.

ASEAN, with over 150 million Facebook users, will be at the heart of this revolution in how we research, book and share our travel experiences.

Entrepreneurial culture

ASEAN's young, increasingly well-educated population and long-established entrepreneurial spirit

make it a fertile breeding ground for travel startups, while its low living and operating costs make it a popular base for startups from outside the region.

Innovative sites such as HotelQuickly, Grab, and Eatigo are all ASEAN-based, and the number is rapidly growing as young people with little experience in the traditional way of doing things reshape the way people book their trips and share their travel experiences.

If there is a downside, it's the lack of commitment from governments to supporting a real startup culture, particularly when foreigners are involved.

In Thailand, foreign startups need to employ four local staff for every foreign work permit – something beyond most early-stage startups. It's a similar situation in Vietnam, where rules on foreign ownership are also restrictive.

As more foreign startups flock to the region things will no doubt improve, but while governments here talk about supporting startups, they have been slow to put their words into positive action.

Nevertheless, a perfect storm of rapidly growing tourist numbers and a young, tech-savvy entrepreneurial population is turning South-east Asia into a hotbed of travel innovation like no other.



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Optimism high on strong supply

Jesper Palmqvist

STR Global's area director Asia-Pacific provides an overview of how major hotel markets in ASEAN have performed in the last year and shares his projections ahead

Hotels in South-east Asia recorded a 6.7% increase in demand based on September 2016 year-to-date data, largely aided by a 9% increase in international arrivals in 1H2016 according to UNWTO. Occupancy levels have risen 2.8% as the region's supply growth slowed slightly (+3.8%).

Meanwhile, hotels are struggling with ADR, as fluctuating currency exchanges have contributed to a 2.2% drop to US\$110.60, the region's lowest since 2011. As a result, RevPAR increased only moderately (0.6%).

Country focus

Thailand

For September year-to-date 2016, Thailand's occupancy rose 4.7% to 76.8%, its highest level since 2010. Meanwhile, ADR increased 1.1% to 3,549 baht (US\$99.70), leading to a 5.9% increase in RevPAR to 2,727 baht.

The country's hotel market has recorded growth following the political situation in 2013-2014, owing to efforts by the Tourism Authority of Thailand. An increase in flights from several markets, especially China, is expected to further boost arrivals.

Malaysia

Malaysia's performance has been driven by occupancy (+4.1% to 63.9%), while ADR grew at a slighter pace (+0.9% to RM350; US\$79.30), resulting in a 5.1% increase in RevPAR to RM223.66.

Demand rose 7.6% year-to-date, more than double its supply growth (+3.4%). This is considerable performance, since the Puchong bombing in June led to several nations, including the US,

the UK and Canada, issuing travel advisories.

Singapore

Supply growth has impacted Singapore's performance. With almost 5,500 more rooms in the market than end-2015, ADR declined 2% and RevPAR dropped 2.5% to S\$231.90 (US\$163), the country's lowest since 2011.

Hotels also hit a roadblock when the Zika virus spread to Singapore in August, leading to several countries issuing travel advisories. This resulted in Singapore's lowest actual occupancy (77.9%), ADR (S\$304.60) and RevPAR (S\$237.26) for the month of September since 2010.

STR forecasts Singapore's RevPAR to decline 1.8% for 2017. Barring unforeseen events, the market should make a gradual comeback to growth in 2018.

Vietnam

International arrivals rose 124% from January to July 2016, compared with the same period last year. This was largely due to an influx of Chinese visitors, accounting for roughly 31.5% of arrivals. Hotels saw a double-digit growth in RevPAR (+11.6%) for September 2016 year-to-date.

After Malaysia and Indonesia, Vietnam has the region's third biggest room pipeline. Of the 22,000 rooms in development



There seems to be unified opinion that the incoming volume of projects in the mid and upper midscale range will not saturate the market.

spanning 75 projects, 7,200 (26 properties) are expected to open within the next two to three years.

Indonesia

Similar to Singapore, Indonesia's hotel market is facing significant increases in supply.

Since the start of 2016, 64 new properties have opened, accounting for almost 10,000 rooms. Most of these are in the upper midscale category, while development in the luxury and upper upscale classes has been more modest. This appears to have impacted ADR, which dropped 6.6% to one million rupiah (US\$76.20) for the first nine months of 2016. Occupancy however, grew 3.2% to 59.6%.

Final thoughts

We can expect growth across most markets in the short to medium term. There seems to be unified opinion that the incoming volume of projects in the mid and upper midscale range will not saturate the market.

With a growing middle class in markets like Indonesia and Vietnam, and a historical supply gap for those chain scales in Singapore, we could see some shifts in market landscapes in the near future, but hotel development looks to be keeping pace with these changes.



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ASEAN's most enduring travel agencies

From their humble origins, these companies have put in the hard work over the years to become the leading lights and powerhouses of South-east Asia's travel business. See who's been around for at least three decades in this A-List. Now isn't that some achievement?



1. AA TRAVEL SERVICE



When most looked inwards, Sanguan Phornprathipdeva reached out. Establishing AA Travel Service in 1980, he capitalised on Thais' interest in exploring the world during a time of economic growth.

AA's offerings now include inbound services, particularly for golf tourists from Japan, MICE and seminars, and airline ticketing. The company puts staff training as the bedrock of its reputation and has taken care to foster strong links within the industry to access competitive rates.

As president since its inception, Sanguan has been a driving force behind the company and has held a number of positions with national travel agent bodies.

2. ADKINS TRAVEL



Founded by Pacita Escudero St Onge, Adkins Travel became an IATA member in 1951, handling mainly outbound trips for reli-

gious orders and inbound missionary groups. When St Onge passed away, management was turned over to old timers, including Flor Bilan and Adelia Cortez.

Owner Francisco Lim, who first learned the ropes of the trade at Adkins Travel from 1973 to 1979, acquired the company years later in 2007, and retained Bilan and Cortez who both remain active consultants to this day.

Adkins still caters to religious and missionary groups, but this now accounts for about five per cent of business as the corporates pie has grown to 85 per cent, with the remainder being FITs.

3. ANEKA KARTIKA TOURS



Tapping new markets and adapting to emerging travel trends have been vital for Aneka Kartika Tours, founded in 1972. It is why, according to managing director Welly Njotowidjojo, the agency prospered as the market shifted to a higher proportion of Asian travellers.

"Our story of product devel-

opment began from the run-of-the-mill itineraries and classic overland tours to more in-depth cultural exploration and adventure tours," he said.

Handling a Singapore president's trip to East Java was one highlight, as was the meeting between a Philippine senator and the president of a neighbouring country in Bali.

The 1997 economic crisis and subsequent situations heavily affected European traffic. "We considered ourselves lucky to have already expanded our mar-

Below: The beginnings of Adkins Travel in the Philippines



ket to Asia, particularly from neighbouring ASEAN countries."

For the future, Welly aims to focus more on niche products, but not necessarily upmarket ones.

4. ANTAVAYA



Established in 1965 for Indonesian badminton fans, Vayatour has been part of CT Corp since 2007. In 2012, the AntaVaya brand was created from two legacy brands: Vayatour became AntaVaya Corporate Travel while Anta Tour is now AntaVaya Leisure.

AntaVaya Leisure is focused on retail and tour business, while AntaVaya Corporate Travel streamlined its core business and established new units such as *umrah*, executive coach, PCO and creative events.

"We would like to optimise the synergy of companies within CT Corp and provide an integrated solution for all our customers," said AntaVaya Corporate Travel executive director Bagus Priatna.

"We aim to be the travel and event powerhouse of Indonesia."

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BLR IS REJUVENATING

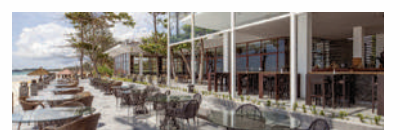
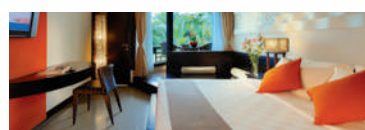
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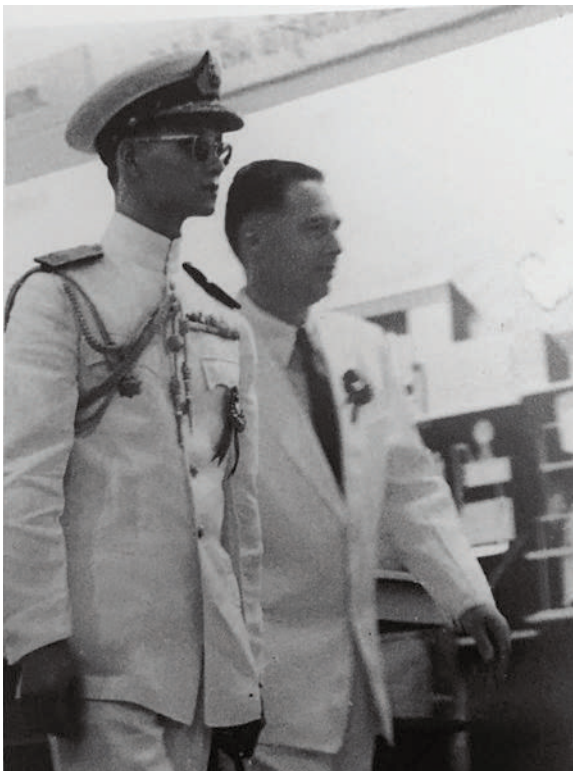


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From far left: Thailand's late king Bhumibol Adulyadej with a Diethelm Travel general manager at the Trade and Constitution Fair in Bangkok in 1956; Chan Brothers Travel's group managing director Anthony Chan

to move consumers up the value chain and reap higher-yield travellers through continual product innovation and service differentiation.

"We are implementing strategies to leverage technology to improve service, increase efficiency, broaden market reach and change our business model."

5. **ASIAN OVERLAND SERVICES TOURS & TRAVEL**



It was an uphill battle for group managing director Anthony Wong when he started the company in 1976. Three founding partners quit and left him with debt in 1981, but his trailblazing tour ideas and sharp business acumen paid off.

Wong believes product innovation, long-term planning and staff welfare are some vital factors for his success. He said: "Bosses must be hands-on to have bottom-up inputs and understanding with his frontliners... Symbiotic relationships with other industry players have also been hugely instrumental to our success."

Now the agency boasts 120 staff in Kuala Lumpur, Langkawi and Sabah plus marketing offices in India, Sri Lanka, Indochina and Indonesia.

Recent changes have focused on cruises, with 2013 seeing the first ground handling of 1,600 passengers. By 2015, the agency managed 38,000 passengers.

Apart from its headquarters in Makati, Baron has a full service branch in Cebu, three tour desks in Manila, representative offices in Japan and partners in all major international cities.

bound division that provides services to corporate and institutional clients, and maintains offices in Manila, Boracay, Cebu and Bohol.

6. **BARON TRAVEL CORP**



Baron Travel Corp celebrates its golden anniversary in 2017 as one of the Philippines' leading agencies. The lead company in the Arpan Group, Baron's systematic and personalised approach attracts new and repeat clients including tour operators, FITs, companies and organisations.

President and CEO Marilen Yaptango said the 50-year-old agency has lasted so long because "we take our customers seriously. We take care and take pride in all our team members, who in turn take care of all our clients."

7. **BAYU BUANA TRAVEL SERVICES**



Bayu Buana has been around since 1972, but president director Agustinus Pake Seko said the rapid emergence of LCCs and OTAs, among other changing trends, have disrupted the travel market.

Seko hence sees the swift strategy switch to digital as the company strength. "As a team we managed to pull through quick and fast, and stay relevant in the marketplace 44 years on."

In 1989, Bayu Buana was the first travel agency listed on the Jakarta Stock Exchange. It partnered with BCD Global Corporate Travel Management in 2006 to catalyse its foray into the sector.

Seko said the agency plans to go regional. "The concept of an ASEAN company is very appealing. We aspire to grow organically, but not discounting any acquisition along the way."

9. **CHAN BROTHERS TRAVEL**



Chan Brothers started with three men and has grown to become Singapore's largest and most established agency, backed by a rich history of over 50 years and more than 300 associates globally.

In 1983, Anthony Chan took over as group managing director, introducing the successful "hotel-on-wheels" concept for European tours, and popularising Australia and New Zealand among Singaporeans.

In 1999, the company's first website was launched, and in 11 months took in 25,000 bookings and close to S\$30 million (US\$20.7 million) in sales. In 2015, it marked its 50th anniversary with an exclusive three-night cruise in Malaysia for 2,000 guests.

Chan said: "We constantly seek

10. **CPH TRAVEL AGENCIES**



The late Jimmy Choo Poh Hin pioneered the industry in Borneo, taking guests deep into the island's rugged terrain.

The company he set up in Kuching in 1968 with 15 people is today led by his son, William Choo Fah Kui, with 50 staff handling an average of 8,000 clients annually.

Choo said the company has survived and thrived because of its firm belief in the value of its staff. "Good management and good judgment also play a part."

Accolades include being named the best destination management company in 2013 by the Sarawak Convention Bureau and a year later winning the Sarawak Tourism Board's best tour operator award.

11. **DIETHELM TRAVEL GROUP**



Etto Wettstein founded Diethelm Travel Group in April 1957 in Thailand as an offshoot of the Diethelm Keller Group. He led 19 people at the time, when it had one market. Crucial to early success was being then Swissair's travel agent in Thailand.

Diethelm acquired STA Travel Holding in 1979 and has a 50 per cent stake in the Globetrotter Group. Having long run an internal incentives department, it launched Diethelm Events in 1999 as a dedicated MICE division.

After nearly 60 years, Diethelm has grown considerably. It now boasts 600 employees in Asia and has expanded to serve 12 markets, led by group managing director Lisa Fitzell who boasts over 30 years of industry experience.

12. **DYNASTY TRAVEL**



Dynasty Travel was incorporated in 1978 as a specialist in Australia and New Zealand packages. The firm has since grown from fewer than 10 people to a full-service retail and corporate travel company, with 120 staff generating an average annual sales turnover of S\$100 million.

Being proactive and attuned to trends in the travel landscape were critical to staying a market leader, said managing director



Below: Dynasty Travel's head office in Singapore

Clifford Neo. Dynasty Travel in 2012 launched the iPhone app, iDynasty, and rolled out the iPad mini booking system in February 2014.

It was awarded the prestigious Enterprise 50 award in 2013, and in 2015 received the Singapore Service Excellence Medallion Award.

13. FAR EASTERN TRAVEL AGENCY



Far Eastern Travel Agency (FETA) is the country's first travel services provider, founded in 1946 by Juan and Leony Limjuco for American military personnel, civilians and their families in post-World War II Philippines.

FETA evolved to become the agency for the elite and affluent and as travel became part of the business sector, it expanded to cater to companies and organisations. FETA is also affiliated with various NTOs in Asia, and handles inbound and outbound, leisure and corporate travel.

Today, the scion of the Limjuco clan, general manager Oliver Sison, keeps the 71-year firm's leg-



Above: Brunei's Freme travel group

acy alive with the credo of coming out with quality products and services "that we can stake our name on".

14. FREME



Starting in 1971 with a small office and three staff, it was incorporated as a private limited company by 1982 and now boasts five offices, 94 full-time staff and a turnover of around B\$50 million

(US\$34.6 million). A milestone moment came in the early 1980s after chairman Sharifuddin Pengiran Metali joined. Freme also won a contract from Brunei Shell Petroleum to handle the company's corporate travel, which it did for the next three decades.

"In the following years, we saw a quantum jump in sales and business volume and became the Brunei partner for Carlson Wagonlit Travel," said managing director Michael Lee.

The company opened the Freme Adventure Park in early 2015. Future plans include leveraging online and social media platforms to engage with customers.

15. GIAMSO INTERNATIONAL TOURS



Giamso Tours has gone from two people in a shophouse in 1979 to 35 full-time staff today, and boasts exclusive partnerships with the trade to gain a competitive edge.

Giamso Tours has also invested significantly in worldwide partnerships and cutting-edge system technology, establishing a system offering the best combination of travel products to meet customers' changing demands.

16. GOLDEN TOURWORLD TRAVEL



Golden Tourworld Travel started in 1985 as a small tour operator handling unique outbound packages tours. Today it has 80 personnel.



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Managing director Jason Lim put success down to the importance of teamwork. “We also treat the staff well which is why we have many long-serving staff.”

A turning point came in the early 1990s when the company began selling Cunard cruises. It has since developed the growing middle- and upper-middle class customer base to sell tours to Europe, Central Asia, the US, and exotic countries like Cuba and Mexico. Future plans include expanding further into exotic destinations.

17. GO VACATION



Raymond Honings began LTU Asia in 1983 as an airline supervision agent. In 1996, Hans-Peter Tuggener joined from Diethelm and established the DMC side.

In the early days, 20 staff focused on the German market, but now 16 offices in Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam work with 200 agents worldwide.

Christoph Mueller, who joined in 1997, became managing director after Tuggener’s retirement in 2002. He points to the expansion into Indonesia with a joint venture in 2007, and the subsequent rebranding as Go Vacation, as turning points, followed by the Sri Lanka operation in 2010 and Vietnam in 2016.

Mueller said the partnership with Der Touristik allows Go Vacation to secure large-scale business, but puts the long-term success down to the “perfect mix of local and expatriate tourism professionals working with us for many years.”

18. HOLIDAY TOURS & TRAVEL



Holiday Tours & Travel started out small with fewer than 10 staff in 1975, but now has more than 300

staff in major centres nationwide. Known for corporate ticketing, incentive trips, outbound and inbound travel, the company has been guided by the board’s values of innovation.

Managing director Thomas Chong said the affiliation with Carlson Wagonlit Travel since 2003 added to the agency’s reputation for expertise in corporate travel.

“On the leisure travel front, our forte lies in free and easy travel where we consistently innovate our product offerings to stay relevant in the market and also carve a niche for ourselves by leveraging new market opportunities such as sports tourism,” he said.

19. HONG THAI TRAVEL



Affiliated with Hong Thai Travel in Hong Kong, managing director Jackie Wong and general manager Alex Chan established Hong Thai Travel Singapore in 1985 with only four staff specialising in inbound tours.

The outbound department was set up in 1989 and deputy general

manager Peggie Chung took over in 1998 and expanded the outbound business to 150 staff today.

Chung said a comprehensive range of products was vital to stay competitive. “This way, we can be sure our customers would be able to find a travel product to match their needs and we will not be greatly affected should some destinations encounter slump periods.”

A customer care team also takes the time to consolidate feedback from customers after their tours to keep the company’s product and service standards in check.

20. INTERNATIONAL TOURS CENTRE



International Tours Centre (ITC) has evolved since it began as a ticketing agency in 1969, but the corporate market remains its focus nearly five decades later.

ITC has become a one-stop shop with inbound and outbound tour services, event organising and lifestyle travel consulting. Yet corporate clients account for four in five customers, while 15 per cent

Above left: Kris International Traveltours in Malaysia
Above right: Go Vacation’s Christoph Mueller (centre) at the launch of Go Vacation Vietnam

are MICE and just five per cent are leisure travellers.

ITC has more than 100 staff and offices in Chiang Mai, Phuket and Koh Samui. President Thanabordee Vajarasthira is an industry veteran who has served on Thai tourism bodies.

21. JEBSEN TRAVEL & TOURS SERVICES



Owner and managing director Lim Chee Tong founded Jebesen Travel & Tours Services in 1979 as an inbound, outbound and ticketing company. In 1989, it diversified into selling cruises.

Lim said his success was built on focusing on the right products and developing them. In Jebesen’s case, it was cruising. Future plans include providing consultancy for the cruise industry.

With offices in 10 countries, it is the GSA for 50 international cruise lines and also a cruise consultant for China Merchants Group to market Tai Zi Bay cruise terminal in Shekou, Shenzhen to passenger cruise liners.

22. KRIS INTERNATIONAL TRAVELTOURS



Kris International Traveltours was established in 1985 as an IATA ticketing company to cater to the Sri Inderajaya Holdings’ needs.

The Kuala Lumpur-based company now includes inbound, outbound, charter operations and MICE services, having gone from five staff to 20 full-time staff. The day-to-day operations is led by Foo Kok Teng, a 25-year veteran.

Future plans involve capitalising on the company’s strengths, which involve negotiating with airlines for competitive fares and passing it on. It is currently the only Malaysian agent offering chartered flights to Christmas Island and Australia.



On the leisure travel front, we consistently innovate our product offerings to stay relevant in the market and also carve a niche for ourselves by leveraging new market opportunities such as sports tourism.

THOMAS CHONG
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
HOLIDAY TOURS & TRAVEL,
MALAYSIA

23. MARSMAN DRYSDALE TRAVEL



The travel agency was formed in 1975 when the European pharmaceutical principals of its mother company, the diversified conglomerate Marsman Drysdale Group, ventured into tourism. The inbound tours division was born, with government assistance in the form of in-depth training and seminars.

Marsman Drysdale has two divisions: inbound catering to leisure and incentive trips including wholesalers in Europe and parts of Asia, and outbound catering to the corporate market and leisure and incentive travel.

In 2006, Marsman Drysdale Travel became the exclusive Philippine partner of Hogg Robinson Group.

in 1974. The outbound agency started with Europe and now has divisions for Asia and Africa, and packages include America, Australia and New Zealand.

The agency is a family affair. Thida is managing director, with husband Manat as general manager, and son Torpong as assistant general manager.

Torpong said loyalty was key to longevity. “We have to be loyal to customers, and always serve our customers to the very best standards.”



Above: The team at Marsman Drysdale Travel, the Philippines
Below: Staff of Malaysia's Mayflower ACME Tours

26. MITRA MALAYSIA



The late Abdullah Tuanku Abdul Rahman founded Mitra Malaysia in 1970. The company has carved out a niche in the corporate sphere, serving more than 80 corporations and SMEs from the oil & gas and financial industries, plus government departments and ministries. It also offers leisure and Muslim-friendly tours.

Group president Iskandar Tunku Abdullah said receiving the ISO 9001 certification in 1997 was “important in ensuring consistent standards”.

The IATA accredited travel agency is also the Malaysian Global Alliance Partner for Expedia's corporate travel arm Egencia. Mitra also plans to be a wholesaler for tours and hotels, and ultimately to franchise out the brand.

24. MAYFLOWER ACME TOURS



An inbound agency since 1960, Mayflower went through a major shift during its 1973 merger with Acme Tours and diversified into car rental and coaches.

Mayflower Acme Tours' appointment as the travel representative for American Express in Peninsula Malaysia was the beginning of corporate airline ticketing services. It is a subsidiary of Warisan Tan Chong Holdings, with 550 staff and a fleet of more than 3,000 vehicles.

Abdul Rahman Mohamed, deputy general manager, channel management, said success came from providing services to all segments of the public. “Future plans include focusing on developing new ventures such as medical tourism, education, digital marketing and online platforms.”

27. NAM HO TRAVEL SERVICE



Established in 1963, Nam Ho Travel caters both to corporate and leisure travellers. It specialises in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, South-east Asia and Oceania.

Nam Ho Travel uses the latest technology to provide result-oriented services to meet clients' requirement and budgets. It revamped its website in 2012, introducing online bookings for hotels and flights. It also began a live chat system and widened its social media presence.

25. MD TOURS AND TRAVEL



Thida Chanpen had all of two employees when MD Tours began sending Thais around the world

28. NEW SHAN TRAVEL



From its origins in 1972 as an eight-person outfit solely providing ticketing services, New Shan Travel Service has become one of the biggest agencies in Singapore.

Its staff of 140 provides a full spectrum of services, from flights and visas to group tours and hotel reservations, as well as corporate and wholesale ticketing and incentive tours.

The agency is exploring new sales and marketing channels, investing in talent, strengthening its core businesses and establishing new tie-ups with service providers.

ing director, said: “We leverage the expertise provided by some of the industry's leading event management professionals.”

The Singapore-based company delivers more than 2,000 annual events and is part of Hotelbeds Group, a provider of services to the travel trade.

29. NS TRAVEL & TOURS



Embassy employee by day, tour guide by night, Suparerk Soorangua's hard work got NS Travel & Tours off the ground in 1979. It was a time when many parts of Thailand were not developed for tourists and Suparerk pioneered trips to places like Koh Samui.

The 1997 financial crisis left the company in debt, but nearly two decades later, Suparerk handed over a company worth two billion baht (US\$55.5 million) to twin sons Chotechuang and Chatchawan.

Employing 80 people, NS Travel has shifted focus to the corporate market, which forms 65 per cent of its business, and working as a wholesale operator in conjunction with retail agencies.

31. PACTO



This Indonesian tourism pioneer was established in 1967, offering travel management and DMC services as its core business.

Forty years of experience paid off in 2007 when the UN's climate change convention came to Bali. The agency mobilised 14,000 delegates for two weeks, with 100 hotels used.

Pacto today stands as the country's largest travel and destination management networks, and has diversified its destinations, notably in eastern Indonesia. It plans to develop a tourism school in Indonesia.

32. PAN PACIFIC TRAVEL CORP



Pan Pacific Travel was formed in 1978 by businessmen who believed in the Philippines' potential to become a major destination.

Promoting inbound tourism has allowed it to open new branches in Ermita and Makati, on top of its main office in Manila. A fourth branch in Cebu coincided with a rise in domestic travel.

From 20 personnel in 1978, Pan Pacific Travel today has more than 130 across inbound and outbound divisions.

30. PACIFIC WORLD



Pacific World was founded in 1980 in Hong Kong, later expanding into Greater China and South-east Asia. The business was acquired by TUI Travel in 2006 and expansion continued into Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Selina Chavry, global manag-

33. PAN TRAVEL



Recognising that the “travel agent business is risky, low margin and highly competitive,” Pan Travel president director Elly Hutabarat



has been exercising prudence and effective cost management since the company was founded in 1968.

Pan Travel is also the GSA of Rail Europe, wholesale agent for Japan Rail Passes, and a specialist in the Umrah and Hajj tours since the early days of its existence.

As a member of Egencia, Pan Travel is constantly training its staff to maintain their level of services in the “demanding” corporate business sector.

34. PANORAMA GROUP



Adhi Tirtawisata started Panorama from a small garage office in Jakarta in 1972, and was the driver and tour guide when the first tourists arrived from the Netherlands.

As demand for domestic and outbound travel grew, Adhi set up Panorama Tours in response, renaming the inbound arm Panorama Destination, and expanded the group to include a transportation company, White Horse. Panorama was floated on the Indonesian Stock Exchange in 2001.

Group managing director Rama Tirtawisata said: “People are our asset, therefore we give full attention to human development. We have set up the Panorama Learning Academy to develop our staff.”

35. RAJAH TRAVEL CORP



Rajah Travel Corp was founded in 1972 by Jose and Alejandra Clemente. In the 90s, it was spun off from inbound Rajah Tours Philippines and incorporated as a BSP/IATA agency. Today, the multi-award winner is a comprehensive travel services provider with four offices and more than 250 employees.

For the Clementes’ daughter, Aileen (see ASEAN tourism personalities), who took over the reins, Rajah Travel is “a Philippine-based company with global perspective”.

Her innovations include making the B2C website more accessible, an online registry for the gift travel credits and a souvenir shop. In the future, expect an enhanced B2B website and mobile booking capability.

36. REGALE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL



Jumpol Chadavadh was 34 and had worked for major Western travel companies when he established Regale in 1983. Now, more than three decades later, he is content to sit back and guide his likely successor and daughter Nantavan in the business.

Starting with four staff and a focus on outbound and corporate



clients, a joint venture with P&O in 1990 was a major turning point. Regale is now a handling agent for Princess and Carnival cruise lines, and has inbound and GSA divisions, with 75 staff.

“Most travel agents specialise in only inbound or outbound, they don’t want to invest in a company with a (diverse) business model like ours,” Jumpol said.

37. SAIGONTOUR-IST TRAVEL SERVICE



Since launching in 1975, state-run Saigontourist Travel Service has developed inbound and outbound tours showcasing the diverse jewels of Vietnam and the region.

It organised the first escorted outbound group tours in 1988 to Cambodia, Germany and France. In 1991, it operated the first shore excursion for international cruise tourists, which has developed into huge business for the company in recent years.

Saigontourist’s MICE arm emerged in 2003, followed by the luxury arm Premium Travel in 2005, and the budget IKO Travel in 2008.

People are our asset, therefore we give them full attention to human development. We have set up the Panorama Learning Academy to develop our staff.

RAMA TIRTAWISATA
GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR
PANORAMA, INDONESIA

38. SA TOURS



Established in 1974, SA Tours provides a wide range of worldwide tour packages, hotel and cruise deals. The established brand strives to improve itself by investing in staff, infrastructure and services.

In recent years, it launched the SA Travellers’ Club to reward loyal customers. Members are able to turn their spending into savings for their next purchase. The company prides itself on exceeding customers’ expectations and this has paid off through the years.

39. SEDUNIA TRAVEL SERVICES



Sedunia started in 1976 as a corporate ticketing agent and has evolved to become one of Malaysia’s largest agencies. The company is the GSA for brands such as Globus, Monogram, Avalon Waterways and Rocky Mountaineer, and represents Yokoso Tours Japan and Kintetsu Rail Pass.

Owners Teoh Leng Lan and Loke Kar Chee took over in 1996 and grew the business from 10 staff to 185 today, with the annual revenue for the year ending March 2016 reaching RM235 million (US\$52.5 million). Future plans include growing the Muslim outbound segment and building a stronger online presence, which will see the company launching revamped B2B and B2C websites.

40. SHARP TRAVEL SERVICE



One of the Philippines’ oldest travel agencies, Sharp Travel Service was formed in 1952 to serve the needs of the CF Sharp Group of Companies, which deployed Filipino seafarers in the post World War II rebuilding effort.

Sharp Travel went on to become a DMC while handling the export

of marine manpower, later adding MICE and events travel management. It has also forged a relationship as ground handlers in the Philippines for foreign cruise ships of Hapag-Lloyd.

Led by executive vice president and COO Lou Banzon, Sharp Travel now has offices in Manila, Makati and Cebu, and is a recipient of ISO 9001 certification and a member of various trade associations.

41. SI TOURS



Newlyweds Sophida Tohsofee and Idthi Mahatthira embarked on more than marriage in 1974, also forming SI Tours.

After starting with the South-east Asian inbound market, the company turned its attention to the Middle East in 1978 and moved into Europe. “We’ve gone from Holland to Poland,” Sophida said.

A challenge came in the early 1990s, when the Gulf War dried up the key Saudi Arabia market. But the company struck an agreement with the fledgling Dutch agency Fox in 1996, growing from two minivans to 12,000 customers a year.

After a change in Fox’s ownership ended the partnership, SI Tours again moved to new territory and today Sophida seeks a successor.

42. SIAM EXPRESS



For Siam Express – which was incorporated in Singapore in 1983 – the comprehensive range of creative services offered, plus its integrity and ability to manage costs are key elements for the agency’s long-staying power, said director Jaclyn Yeoh.

As well, the adoption of the latest technology in its operations has enabled the company to achieve greater success. Looking ahead, Yeoh intends to specialise in niche markets like education, develop B2B portals and new markets like Myanmar.



43. SMAILING TOUR



Smailing Tour had survived on service and offering value for money since 1976, but it really took off in 2007 with the acquisition of American Express Travel.

"That was the starting point of Smailing Tour becoming Indonesia's number one travel management company, up to now," president and CEO Anthony Akili said.

Smailing Tour has launched an online booking service and will transform its Bali inbound centre into Smailing DMC. Following the opening of a Smailing DMC branch office in Yogyakarta in 2015, the company is also planning to establish more branch offices across Indonesia.



Swire Travel's longevity can be attributed to its continuous evolution to meet the challenges of the times - departing from mainly corporate and marine travel to immersing in leisure inbound travel as the Philippines is coming of age as a choice destination.

ELI WHITE, PRESIDENT, SWIRE TRAVEL, THE PHILIPPINES

44. SWIRE TRAVEL



Starting 38 years ago in 1979 to serve its sister companies within the Rayomar Group, Swire quickly came into its own with popular inbound and outbound products.

It developed its MICE department for MNCs and became the global partner of Uniglobe in 2006 and of Egencia in 2009. Swire is a member of the Philippine Marine Travel Agencies Association.

President Eli White said: "Swire Travel's longevity can be attributed to its continuous evolution to meet the challenges of the times - departing from mainly corporate and marine travel to immersing in leisure inbound travel as the Philippines is coming of age as a choice destination."

47. TRADEWINDS TOURS & TRAVEL



Tradewinds began in 1975 as a subsidiary of Singapore Airlines to develop a hotel in Manila, and became a tour wholesaler in 1984.

According to general manager Kian Hwa Chua, Tradewinds morphed into its current form in 1992 to focus on developing tour programmes when the airline operations and assets were split from the tour business to form SilkAir.

"Over the years, Tradewinds has fulfilled its key role to support Singapore Airlines and SilkAir, establishing Singapore as a key aviation hub and gateway to the Asia-Pacific region," Chua said.

50. WORLD TRAVEL SERVICE



Kusa Panyarachun was a young war veteran in 1947 when he was put in charge of a small section

of his family's business: tourism. From there, Kusa created World Travel Service (WTS).

American women with war pensions were the first market, followed by Europeans. "His main principle is to provide only reliable and honest service to the tourists," said WTS general manager Thongchai Phithakstrakul, a 50-year company veteran.

At its prime 30-40 years ago, WTS had more than 50 counters in Bangkok hotels, a staff of more than 500 and branches in key locations. The computer revolution has since forced WTS to downsize.

Kusa, now 97, calls the office daily and visits up to twice a month.

Paige Lee Pei Qi, Michael Sanderson, Mimi Hudoyo, S Puvaneswary, Rosa Ocampo and Marissa Carruthers contributed to this feature.

45. THE TRAVEL CORPORATION



For 35 years, The Travel Corporation has kept up to date and pushed for continuous product innovation to keep pace with fast-changing consumer demand, said president Robin Yap.

"Arming (the trade) with product knowledge through training and familiarisation trips as well as having a team of dedicated and passionate colleagues have been winning factors," Yap said.

The fourth-generation, family-owned business has 40 sales offices worldwide and 10,000 team members, serving over two million customers across some 70 countries.

48. UNI-ORIENT TRAVEL



Stephen Techico formed Uni-Orient Travel with a group of friends in 1976 as the first agency to bring Chinese tourists to Manila. Today, it is a wholesaler with over 200 staff, with one of Techico's partners, two daughters and two sons now at the helm.

One son, Wilson, heads business and product development and has driven the DMC's B2B portal, U Xplor, to a database of over 300,000 hotels globally, plus tours, packages and land transfers.

The agency is targeting the luxury market, widening its outbound reach with tours of Russia, the Middle East and other destinations and developing more customised inbound packages.

46. TOUR EAST



An appetite for reinvention has seen Tour East go from a startup in 1972 to a leading Asian DMC with over 500 tour specialists across 13 countries, and with more in the pipeline.

Judy Lum, senior vice president

49. WORLD EXPRESS



DMC World Express has specialised in individual and group travel to Singapore and Malaysia since 1969. Managing director Darren



50

homegrown hotel companies

The rise of homegrown hotel groups in South-east Asia has been nothing short of meteoric over the past five decades. *TTG Asia* presents 50 most prominent hotel groups with ASEAN roots and international visions



Above: Pan Pacific Serviced Suites Beach Road, Singapore

1. ABSOLUTE HOTEL SERVICES

The fast-growing hospitality management company Absolute Hotel Services (AHS) has unveiled strong ambitions to scale up its portfolio in the region since its inception in 2008, under the helm of CEO Jonathan Wigley.

Based in Bangkok, AHS currently covers the brands of U Hotels & Resorts, Eastin Grand Hotels, Eastin Hotels & Residences and Eastin Easy.

It is an affiliate company of BTS Group Holdings, one of Thailand's largest public listed companies, and boasts offices in Hong Kong, Vietnam and India.

2. AEROWISATA HOTELS & RESORTS

Launched in 1973 as a subsidiary of Garuda Indonesia, Aerowisata recently introduced a new service concept, Authentic Indonesian Hospitality, where the local spirit is carried throughout its three

brands – the upscale Prama, the midscale Kila and the economy Asana.

The group currently operates seven hotels and villas in Bali, Bandung, Lombok, Jakarta and Papua, and has another three properties in Ketapang, Jakarta and Balikpapan in the pipeline.

In the next five years, Aerowisata will take on an aggressive approach to increase the number of hotels under its management, instead of developing its own properties, said Gatot Satriawan, director of Aerowisata.

3. AKARYN HOTEL GROUP

Founder Anchalika Kijkanakorn established the Akaryn Hotel Group in 2005 with the Aleenta Resort and Spa Hua Hin in Pranburi. The group now boasts three hospitality brands – Akaryn, Aleenta and Akyra – plus the Ayurah Wellness Centres.

President by Akaryn, which opened in Vientiane last November, is the group's first interna-

tional venture. The first half of 2017 will usher in Akyra Bangkok and Aleenta Samui at Half-Moon Bay, bringing the group's total number of resorts to seven.

4. ALILA HOTELS & RESORTS

What happens when a founding partner of GHM Indonesia (see #23 General Hotel Management) and of Mandara Spa Asia decides to create his own hotel brand?

The result is Alila Hotels & Resorts, which is Mark Edleson's dream to be "Surprisingly Different" by combining innovative design, luxury lifestyle, unique location and sustainable tourism.

Based in Singapore, the company operates four Alila Villas and 11 Alila properties. To further its expansion, the company signed a strategic alliance with San Francisco-based Commune Hotels & Resorts to create a global lifestyle hotel management company.

5. AMANRESORTS

Created by visionary Adrian Zecha (see 50 ASEAN tourism personalities), the first Amanresorts, Amanpuri in Phuket, opened in January 1988 with only 40 rooms.

Not only was Amanpuri a masterpiece with minimalist architecture and personalised service, it was also brilliant in its business model, i.e. the sale of residences supporting the hotel component.

Amanpuri was followed by Amandari in Bali and a slew of resorts in Indonesia, before further expansion in South-east Asia, the US, Morocco and Sri Lanka.

Amanresorts was based in Singapore until its recent bitter takeover by a Russia-US joint venture which moved its base to London.

6. AMARA HOTELS & RESORTS

Singapore's Amara Hotels & Resorts offers a trio of synergistic businesses: hotel investment and management, property in-

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NEW ATTRACTIONS BECKON TOURISTS TO MALAYSIA IN 2017

With 2017 being the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN, Malaysia has joined all the ASEAN nations to celebrate this momentous milestone themed “Visit ASEAN@50: Golden Celebration”.

New attractions have opened with some exciting events lined up throughout the year so tourists can experience the best of Malaysia’s shopping, eco-adventures, theme parks and nature in 2017.

Visit Perak Year, Visit Pahang Year, and Visit Terengganu Year

The states of Perak, Pahang, and Terengganu are excited to beckon the new year, as it is also the launch of their **Visit Perak**, **Visit Pahang**, and **Visit Terengganu** Year celebration. Nature and outdoor enthusiasts will certainly enjoy visiting these states, as they are known for some of the best natural eco-tourism attractions in Malaysia.



Royal Belum State Park, Perak



Mount Tahan, Pahang

In Perak, tourists can visit the popular **Royal Belum State Park**, home to some of the oldest rainforests in the world, dating back to 130 million years ago, while **Taman Negara Pahang** is home to Mount Tahan, the highest mountain in Peninsula Malaysia.

Perak will also be hosting the ‘Ipoh Cycle Fest’ from 28-30 April this year, a popular cycling festival featuring competitions, product exhibitions, and bicycle expos. With several cycling packages and pre-determined cycling routes developed in towns such as Gopeng, Lumut and Taiping, Perak is expecting to be the leading cycling destination in the country.

Those who prefer the sunny, powdery beaches will appreciate Terengganu’s beautiful islands, such as **Pulau Redang** and **Pulau Perhentian**. These world class beaches are a popular destination for honeymooners, and provide the perfect sanctuary for those looking to escape the concrete jungle.



Redang Island, Terengganu

New Shopping Mall

In Penang, tourists can explore the new **Design Village Outlet Mall**, the latest addition to the myriad of shopping malls in Malaysia which can be easily accessed from the neighbouring states. With over 150 stores over 24 acres of tropical garden setting, the outlet store will feature local and some major international brands. This is the fourth outlet shopping mall in Malaysia, and promises to give great bargains to tourists looking to shop!



Design Village Outlet Mall, Penang

Theme Parks

Families looking to enjoy the holidays together will be excited to visit **Legoland Malaysia Resort** in Johor – the first Legoland in all of Asia. It houses more than 40 rides, shows and attractions and has since expanded to include a water park and hotel. Besides Legoland, Johor also features other smaller-scaled theme parks such as **Sanrio Hello Kitty Town** and the **Angry Birds Activity Park**.



Legoland Malaysia Resort, Johor



Sanrio Hello Kitty Town, Johor

Last December, **Movie Animation Park Studios** opened with more than 40 rides in Ipoh, while **Twentieth Century Fox Studios** in **Resorts World Genting** will be opening this year with about 25 rides and attractions based on Fox films such as ‘Aliens vs. Predator’, ‘Ice Age’ and ‘Planet of the Apes’. Once opened, families will be hard pressed to find a more exciting destination for their annual getaway!



Movie Animations Park Studios (MAPS), Perak

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vestment and development, plus speciality restaurants and food services. For instance, the flagship hotel in Singapore, which opened in 1986, has an adjacent shopping mall and office tower.

In addition to Amara Singapore, Amara also owns Amara Sanctuary Resort, Sentosa in Singapore.

Following the 2015 launch of its first overseas property, the 250-room Amara Bangkok, the group expects to open its 343-room hotel in Shanghai in early 2017.

7. ARCHIPELAGO INTERNATIONAL

The Indonesian company started in 1997 as Aston International with Aston Bali (now Grand Aston Bali) as its first property. In 2013, the company's name was changed to Archipelago International but retained Aston as one of its brands.

Archipelago International now has seven core brands that range from ultra-luxurious villas with private pools to serviced residences.

The company operates 120 hotels in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, with 100 more in the pipeline in South-east Asia.

8. ASIA HOTEL GROUP

The Asia Hotel Group broke into the Thai market in 1966 with its first property, the landmark Asia Hotel, offering 600 rooms in central Bangkok. Eight years later, the group opened the 305-room Asia Pattaya Hotel.

The group's next big move would not come until 2001, when it opened the Asia Airport Hotel near Don Mueang International Airport with 395 rooms.

More recently, the group purchased and rebranded the James Cha-Am in Phetchaburi, expanding its number of rooms to 214.

9. ASIAN GRAND LEGACY HOTELS

Asian Grand Legacy Hotels (AGLH) Philippines was established in 2012 by veteran hotelier Miguel Cerqueda.

Initially known as Genesis Hotels and Resorts, it was brought under casino operator Thunderbird Resorts from 1999 until March 2012, before it was offered back to Cerqueda who renamed it AGLH with new partners.

Its portfolio comprises beach resort Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar in Bataan, which is a collection of restored heritage houses, as well as Astoria Hotels and Resorts in Boracay, Bohol, Palawan, and Makati and Ortigas in metro Manila.

The brand has expanded to Vietnam with the opening of the 189-key The Grand Tourane Hotel in Danang in March 2017. Plans are afoot to build more hotels in Hanoi and Nha Trang.

As part of its ASEAN expansion,

AGLH has opened an office in Singapore spearheaded by Cerqueda and experienced hotelier Roger Begre.

10. ASCOTT

From the 1984 debut of its first property, The Ascott Singapore along Scotts Road, Singapore-based Ascott has grown to become the world's largest international serviced residence owner-operator.

It now has over 28,000 operating serviced residence units and over 17,000 units under development, bringing its portfolio to a total of 45,000 units in over 290 properties in 100 cities worldwide.

The company operates three brands – Ascott The Residence, Citadines Apart'hotel and Somerset Serviced Residence.

Ascott has also recently launched The Crest Collection – a selection of some of Ascott's most prestigious and unique luxury serviced residences – and Tujia Somerset brand to cater to the

Above: Amara Sanctuary Resort Sentosa, Singapore
Below: Banyan Tree Lang Co, Vietnam



booming middle-class segment in China.

11. ASTORIA HOTELS AND RESORTS

Astoria Hotels and Resorts (AHR) owns five upscale properties in the Philippines.

The first property launched was the 120-key Astoria Plaza full-service residential suites in Ortigas in 2001. It would be nine years before the second property, Astoria Boracay opened, which also led to the formation of AHR.

In 2012, AHR opened Astoria Bohol with eight villas and Astoria Palawan in 2014. In the same year, it acquired Astoria Greenbelt, a business hotel in Makati.

12. AYALA LAND HOTELS AND RESORTS

Several years ago, Ayala Land Hotels and Resorts launched its own brand, Seda – Filipino for silk – a collection of urban lifestyle hotels.

The fast-growing Filipino brand now has a presence in metro Manila's Bonifacio Global City, Santa Rosa in Laguna, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro and Davao City.

In the pipeline are Seda Lio in Ayala group's tourism development in El Nido, Palawan, as well as a Seda each in Makati, Quezon City, and several of its mixed-use development projects.

Apart from Seda, Ayala Land Hotels and Resorts also owns and manages El Nido Resorts, a collection of four luxury island resorts in Palawan.

13. BANYAN TREE HOLDINGS

Banyan Tree Holdings was established in 1994 with the launch of Banyan Tree Phuket. The Thai resort is part of the Laguna Phuket integrated development, a project started by founder Ho Kwon Ping and his wife Claire Chiang.

Their conversion of an abandoned tin mine into a resort through a 10-year regeneration programme represents one of the earliest sustainable development projects in the region's hospitality scene.

The Singapore-based group boasts four brands: Banyan Tree is an all-villa concept; Angsana, offering a range of facilities suited for families and friends; Cassia, a holiday apartment concept; and Dhawa, a contemporary brand targeted at design-savvy guests.

Also synonymous with the brand is the Banyan Tree Spa, spanning 64 spas and 77 retail galleries in 25 countries.

Today, Banyan Tree boasts 38 hotels, with 29 in the pipeline. The Accor Group has just acquired

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a five per cent stake, which will see further expansion of the Asian group globally.

14. BERJAYA HOTELS & RESORTS

Founded in 1992 by Vincent Tan Chee Yioun, Berjaya Hotels & Resorts boasts a strong presence in Malaysia with properties in Langkawi, Tioman, Redang, Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Penang and Bukit Tinggi highlands. It has expanded its footprint to the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka as well as farther afield to the UK and Seychelles. More recently, Berjaya rolled out a new brand Ansa with the debut of Ansa Kuala Lumpur in August 2015.

15. CENTARA HOTELS & RESORTS

The Central Plaza Hotel company was established in 1980 to take care of the hotel, convention centre and shopping mall that would

later become known as Centara Grand Central Plaza Ladprao. In the decades since, it has grown to 38 properties in Thailand, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Vietnam, with another 29 hotels in various stages of development, including one in Doha. Renamed Centara Hotels & Resorts in 2007, the company has six brands which are combined with convention facilities, including the five-star Centara Grand; the four-star Centara; Centara Boutique Collection; Centara Residences & Suites; the three-star Centra by Centara; and the newest Cosi Hotels, aimed at young, tech-savvy travellers.

16. COMO HOTELS AND RESORTS

Part of the Singapore-based Como Group, Como Hotels and Resorts has a cult following of its own, thanks to the aura of its fashionable founder Christina Ong, wife of Ong Beng Seng (see #23 HPL Hotels & Resorts), which has rubbed

Above: Furama Silom, Bangkok, Thailand
Below: Modena by Frasers Bangkok, Thailand

off onto the brand. From its early days with two London properties The Metropolitan and The Halkin, Como Hotels and Resorts now operates 12 properties under four categories, Urban Hotels, Adventure Retreats, Island Getaways and Wellness Resorts.

17. DISCOVERY HOTELS & RESORTS

When Discovery Hotels & Resorts was formed in 1998 by Jakarta International Hotels & Development and Ciptadaya Gema Puspita, the first property that came under its fold was Hotel Borobudur Jakarta, a pioneering property in the city that was previously managed by InterContinental Hotels Group. The company later took over the management of Kartika Plaza Beach Resort in Bali, which was renovated and rebranded as the Discovery Kartika Plaza Hotel. The group now operates four hotels and plans to manage at least 20 in the near future. Hotels under construction include Discovery Kendari Beach City Hotel and Discovery Kessilampe Hotel & Resort in Kendari, the capital of south-east Sulawesi.

18. DISCOVERY LEISURE COMPANY

Founded by businessman Ruben Tiu, the Philippine hospitality company has a portfolio of four upmarket hotels and resorts in strategic locations. The Discovery Leisure Company has owned and managed the 220-key serviced residences Discovery Suites Ortigas since 2001, and the seven-suite B&B Discovery Country Suites Tagaytay since 2004. The group unveiled the 87-key luxury resort Discovery Shores Boracay in 2007 and acquired the 54-key private island resort Club

Paradise Palawan in 2013. Last year, it launched the 141-key Discovery Primea in Makati. In the pipeline is a 117-key beach resort in El Nido Palawan targeted at millennials, as well as an 180-key mountain resort in La Trinidad, Benguet.

19. DUSIT THANI HOTELS & RESORTS

Chanut Piyaoui opened the Princess Hotel in 1949, but the hotel chain only came into prominence in 1970 with the opening of the flagship Dusit Thani in central Bangkok's Silom district. Dusit Thani is pitched as an up-market, full-service brand, alongside the high-end Dusit Devarana and the trendy dusitD2 brands. Dusit now has 28 hotels in nine countries: Thailand, where the bulk is, plus China, Egypt, India, Kenya, the Maldives, Philippines, UAE and US. The group is embarking on an ambitious expansion plan, with more than 40 hotels set to open within the next five years in 21 countries in Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

20. FAR EAST HOSPITALITY

Singapore's Far East Hospitality (FEH), a regional hospitality assets owner and operator, is a 70-30 joint venture formed in 2013 between Far East Orchard (a listed company under Far East Organization) and The Straits Trading Company. In the same year of its formation, FEH – through its wholly-owned subsidiary Far East Hospitality Investments (Australia) – completed a 50-50 joint venture with Australia's Toga Group. Since the launch of its first property in Singapore, Ming Court Hotel in 1987 (now Orchard Parade Hotel), the company has been driven to spread its Singapore-inspired hospitality to foreign shores. With the joint ventures, FEH now has a combined portfolio of more than 13,000 rooms under management across 90 hotels and serviced residences in seven countries. In South-east Asia, FEH's portfolio comprises 12 hotels and 10 serviced residences.

21. FRASERS HOSPITALITY GROUP

Frasers Hospitality Group, the hospitality arm of Frasers Centrepoint, has since its inception in 1998 grown from an initial 412 units in Singapore to 140 properties and more than 22,500 keys in 77 cities worldwide. Frasers Hospitality operates serviced apartments, hotel resi-





dences and boutique lifestyle hotels across these brands: Fraser Suites, Fraser Place, Fraser Residence, Modena by Fraser, Malmaison, Capri by Fraser and Hotel du Vin. The company is on track to achieve 30,000 keys by 2019.

In 2014, Frasers Hospitality Trust was launched as the first global hotel and serviced residence trust to be listed in Singapore, compris-

ing Frasers Hospitality Real Estate Investment Trust and Frasers Hospitality Business Trust.

22. FURAMA HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

Furama Hotels International (FHI) is a Singapore-based hotel management company that started

Above: Hard Rock Hotel Singapore, part of Resorts World Sentosa

with the Furama City Centre hotel in Singapore's CBD.

Today, FHI manages more than 50 hotels, villas and resorts, offering over 7,500 rooms across three brands – Furama, a line of four-star business hotels; FuramaXclusive, comprising boutique hotels, villas and resorts; and FX Hotels, which provides essential services.

Further expansion is in FHI's cards to reach over 8,000 rooms in 2017.

23. GENERAL HOTEL MANAGEMENT

The Singapore-based company was established in 1992 by Amanresorts' creator Adrian Zecha (see #5 Amanresorts) and Hans Jenni, offering modern luxury travellers the promise of 'A Style to Remember'.

The group currently operates Chedi hotels in Bali, Muscat and Andermatt, Switzerland, and has a pipeline of at least 10 hotels opening between 2017 and 2020.

GHM is also collaborating with the Beijing Tourism Group and Great Ocean Holdings on a new

China-centric brand, Ahn Luh Resorts & Residences, the first resort of which has soft-opened in Shanghai. Recently, it launched Tin Hotels, its foray into the mid-tier segment.

24. GENTING GROUP

The group was founded in 1965 by the late Malaysian entrepreneur Lim Goh Tong, whose vision of Genting Highlands as a highland resort destination led to the creation of Resorts World Genting (formerly Genting Highlands Resort). Its winning combination of theme parks, hotels, casinos, concert shows, plus retail and F&B outlets made it into a renowned Asian destination.

Current chairman Lim Kok Thay (see ASEAN tourism personalities), second son of the elder Lim, has led the conglomerate's global expansion in the integrated resort space, including Resorts World in Singapore and Manila, with Las Vegas in the pipeline. He also spearheaded the company's rejuvenation in the cruise business and acquired Crystal

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Cruises in 2015. Meanwhile, the Genting Outdoor Theme Park at flagship Resorts World Genting is currently closed for a major revamp and will boast the world’s first 20th Century Fox theme park when it reopens in 2017.

25. HPL HOTELS & RESORTS

Under the leadership of Singapore tycoon Ong Beng Seng (see ASEAN tourism personalities), the Singapore-based group has grown from two hotels in 1991 to 11 properties today with 2,886 rooms in Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean, under three brands, the four-star Concorde Hotels & Resorts, Hard Rock Hotels and The Boutique Collection. It also owns hotels that are managed by Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Worldwide and Le Méridien. A number of them, such as the Four Seasons Resort at Jimbaran Bay, Bali, remain iconic developments to this day.

26. IMPERIAL HOTELS & RESORTS

Since it opened as a 170-room hotel in 1972, the New Imperial Hotel in Bangkok has been through a number of name changes and renovations. The latest incarnation is as the Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen’s Park after a 3.5 billion baht (US\$100 million) facelift, where the Imperial brand was removed for the first time in more than 40 years in the joint project between the Thai owners TCC Hotels and the US giant. TCC Hotels, part of billionaire

Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi’s suite of companies, owns the Imperial hotels in Thailand’s northern provinces, plus Cham and Koh Samui, along with dozens of other properties under other brands across Asia-Pacific, London and New York.

27. JAYAKARTA HOTELS & RESORTS

Syukur Pudjiadi founded The Jayakarta Group in 1973, launching the first Jayakarta Hotel in Jakarta in the same year, followed by more hotels in Bali, Anyer, Lombok, Yogyakarta and Bandung. In 1995, The Jayakarta Group established Jayakarta Hotels and Resorts to manage its own properties as well as two other hotels in Palembang and Labuan Bajo, Flores. Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts now operates eight hotels under the Jayakarta brand, three under Marbella Indonesia and the budget J Hotel Kuta in Bali. Plans are currently in place to expand the J Hotel brand into Cikarang, Bumi Serpong Damai, Cengkareng and Semarang.

28. KATA GROUP RESORTS

Owning and operating six resorts in southern Thailand, Kata Group Resorts started with Kata Beach Resort and Spa and Phuket Orchid Resort and Spa in the late 1970s. In 2012, Kata Group launched the Beyond Resorts brand for couples, with outposts in Khao Lak, Krabi and Phuket’s Karon Beach, while adding Kandaburi Resort & Spa in Koh Samui to its portfolio.

The group celebrated its 36th anniversary in 2016, with founder Pramookpisitt Achariyachai still at the helm. Kata Group Resorts is poised for a listing on the Stock Exchange of Thailand in 2017, and seeks further growth in Phuket, Pattaya and Hua Hin.

29. KEPPEL LAND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

A wholly-owned subsidiary of Keppel Land (Keppel Group’s property arm), Keppel Land Hospitality Management’s business footprint spans from hotels and serviced apartments to golf resorts and marinas in Singapore, China, Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam. Sedona Hotels & Suites, a selection of luxury serviced apartments and five-star hotels in Asia, is notably the Singapore-based

Above: Bintan Lagoon Resort, Indonesia
Below: Sedona Hotel Yangon, Myanmar

company’s most prominent brand in the hospitality sector. Currently, there are three Sedona properties in Yangon, Mandalay and Ho Chi Minh City in the company’s portfolio.

30. MERITUS HOTELS & RESORTS

Meritus Hotels & Resorts started with the 1971 debut of its flagship Mandarin Orchard Singapore – then known as The Mandarin Singapore. Dubbed the grande dame of Orchard Road for its storied heritage, the 45-year old Mandarin Orchard Singapore remains a hospitality icon in Singapore and whose Chatterbox restaurant is especially famed for the Hainanese chicken rich dish. The group’s other properties include Marina Mandarin Singapore and Meritus Pelangi Beach Resort & Spa in Langkawi.

31. MILLENNIUM & COPTHORNE HOTELS

Founded in 1989 by Kwek Leng Beng (see ASEAN tourism personalities) of Singapore’s Hong Leong Group, Millennium & Copthorne Hotels (M&C) is a global hospitality management and real estate group with a worldwide portfolio. Listed on the London Stock Exchange since 1996, the group’s property portfolio encompasses the following brands: Grand Millennium, Millennium, Grand Copthorne, Copthorne, M Hotel, Studio M, Kingsgate and M Social. Millennium Hotels and Resorts was established as a global brand by M&C to provide a common marketing and operating platform across its portfolio. M&C currently has 125 hotels with 34,665 rooms in over 80 destinations worldwide, with 19 hotels in the pipeline that will add 6,093 rooms to its portfolio.



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Above: Anantara Angkor Resort, Cambodia
Below: Six Senses Ninh Van Bay, Vietnam

32. MOZAIC HOTELS & RESORTS

Founded in 2006, Mozaic Hotels & Resorts (MHR) is a hospitality management company that focuses on the deluxe segment of the market, representing independent properties with distinct charm and appeal.

The Singapore-based MHR currently manages Bintan Lagoon Resort and Baan Yin Dee Boutique Resort in Phuket.

Bintan Lagoon Resort is a 470-room beachfront resort, with amenities such as two championship golf courses and 12 restaurants.

Baan Yin Dee is a 21-room hill-top boutique resort overlooking Phuket's Patong Beach.

33. MINOR HOTEL GROUP

In just under 40 years, Minor has grown from a single beachfront in Pattaya to become one of Asia-Pacific's largest hospitality groups.

Founded by billionaire chairman and CEO William Heinecke (see ASEAN tourism personalities) in 1978, Royal Garden Resorts began with a hotel that is now the Avani Pattaya Resort & Spa. In 1988, it was listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand before being renamed Minor International in 2005.

In between was the landmark acquisition of the Regent, Bangkok in 2000 and the launch of the five-star Anantara brand in Hua Hin in 2001. Its overseas expansion gathered pace with a stake in Sri Lanka's Serendib Hotel in 2007 and the opening of Anantara Seminyak in Bali in 2008.

Hospitality brands under Minor include Anantara, Avani, Oaks, Elewana, Tivoli and Per Aquum. Its 155 hotels, resorts and serviced suites, including joint venture and managed properties, boast a combined 19,000 rooms in 23 countries.

34. ONYX HOSPITALITY GROUP

Bangkok-based Onyx Hospitality Group has its roots in Amari Hotels & Resorts whose history started with one hotel, Nipa Lodge Pattaya, which was built in the 1960s and later taken over by ItalThai.

Business boomed and ItalThai built a second hotel, Orchid Lodge Pattaya, which gave birth to the Siam Lodges of Thailand.

Under the leadership of Swiss hotelier Kurt Rufli, the company started expanding and gaining management contracts of large city hotels in Bangkok. It soon outgrew the name Siam Lodges, leading to the creation of the Amari logo and branding in 1992.

At the time of Rufli's retirement in 2008, Amari was managing 20 hotels in Thailand with about 4,000 rooms and 4,000 employees, of whom around 100 were expats.

With intentions to grow the company beyond its Thai roots, the group was renamed Onyx Hospitality Group which today offers three brands, Amari, Ozo and Shama.

35. PAN PACIFIC HOTELS GROUP

Pan Pacific Hotels Group is a wholly-owned hotel subsidiary of Singapore-listed UOL Group. Based in Singapore, the group owns and manages 40 hotels, resorts and serviced suites with some 12,000 rooms (including those under development) in Asia, Oceania, North America and Europe.

The group comprises two brands: Pan Pacific, which offers premium accommodation, and Parkroyal, a collection of leisure and business hotels and resorts across Asia-Pacific.

The group also runs the established St Gregory Spas and Si Chuan Dou Hua restaurants in Japan, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

36. PARK HOTEL GROUP

The group started with just one property, Park Hotel Hong Kong, in 1961, but real growth began when the company established its corporate headquarters in Singapore in 2005 and acquired the Crown Prince Hotel Singapore in the same year.

The founder's son, Allen Law, has led the single hotel transformation to a regional chain today with 13 hotels and 4,000 rooms across six countries under the two Grand Park and Park Hotel brands.

Last year, Park Hotel Group secured a management contract for its first hotel outside Asia, Park Hotel Adelaide, and opened its first resort, Park Hotel Nusa Dua, Bali. Recently, the group also secured its first hotel in Malaysia, the Park Hotel Melaka.

37. SAHID HOTELS

Part of the Sahid Group, Sahid Hotels was formed in 1965 with its first property in Solo, central Java.

In 1994, the Sahid International Hotel Management & Consultant (SIHM&C) was set up to manage its growing portfolio. Aside from managing its own properties, SIHM&C also operates and manages properties that belong to its investors and partners.

Sahid's brands include Grand Sahid, Sahid Raya, Sahid, Griyadi and Sahid Muslim Friendly.

The company currently operates and manages 21 properties in Indonesia, with five under construction and five in the pipeline. The company plans to reach its goal of 100 hotels by 2025.

38. SANTIKA INDONESIA HOTELS & RESORTS

Grahawita Santika, the owning company of Santika Indonesia Hotels & Resorts, was established in 1981 when Indonesia's largest me-

dia company Kompas-Gramedia Group diversified into the hospitality sector.

The first property developed was Hotel Santika Bandung, whose successful debut spurred the group's expansion to other cities in Indonesia.

Following a restructuring in 2006, Grahawita Santika repositioned itself and included boutique villas under its brands, and later introduced a two-star category to capture all segments of the vast Indonesian market.

The group now operates 94 properties in the country, with 10 more in the pipeline.

39. SHANGRI-LA GROUP

Although the company is based in Hong Kong, the Shangri-La story began in South-east Asia in 1971 when Malaysian Chinese business magnate Robert Kuok built his first hotel in Singapore and named it Shangri-La.

In 1979, Kuok Hotels was formed to manage two properties, one in Penang and one in Fiji. This was the precursor to Shangri-La International Hotel Management, which was founded in 1982.

Today, the company manages over 90 hotels and resorts throughout Asia-Pacific, North America, the Middle East and Europe, with an inventory of more than 38,000 rooms.

There are currently new hotels under development in China, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Myanmar, the Philippines, Qatar and Sri Lanka.

40. SIX SENSES

Soneva Group founder and CEO Sonu Shivdasani established Bangkok-based Six Senses in 1995 with its first spa in the Maldives.

Expansion has been steady, with Thailand, Vietnam, Oman, China and the Maldives having the largest presence. Farther afield, the company has a resort in Portugal, a residence in France,





and spas from Greece to Egypt, and London to the Dominican Republic.

Today, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas comprises 10 resorts and 27 spas under the brand names Six Senses, the family-friendly Evasion and Six Senses Spa.

Shivdasani sold the company to Pegasus Capital in 2012, and Six Senses has embarked on an ambitious expansion programme which will see its portfolio double from 2014 by the end of 2017.

41. SOKHA HOTELS & RESORTS

Sokha Hotels & Resorts was founded in 2004 by Neak Oknha Sok Kong, with the opening of the five-star Sokha Beach Resort, on the Cambodian coast of Si-hanoukville, as its flagship. The property opened with 180 rooms but has expanded to 391 rooms.

A decade later, Sokha has become Cambodia's largest hotel operator with resorts in Si-hanoukville, Kampot and Siem Reap. Two recent openings are the Sokha Phnom Penh Hotel and Residence on Chroy Changvar peninsula, and the Sokha Siem Reap Resort and Conference Centre.

Also in the pipeline is the Koh Dong Private Island development, which is scheduled for completion soon.

42. SUKOSOL HOTELS

Jazz singer Kamala Sukosol opened the Siam Bayshore resort on the southern tip of Pattaya Bay in 1975. Eight years later the company, then called Siam City Hotels & Resorts, expanded with a second property in the resort town, The Bayview Pattaya.

In 1990, the company had a major turning point after Sukosol launched what would become the

company's flagship – The Siam City Hotel in Bangkok.

After a group-wide rebranding of the Sukosol family business in 2012, Siam City Hotel was renamed The Sukosol. In the same year, the company opened The Siam, a 39-suite luxury retreat on the Chao Phraya River, and in 2013 launched the 21-room boutique Wave Hotel in Pattaya.

43. SUNWAY HOTELS & RESORTS

Sunway Hotels & Resorts, the hospitality division of Malaysia-based conglomerate Sunway Group, operates and manages 10 hotels and resorts in Malaysia, Cambodia and Vietnam, representing 3,017 guestrooms, suites and villas.

Sunway Hotel Georgetown in Penang was the group's first property, opening on June 1, 1994 with 250 rooms.

In early 2016, Sunway Hotels & Resorts announced an investment of RM875 million (US\$214.4 million) to facilitate a three-year redevelopment and expansion plan. As a result, Sunway Group will own and operate 11 hotels, nine of which are in Malaysia.

Upcoming openings include the 351-room Sunway Velocity Hotel in Kuala Lumpur (3Q2017), and the reopening of 564-room Sunway Pyramid Hotel East in Kuala Lumpur's Sunway Resort City (1Q2017).

44. SWISS-GARDEN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS, RESORTS & INNS

Swiss-Garden International Hotels, Resorts & Inns is a Malaysian-based hospitality group established in 1991 by PJ Development Holdings.

The first property to open was

Above: Shangri-La's Boracay Resort & Spa, Philippines

Swiss-Garden Hotel Kuala Lumpur in 1993, a four-star deluxe hotel.

The company currently manages and operates 11 hotels and resorts with an inventory of over 2,800 rooms, overseen by the Swiss-Garden International management team under CEO Ricky Ang.

There are plans to expand to China, Australia and other ASEAN countries in the coming years.

45. TAUZIA HOTEL MANAGEMENT

Tauzia Hotel Management was established in 2000 by Marc Steinmeyer. Its first hotel, the Harris Resort Waterfront in Batam, was launched in 2002.

Since then, the company has developed a collection of brands ranging from the deluxe World-hotels and Preference Hotels and midscale Harris Hotels to the economic Yellow Hotels and budget Pop! Hotels. A consulting division, Tauzia's Estate Management, was also set up.

The group currently operates 44 hotels across Indonesia and aims to have 106 hotels by 2021 in Indonesia and the region.

46. TMG HOSPITALITY

Victoria Hotels & Resorts is part of Vietnam's Thien Minh Group (TMG), which launched in 1994 alongside Buffalo Tours.

In 2011, TMG acquired 100 per cent of the upmarket Victoria Hotels and Resorts, establishing the flagship TMG Hospitality arm of the company. The same year, it expanded into Laos and opened the Xiengthong Palace (now known as the Victoria Xiengthong Palace).

The group currently has six properties in Vietnam and one in Laos. Moreover, the company operates the Victoria Express Train – which links Hanoi to Lao Cai in Sapa – as well as a fleet of boats in the Mekong. TMG also owns Mai Chau Lodge, Festival Hue and EMM Hotels & Resorts.

47. UNLISTED COLLECTION

Founder Loh Lik Peng (see ASEAN tourism personalities) first transformed a shophouse in Singapore into a cool boutique hotel in 2000.

Today, this Singapore home-grown company boasts a collection of 27 design-driven properties and trendy restaurants in Singapore, Shanghai, Sydney and London.

The company's portfolio includes three hotels in Singapore – Hotel 1929, New Majestic Hotel and Wanderlust Hotel; The Waterhouse at South Bund, Shanghai; The Old Clare Hotel Sydney; and

the Town Hall Hotel and 196 Bishopsgate in London.

48. YTL HOTELS

YTL Hotels was founded by Francis Yeoh, managing director of YTL Corporation. Its first property was the 56-room Pansy Resort in 1985, which was rebranded Pangkor Laut Resort in 1994.

The company is involved in both ownership and management of properties and operations ranging from moderately-priced hotels to luxury trains.

Today, YTL Hotels has a portfolio of 26 hotels and resorts across Asia, Australia and Europe.

It is currently developing two Ritz-Carlton hotels, one in Koh Samui (2Q2017) and another in Niseko Village (2020).

49. WORABURI

Popular for those on a budget, Woraburi and its economical sister brand Sawasdee have zeroed in on the hotspots of Khao San Road in Bangkok and Pattaya.

Sawasdee has 12 hotels in the one- to three-star range – with five each in Khao San and Pattaya – comprising more than half of the group's 20-property portfolio.

Meanwhile, the more upmarket Woraburi brand has properties on Bangkok's Sukhumvit Road, as well as in Ayutthaya, Phuket, and two in central Pattaya.

Two properties in Bangkok's Sukhumvit operate under the Salil brand, the name of the parent company.

Most recently, the company launched the Vince Hotel in Pratunam, a boutique offering in central Bangkok.

50. X2 HOTELS & RESORTS

Thailand's Kui Buri Resort was the first project of Anthony McDonald when he started X2 in 2004.

The company is the brainchild and passion of McDonald, who spent eight years as the general manager of Thai Ultimate Car Company before entering hospitality because he saw hotel designs becoming increasingly similar.

The brand, pronounced "cross to", aims to break the mould of typical tropical resorts and appeal to those who love style.

The company has grown to encompass 29 properties under the X2 Luxe, X2 and X2 Vibe brands spanning Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Australia.

Raini Hamdi, Paige Lee Pei Qi, Michael Sanderson, Mimi Hudoyo, S Puvaneswary, Rosa Ocampo and Marissa Carruthers contributed to this feature.

50

ASEAN tourism personalities

The region is blessed with not just diverse attractions but a diversity of talented people who inspire us with their brilliance and passion in the business. TTT Asia spotlights 50 of them



TONY FERNANDES

Through his vision of making travel affordable to the masses and AirAsia's tagline "Now everybody can fly", Fernandes has revolutionised the way people travel in South-east Asia, as well as created a monopoly of new routes linking its hubs with secondary destinations.



LIM KOK THAY

The Genting Group chairman spearheaded the conglomerate's international expansion strategy – launching the Resorts World brand of integrated resorts, and rejuvenating the cruise business to include Crystal Cruises and Dream Cruises in its portfolio.



JENNIE CHUA

As iconic as the Raffles Hotel she once helmed, the distinguished Chua has put Singapore onto the top league of global convention business and held many leadership roles in the tourism and hospitality sectors. She is also celebrated for her achievements in other fields.



CHANIN DONAVANIK

Chanin has been widely lauded for his immense contributions to South-east Asia's hospitality sector, especially in improving the industry standards through hospitality schools such as Le Cordon Bleu Dusit Culinary School, and programmes in cooperation with Lyceum of the Philippines.



HO KWON PING

Eloquent, charismatic and sharp, the executive chairman of Singapore-based Banyan Tree Holdings is an Asian pioneer in sustainable hospitality development and reinvented the humble Asian massage concept into a multimillion-dollar luxury resort and spa business today.

1. ABDULLAH JUNID

Che Lah, as Abdullah Junid's fondly known in the ASEAN tourism fraternity, organised the first ASEAN Tourism Forum in 1991 in Malaysia. He was also the first executive director of the ASEAN Tourism Information Centre. One of the more fun-loving and charismatic NTO leaders of his day, Che Lah showed he was not all about easygoingness, speaking his mind and proving a strong director-general of Tourism Malaysia, from which he retired in 2004. One of his dry quotes was on the relaunch of the ASEAN Hip-Hop Pass: "There is a certain elasticity to a recycled product."

2. ADRIAN ZECHA

It is a feat to create a brand that is so loved by many the world over. Adrian Zecha created Amanresorts and brought thousands of rich Aman junkies to South-east Asia's shores, sealing the region's image as offering personalised

service never imagined before. Born in Sukabumi, Indonesia, Zecha also launched Asia's first regional newspaper, *Asia Magazine*, in 1961, and one of the earliest forms of travel and lifestyle magazines, *Orientations*, in 1970.

3. AILEEN CLEMENTE

One of ASEAN's younger tourism leaders, Aileen Clemente oversees Rajah Travel Philippines, an early DMC in the region. The elder



ABDULLAH JUNID

One of Che Lah's dry quotes was on the relaunch of the ASEAN Hip Hop Pass: "There is a certain elasticity to a recycled product."

generation of this family-owned company were active advocates of ASEAN tourism development. Clemente ensures the link continues, serving as president of the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA) in which she pushes for policy reforms, marketing and promotions, and capabilities-building in the region. She is also active in various organisations in the Philippines on environmental and community initiatives.

4. ALEXIS DE SUREMAIN

The beginnings of Cambodia's boutique hotel scene were mooted when Alexis de Suremain invested in a two-room hotel repurposed from a 1920s colonial villa. Today, The Pavilion is an icon in the capital with 36 rooms. Setting the standard for the boutique hotel trend that Phnom Penh is famous for, he continued to expand his portfolio, adding to it six properties, including Plantation, Blue Lime and Tea House. This year, the MAADS hospitality management company was launched to

house the portfolio, which spans bars, restaurants, luxury boat trips and a current bid to create South-east Asia's largest floating artistic space – The Boat.

5. ANTHONY WONG

Beyond starting Asian Overland Services with friends in 1976, Anthony Wong travelled to Europe on a shoestring budget to promote Malaysia before agents there came to be aware of the destination. He has been at the forefront of change in the industry, advocating sustainable tourism and pioneering ecotourism products and services. Wong also champions high-yield convention business to Asia, having served on the ICCA board from 2001 to 2009. He was also the first Malaysian president of SITE.

6. ARGUS SALIM

This affable man has done a lot for Malaysia's hotel industry and ASEAN's tourism development. He

initiated talks with the Singapore Hotel and Tourism Education Centre (SHATEC) to start hospitality diploma programmes for frontliners and middle managers, and pressed for a Malaysian training centre before MAHTEC was formed. He also helped create state chapters in the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), of which he was president from 1998-2001, giving members outside the capital a bigger voice. Argus also served as president of ASEANTA and ASEAN Hotel & Restaurant Association (AHRA).

7. BOB GUY

Bob Guy was a DMC specialist in Asia even before the acronym appeared in the region, always exhorting the need for incentive organisers to offer unique insights into a destination and the ability to open doors to special venues. The co-founder of Pacific World, who is now with Destination Asia, also pioneered the cruise and ship-handling sectors in the region in the 1970s. Today, he continues to work with leading cruise lines and provide advice to terminals, ports and tourist authorities in the region on cruise industry issues.

8. BUDI TIRTAWISATA

Budi Tirtawisata leads Indonesia's Panorama Group founded by his father, Adhi Tirtawisata. One of his achievements is attracting international players including Carlson Wagonlit Travel, Chan Brothers, Europcar, Gray Line, Booking.com, Reed Elsevier and Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group to collaborate in developing the tourism industry in Indonesia. He also chairs the Indonesia Convention and Exhibition Bureau and is vice chairman, marketing and promotion, of the Indonesia Hotel & Restaurant Association.

9. CHANIN DONAVANIK

Chanin Donavanik has been instrumental in the massive growth of Dusit Thani Public Company, founded by his mother, Chanaut Piyaoui, in 1948. He is also lauded as a passionate educator and firm believer of developing ASEAN hospitality talent, through hospitality schools such as Le Cordon Bleu Dusit Culinary School and programmes in cooperation with Lyceum of the Philippines. He served as president of the Thai Hotels Association for four consecutive terms, and of AHRA.

10. CHEW CHOON SENG

Chew Choon Seng joined Singapore Airlines (SIA) in 1972 and held



ANTHONY WONG

He even took it upon himself to promote Malaysia internationally, travelling to Europe on a shoestring budget at a time when European agents had not heard of Malaysia and South-east Asia.

many senior assignments before becoming its CEO (2003-2010). Since 2011, he is chairman of the Singapore Tourism Board. His humble and approachable ways belie his steeliness – as CEO, he navigated SIA out of turbulence and returned it to profitability – and are just some of his keys to opening doors wider for the sake of Singapore and ASEAN tourism industry betterment.

11. DANIEL CORPUZ

Daniel Corpuz's dedication to ASEAN tourism and conventions marketing and to the Philippine tourism industry is exemplary. The former Philippine undersecretary for tourism development retired two years ago and is now consultant to global tourism organisations. Corpuz was also dean and senior lecturer of the Asian Institute of Tourism, University of the Philippines. As former head of the then Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation, he was credited for the masterplan that made Manila a successful MICE city.

12. DIANA EE-TAN

In her illustrious tourism career, the low-profile Diana Ee-Tan has contributed greatly to Singapore and ASEAN tourism and convention marketing by helping local hospitality talent rise in the region, through her leadership at Raffles International and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Asia-Pacific. Today, Ee-Tan continues to contribute her expertise by being on boards of organisations and educational institutes including the Singapore Tourism Board, and the Singapore Hotel and Tourism Education Centre.

13. DHARMNOON PRACHUABMOH

Colourful and prolific, Dharmnoon Prachuabmoh headed the Tourism Authority of Thailand as governor from 1986 to 1994. He's widely credited for spearhead-

ing the *Amazing Thailand* campaign, which is still in use today. The jovial Dharmnoon is widely known among industry members as an approachable and hands-on leader who actively participated in many promotional trips and saw the benefits of cooperating closely with ASEAN counterparts and PATA to foster tourism development.

14. ELLY HUTABARAT

Elly Hutabarat has been active in ASEANTA since the 1990s and was its president from 2006 to 2007. A golden moment during her presidency was the launch of the *10 Perfect Paradise* website featuring products such as airline passes and ASEAN packages including combined ASEAN destination tours. At home, Elly is one of the founders and currently president of the Association of the Air Ticketing Companies.

15. FELIX CRUZ

South-east Asia's *Feel the Warmth* campaign was launched under Cruz's presidency at ASEANTA. He was also responsible for including LCCs in the association. He spent 31 years with Philippine Airlines (PAL) and secured traffic rights that continue till to-



DIANA EE-TAN

The low-profile but illustrious Ee-Tan had played a leading role at Raffles International and has contributed immensely to the marketing of Singapore and ASEAN tourism as well as grooming local hospitality talent.

day. He's proudest of helping to expand PAL's traffic rights from Narita to Fukuoka and Osaka in the late 80s.

16. GLENN DE SOUZA

A hotel veteran with more than 30 years under his belt, Glenn de Souza helped many ASEAN hotel owners in South-east Asia to think 'mid-market' as the region's middle class started to travel. He grew Best Western International's portfolio from a mere four hotels in Asia to 200. De Souza now spearheads his own company, Kosmopolitan Hospitality, based in Bangkok.

17. HO KWON PING

Long before environmental-friendly hotels became a trend, Ho Kwon Ping, executive chairman of Banyan Tree Holdings, turned a disused tin mine into Asia's first integrated destination resort, Laguna Phuket, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2016. He also reinvented the humble Asian massage into a multi-million-dollar spa business. Banyan Tree Holdings has created thousands of jobs for South-east Asians, with the Banyan Tree Spa Academy equipping Asians with skills that make them employable the world over.

18. INTHY DEUANSAWAN

Inthy Deuansawan's name is synonymous with Lao tourism. When tourists began trickling into the country in the 1990s, he quit a sales job and opened Khao Chai Deu restaurant in 1998, where his family noodle shop once stood. In 2004, he started Green Discovery, which is now the Lao leader in extreme adventures in nature. As few accommodation options were available to his clients, he started designing Inthira Hotels.

19. JANET TAN-COLLIS

Janet Tan-Collis and her husband Digby were among pioneers of inbound travel in the region, based in Singapore. The chief executive of East West Planners is also widely regarded as one of Asia's MICE industry veterans and till today champions the need for quality standards, greater cooperation between incentives and conventions, and the rise of young professionals in the industry.

20. JENNIE CHUA

The first local female general manager to run Raffles Hotel in the early 1990s, Jennie Chua made her mark as head of the Singapore

Convention Bureau for 11 years, even before Singapore had proper convention and exhibition centres. Along with counterparts in some ASEAN countries, the Philippines in particular, she established the Asian Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus in 1983. She is also celebrated for her achievements in other fields, having been a non-resident ambassador to the United Mexican States and to the Slovak Republic, and for her charity work.

21. JOSEPH CHEW

Joseph Chew, who worked with Singapore Airlines and was seconded to the Singapore Tourism Board, was an early champion of ASEAN marketing. He launched joint Singapore-Malaysia marketing campaigns to encourage longer stays. Chew recognised the potential of cruising in South-east Asia as early as the mid-1980s and worked with Indonesia to develop the fledgling industry. He was also involved in Singapore's first tourism masterplan. Launched in 1986, the S\$1 billion (US\$750 million) Tourism Product Development Plan preserved and restored what's left of heritage buildings in Singapore.

22. KAMALA SUKOSOL

Kamala Sukosol's father founded Siam Hotels & Resorts (now Sukosol Hotels) in 1939, but it was under her helm that the company became a hospitality pioneer in Pattaya, launching Siam Bayshore Resort & Spa in 1975 and Siam Bayview Hotel some eight years later. She is also an accomplished songbird and philanthropist. Proceeds from her concerts and albums were channelled to charities. In 2009, she was recognised in Forbes Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy list.

23. KOBKARN WATTANAVRANGKUL

The first female tourism minister of Thailand, Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul has been quick to embrace ASEAN tourism cooperation. Recognising that Thailand is the only country to share land borders with four ASEAN countries (Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar), she has been emphasising the opportunities from this connectivity and stepping up joint promotional efforts with the neighbours, including packages that twin Thailand with Myanmar or Vietnam.

24. KWEK LENG BENG

Singapore's most famous hotelier, Kwek Leng Beng, executive



KWEK LENG BENG

Singapore's most famous hotelier made the world sit up with his bold acquisitions, which has put South-east Asia and Asia on the map of the global hotel industry.



LUZI MATZIG

In his 40-year career in the ASEAN tour operating scene, the Swiss-born Matzig has blazed many trails, founding Asian Trails at age 50 after heading Diethelm Travel for nearly three decades.

chairman of City Developments Limited, and chairman of Millennium & Copthorne (M&C), needs no introduction. The real estate tycoon with a penchant for owning and developing hotels made the world sit up with his bold acquisitions and developments, a feat that helped raise awareness of the region's riches. Hotels such as the Grand Hotel Palace Rome, the world's only Beatles-inspired hotel, Hard Days Night Hotel in Liverpool count among his recent acquisitions.

25. KUSA PANYARACHUN

For an example of someone who is totally dedicated to his industry, look no further than Kusa Panyarachun who, in his 90s, still maintains an active presence at World Travel Services, Thailand's first travel agency in 1947. The elder brother of former Thai prime minister Anand Panyarachun set up the Thai chapter of PATA in 1972, and a Kusa Panyarachun Scholarship that donates to Thai students studying hospitality and tourism studies at university level.

26. LANCE GOKONGWEI

A mover-and-shaker in ASEAN's LCC sector, the 50-year-old executive guided Cebu Pacific (CEB) to an unprecedented expansion to get to its fleet of 49 Airbus and eight ATR aircraft today. As of 1H2015, CEB had a 60 per cent share of the domestic market and 18 per cent of all international passengers in the country. Under Gokongwei's stewardship, CEB acquired Singapore's Tigerair Philippines in early 2014 and rebranded it Cebgo.

27. LIM KOK THAY

Under his stewardship, the Genting Group established the Resorts World brand of integrated resorts in Asia, the US, Bahamas and UK. The pioneer in Asian cruising, Lim founded Star Cruises, subsidiary of Genting Hong Kong, in 1993. He played a pivotal role in the acquisition of Norwegian Cruise Line in 2000, the first time an Asian company purchased a major Western cruise brand. He then rejuvenated and grew it to be the third largest and most profitable cruise line on a per berth basis in the US. Today, Genting Hong Kong's portfolio also includes Crystal Cruises and Dream Cruises, Asia's first luxury cruise line.

28. LOH LIK PENG

Founder/director of Unlisted Collection, Loh Lik Peng, is instrumental in the boutique hotel wave in ASEAN, transforming a shophouse in Singapore into Hotel 1929 in 2000. He continues to set hospitality trends, incubating projects and oversees a collection of 27 properties and restaurants in Singapore, Shanghai, Sydney and London. Loh also finds time to help young hoteliers/restaurateurs as second vice president of the Singapore Hotel Association.

29. LUU MENG

Having grown up in a refugee camp, Luu Meng returned to Phnom Penh at age 18 before attending a hotel school in Thailand, where he made it his mission to reinvent traditional recipes that were wiped out by the Khmer Rouge. Meng, who has worked with celebrity chefs the likes of Gordon Ramsay and Anthony Bourdain, opened Malis restaurant in 2005, followed by Topaz, Yi-Sang, Khéma and Almond Hotel, sowing seeds for a new breed of fine Cambodian dining. In 2015, the president of Cambodia Hotel Association and Cambodia Chef Federation was crowned Asia's Top Chef.

30. LUZI MATZIG

In his 40-year career, the former head of Diethelm Travel and founder of Asian Trails opened doors for an influx of European markets to Thailand, Mekong and the wider ASEAN region. Always active in ASEAN private sector associations and PATA, Matzig now chairs Asian Trails, which has grown into one of the region's leading DMCs with 33 offices and over 600 staff in Thailand, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet-



LOH LIK PENG

A lawyer turned hotelier and restaurateur, the dynamic Loh is a maverick in the ASEAN hospitality business, creating some of the hottest boutique hotels and restaurants around the globe under the Unlisted Collection.

nam, while satisfying his love for aviation with VIP Jets, which offers private charters on a Cessna twin-jet aircraft in Asia.

31. MARIO HARDY

Before his current appointment as CEO of PATA, Mario Hardy was already closely tied with the non-profit, having held positions of COO and chairman of the board of trustees of PATA Foundation. As CEO, Hardy steered the association in important new directions including putting focus on digital initiatives. The soft-spoken Hardy started his career in aviation in 1985. He is also a serial angel investor who supports travel start-ups in the region.

32. MEITY ROBOT

Meity Robot is one of Indonesia’s tourism muscles, responsible for bridging international dialogues through the Indonesia-America Friendship Association and PATA Indonesia Chapter, which she chaired from 1995 to 1997. She helmed the Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA) Jakarta for three terms (1990-1999) and was president of ASITA’s central board from 1999 to 2003. She was also a board member of PATA (1995-1997) and of PATA Industry Council (1997-1999). Further attesting to her contributions, she was a founding member of the Indonesia Women in Travel (WIPI) in 1990 and its chairperson from 1992 to 1994.

33. NGUYEN THI PHUONG THAO

Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao is the mastermind behind VietJet Air. As co-founder and major shareholder in Sovico, which owns VietJet Air and HD Bank, Thao launched the LCC in 2011 and grew its fleet to 29 aircraft. Today, it takes the largest share of the local air transport market, carrying 20 million passengers. The airline also made headlines in 2012 when its flight attendants wore bikinis onboard. Thao also owns three luxury resorts in Vietnam and mixed-use project Dragon City.

34. ONG BENG SENG

The co-founder and managing director of Hotel Properties Limited (HPL) is the driving force behind the Formula One event in Singapore through privately-owned Singapore GP. HPL, formed in January 1980, owns assets such as the Hilton and Four Seasons Singapore, and Ong’s Four Seasons Resort Jimbaran Bay speaks of authenticity – long before the word becomes the buzzword it is today.



RICHARD HELFER

The veteran hotelier conceptualised and developed the Raffles brand, growing the portfolio to a vast empire of 36 properties in 31 destinations. One Farrer Hotel & Spa is his latest brainchild.

35. PANGA VATHANAKUL

The owner and managing director of family-run Royal Cliff Hotels Group pioneered one of Pattaya’s first and biggest properties in 1973. Who could forget the ATF that was held in the hotel rooms there? Today, the property comprises four five-star hotels with 1,090 keys, and a world-class convention and exhibition centre – no longer the need to turn rooms into buyer-meets-seller spaces.

36. PEK HOCK THIAM

The jovial Pek Hock Thiam was Sentosa’s CEO before he joined the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board as its director and executive director between 1989 and 1994. Prior to that, he was air transport director at the Ministry of Communications when Singapore Changi Airport was being built. The airport opened in record time in 1981, and what Singapore achieved spurred Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Jakarta to develop their international gateways.

37. PHORNSIRI MANOHARN

Phornsiri Manoharn brings acumen with a lot of approachability and charm to the ASEAN NTO sector. Always active in the ASEAN public sector and in PATA, she joined the Tourist Organisation of Thailand (now Tourism Authority of Thailand; TAT) in 1970 and spent the next four decades in postings in London, Singapore and Sydney. As TAT governor from 2007 to 2009, she championed Thailand as a year-round destination by creating interest in traditionally lean travel months. After retiring in 2009, Phornsiri stayed active as an advisor to TAT’s board.



SHEIKH JAMALUDDIN BIN SHEIKH MOHAMED

The face of Brunei tourism, Sheikh – as he is simply known – played a pivotal role in the development of his country’s tourism sector. He was instrumental in setting up Brunei Tourism and under his lead as director of tourism shone the spotlight on Brunei as a golf destination and brought key golfing events to the sultanate.

38. PRASERT PRASARTTONG-OSOTH

Prasert Prasarttong-Osoth founded Bangkok Airways in 1968, raising connectivity within ASEAN in a “boutique” fashion. Bangkok Airways boasts its own airport on Koh Samui and wholly owns Siem Reap Airways. In late 2014, it launched its IPO with proceeds used to expand its fleet and support future growth. Watch him harness the medical tourism market next. Bangkok Airways, which also owns Bangkok Dusit Medical Services, Thailand’s largest private hospital network, is redeveloping the Swissotel Nai Lert Park in Bangkok as a medical haven.

39. RAMON JIMENEZ JR

With Ramon Jimenez Jr as Philippine tourism secretary, air connectivity improved markedly after the Department of Tourism approached airlines to include the Philippines in their routes. Aside from hosting ATF 2016 and helping



NGUYEN THI PHUONG THAO

The self-made billionaire is among the most powerful and influential in Asia’s business scene, establishing LCC VietJet Air in 2011 and owning several five-star hotels and resorts in Vietnam. The successful businesswoman is now planning an IPO for VietJet Air.

to plot the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025, Jimenez and team also engaged the local industry to support the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals. Under him, campaigns including *It’s More Fun in the Philippines*, *Visit Philippines 2015*, and *Visit Philippines Again 2016* were rolled out to considerable success.

40. RICHARD HELFER

Before Richard Helfer came along, there was just one Raffles Hotel in Singapore. Under him, the portfolio grew to 36 hotels/resorts with over 12,000 rooms in 31 destinations raking in annual revenues of over S\$1 billion (US\$720 million) – the first Asian-based company to reach this milestone. Helfer also launched Amrita Spa and conceptualised over 160 F&B concepts, including the Equinox at Swissotel The Stamford. The chairman of RCH International and Creo Lifestyle has unveiled his latest baby, One Farrer Hotel & Spa, Singapore, and continues to be involved in sustainable social enterprises and community development projects.

41. ROBERT KHOO

Robert Khoo is hailed as the man behind the popular NATAS travel fairs. In 2000, he handed his agency to his brother to become chief executive of NATAS. While the fair debuted in 1987 with 48 exhibitors and 60 booths, the last one under his charge in 2013 attracted 156 exhibitors and 1,060 booths. Following his exit, Khoo completed his PhD in education before returning as chief executive of NATAS subsidiary Tourism Management Institute of Singapore. Khoo developed a network of industry colleagues at ASEANTA meetings since the 1980s, allowing him to garner consensus when he became president in 1993.

42. SHEIKH JAMALUDDIN BIN SHEIKH MOHAMED

Known simply as “Sheikh” in ASEAN tourism circles, he played an unequivocal role in the development of Brunei’s tourism. He was instrumental in setting up Brunei Tourism and served as its director from 1996 to 2012, leaving briefly in 1999 to head Royal Brunei Airlines. At the airline, he worked to pave way for female pilots. He spotlighted Brunei as a golf destination by bringing the Asian Tour and European Senior Tour to its shores. In 1992, when he was head of the Brunei Investment Agency in London, he became one of few in the region to be accorded an Order of the British Empire.

WILLIAM HEINECKE

The American-born tycoon has built Minor International Public Company into a global hospitality, restaurant and lifestyle empire since its inception five decades ago.

**43. SOTHO TAN**

Among Cambodia's first post-war tour guides, Sotho Tan was well-equipped to launch her own venture in 1990. Having started out as a small family-run travel company in Phnom Penh, Hanuman Travel quickly established itself by organising ticket and travel arrangements for more than 7,500 peacekeepers and personnel during the UN's presence in the country in the early 1990s. Sotho then expanded Hanuman to Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. In 2000, Hanuman Films was launched, helping with the making of *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, and most recently *The Last Reel*. In 2004, HanumanAlaya, Siem Reap's boutique residence opened its doors.

44. SUTHIKIATI CHIRATHIVAT

Suthikiati Chirathivat stands at the centre of a sprawling family tree and a growing empire of hotels, convention centres and retail outlets. Now chairman of the board of the Central Plaza Hotel, he served as president and CEO until August 2005, and has driven the company's growth from its first Bangkok hotel and convention centre in 1983 to its current portfolio of 69 properties across six brands. He is also vice-chairman of the Central Group, chairman of Post Publishing, chairman of Central Restaurants and sits on the board of Central Pattana.

45. TAN WEE KIAT

The first chief executive of Singapore's National Parks Board (NParks; 1996-2006), Tan Wee Kiat is known affectionately as the country's green thumb. As CEO of Singapore's Gardens by the Bay, he saw the S\$1 billion project from conception to birth. In the 1990s, he coined the term "city in a garden", which encapsulates a unique aspect of Singapore. Tan also started the National Orchid Garden in 2005 and spearheaded initiatives such as the Park Connector Network. Under his stewardship, accessibility to nature areas like the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and Pulau Ubin was improved, and amenities like the

MacRitchie Boardwalk and Tree-Top Walk were put in place for the masses.

46. TONY FERNANDES

Against the odds, Tony Fernandes turned AirAsia into a successful budget airline and public listed company after purchasing the ailing carrier in 2001. With the turnaround, he revolutionised how people travel in South-east Asia as was envisioned in the AirAsia tagline "Now everybody can fly", and created a monopoly of new routes linking hubs with secondary cities. In 2003, he successfully lobbied for the Malaysian government to initiate the open skies agreement with neighbouring countries. As a result, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore granted the airline and other LCCs landing rights.

47. TUNKU ISKANDAR TUNKU ABDULLAH

"TI" as he is fondly called, has had a big hand in shaping tourism planning in the region. As pro-tem member in the set up of the Federation of ASEAN Travel Associations in the early 1990s, he oversaw the writing of its constitution. And in the 1990s, as ASEANTA's secretary-general, he was key to revamping it from an Indonesia-centric association of individual companies into a federation of national associations. He also championed the Visit ASEAN Pass as ASEANTA's chairman of the Intra-ASEAN Travel Committee in the early 2000s. And as president of the Malaysian Association of Tour & Travel Agents (MATTA) from 1983 to 1988, and 1999 to 2006, he set up the MATTA website and urged association members to use the Internet to promote businesses.

48. WICHIT NARANONG

Nicknamed the 'father of Phuket tourism', Wichit Naranong has been credited for many of the destination's victories. The Phuket native lobbied for the government to see the island's tourism potential when it was still a relative backwater. In 1976, he opened the Pearl Hotel in Phuket Town, which today stands as a major

landmark. A decade later in 1986, he launched the Pearl Village Resort in Nai Yang, which would later become the famed Indigo Pearl Resort (recently renamed The Slate). Vichit was also a former senator and president of the Thai Hotels Association. He also took time to be involved in the ASEAN private sector.

49. WILLIAM HEINECKE

Known today as the billionaire chairman of Minor International, Bill Heinecke's tenacity was evident from a young age, when he became advertising manager of the now-defunct Bangkok World at 17 before going on to start his own companies. In 1967, he founded Minor Holdings, which would later grow into the Minor Group spanning a multinational hotel, restaurant and retail empire that would outlast the economic and political crises in the ensuing four decades. He boasts major homegrown brands such as Anantara and runs properties under the Four Seasons and St Regis banners in Thailand. Most recently, he completed the acquisition of Portugal's Tivoli Hotels & Resorts.

50. YANTI SUKAMDANI

During Yanti Sukamdani's tenure as president of ASEANTA (2011-2013), the organisation reported several notable activities, including efforts in 2011 to promote the region as South-east Asia with the website www.southeastasia.org, and the signing of a declaration to bridge business between ASEANTA members and Japan. Apart from being on the board of commissioners of the homegrown Sahid Hotels, Yanti also spearheaded and held seats in the Indonesia Hotel & Restaurant Association and Indonesia Tourism Promotion Board, and was president of the ASEAN Hotels and Restaurants Association.

Editors' Note: Many people have contributed to ASEAN tourism development and promotion, but space allows us to feature only 50. As *Visit ASEAN@50 Golden Celebration* is a year-long campaign, do send us the names of those who you feel should not be forgotten – *TTG Asia* has a dedicated ASEAN page in every issue of 2017 and is delighted to shine a spotlight on them. Send to ttgnewsdesk@ttgasia.com, subject line: ASEAN 50 PERSONALITIES.

Raini Hamdi, Paige Lee Pei Qi, Michael Sanderson, Mimi Hudoyo, S Puvaneswary, Rosa Ocampo, Caroline Boey, Marissa Carruthers and Bernie Rosenbloom contributed to this feature.

In loving memory

ALOIS FASSBIND

Hailed as the father of Pattaya tourism, Alois Fassbind had poured his efforts tirelessly into the destination out of a love for it and a strategic drive to fill rooms at the Royal Cliff Beach Resort Pattaya, which he helmed as its general manager. A large person in every sense of the word, he was also a great entertainer, a bon vivant and a host who was generous to a fault and made everyone feel welcome. His legacy lives on today through his charity, Fassbind Medical Home within the Banglamung Old People's Home.

JOOP AVE

One could bet on the outspoken and controversial Joop Ave to shake things up at ATF or PATA where, as Indonesia's minister of tourism, post & telecommunications (1993-1998) and chairman of the ASEAN Sub-Committee on Tourism (1983-1986), he would bring a lot of arguments to the table on issues pertaining to policy, marketing and development. He co-authored a number of books on Indonesia and tourism. He died in February 2014 after a long illness.

PAKIR SINGH

A pioneer of hospitality training in the region and strong proponent of ASEAN tourism cooperation, Pakir Singh was a luminary with the gift of the gab and the ambition and steel to make visions happen. He was the man who helped set up the Singapore Hotel Training & Education Centre (SHATEC) in 1983, the region's first dedicated hotel school. He was CEO of Singapore Hotel Association (SHA) and SHATEC from 1979 to 2005, and also served as secretary-general of the ASEANTA with the secretariat based at SHA for many years. The early success of SHATEC spawned other hotel schools in the region, with SHATEC sharing its expertise to further the education cause in ASEAN and wider Asia. Dusit Thani College, for example, was set up with SHATEC's expertise.

PR GOPAL

PR Gopal was an outspoken, larger-than-life, chain-smoking travel agent who was a natural leader and generous mentor who helmed and made the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS) a force to be reckoned with. Together with his Malaysian colleagues, he pushed for ATF to help the small group (not yet 10 member countries) to work together to promote and develop tourism to South-east Asia in the early 1980s. During ASEANTA meetings at ATF, Gopal came up with marketing and promotion ideas to lure more longhaul tourists from the West, and for them to stay longer by highlighting the diversity and unique attractions and culture of the ASEAN founding members.

SUSAN TENG

Susan Teng, a veteran who helped nurture the Singapore outbound and wellness market, is also affectionately known as the Singapore 'Spa Lady'. Teng worked for more than 20 years as managing director of Worldwide Honey Tours. As president of the Spa & Wellness Association Singapore, she introduced the first spa insurance scheme for consumer protection, spa accreditation by Casetrust and sat on the advisory panel of Singapore Polytechnic to launch a diploma course on fitness and wellness. She was also chairman of the outbound committee of the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS) for 11 years from March 2003 to April 2014.



Who's who of ASEAN private sector

ASEAN's tourism sector is represented by various divisions, each with its own important role to play to market the diverse region to visitors. **S Puvaneswary** profiles three of them

ASEAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION (ASEANTA)

ASEANTA was established on March 27, 1971, with the aim of providing a common body to facilitate interaction between tourism players in the private sector and the government bodies in South-east Asia for the tourism growth in the region. Its other objective is to provide a common platform for South-east Asian tourism players to interact and have a voice.

From its humble beginnings, ASEANTA is well established today and have members from both the public and private tourism sectors across all 10 ASEAN member countries. Members include NTOs, national tourism and hotel associations, and airlines based in the region.

ASEANTA president, Aileen Clemente, said: "The biggest achievement in marketing ASEAN is the fact that the private sector is putting itself at the forefront alongside the NTOs. You will see more of that happening in the succeeding months."

Among recent milestones include ASEANTA reorganising itself in 2014. That year also saw ASEANTA launching a campaign among ASEAN NTOs to emphasise the partnerships and role of the private sector as an important contributor to the successful integration of ASEAN's tourism sector, especially in marketing ASEAN as a single tourism destination.

In November 2015, ASEANTA was re-registered as an association with the Registry of Societies Malaysia with amendments

in its by-laws to include membership of education institutions with tourism and the meetings and events sector, among others. That same year, ASEANTA was invited to participate in the ASEAN Business Council as its research partner for tourism.

ASEANTA's plans in the pipeline include supporting activities around the Visit ASEAN@50 Golden Celebration campaign, such as Visit ASEAN@50 tour packages, ASEANTA Excellence Awards for the travel and tourism industry, a photo contest and a food trail.



The biggest achievement in marketing ASEAN is the fact that the private sector is putting itself at the forefront alongside the NTOs.

AILEEN CLEMENTE
PRESIDENT, ASEANTA

FEDERATION OF ASEAN TRAVEL AGENTS ASSOCIATIONS (FATA)

Established in early 1990s, FATA's role is to bring into greater focus the issues and challenges faced by travel associations.

FATA aims to contribute to the growth and development of the travel industry in ASEAN by providing effective advocacy in industry and government affairs, training, education and communication initiatives as well as marketing opportunities, in order to achieve the highest standards of services and facilities for travellers and tourists while upholding the dignity and ethics of the tour and travel business.

On FATA's biggest achievements, Hamzah Rahmat, president of FATA, said: "We have embarked on Domestic ASEAN which promotes intra-ASEAN travel. In all travel fairs held in our member countries, ASEAN as a destination has been given great prominence. Intra-region arrivals in each South-east Asian country are also on the rise. This speaks volumes

of the result achieved thus far.”

He added: “When we create a buzz among member countries to visit South-east Asia, the message will catch on in markets outside of the region and travellers there will be curious and want to discover what we have.”

Hamzah said new countries and young visitors from longhaul markets should be targeted, as they perceive ASEAN in the same way as Europe.

“This is where ASEAN is appealing as a multi-destination and cultural holiday region,” he said.

In March 2016, FATA joined the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA).

“Joining WTAAA has allowed for exchange of information and promotions, and an opportunity to reach a wider market. All information and promotional messages of ASEAN are channelled to WTAAA, which in turn shares it with its members. When the world economy recovers in a couple of years, we will reap the fruits of our labour today,” Hamzah said.

ASEAN HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION (AHRA)

One of the key reasons for the establishment of AHRA in 1971 was to create a platform for the national associations of hotels and restaurants in ASEAN member countries to come together to share insights and best practices.

The two broad aims of AHRA are to promote international, regional and domestic tourism, and to advance the business of hotels and restaurants within the South-east Asia region.

Cheah Swee Hee, president of AHRA, said: “I believe our biggest achievement in marketing ASEAN is our strong working relationships with NTOs, airlines, travel, tour and transport operators, hotels and restaurants in the region through ASEANTA. This strong bond shared by all stakeholders strategically promotes our region’s rich and diverse offerings, and ASEAN as a single destination.”

“My hope is for AHRA to continue to grow in stature so as to be an even more effective platform to increase business and raise standards for hotels and restaurants in the region.”

Cheah added that AHRA members are working with their respective NTOs to put together special packages to commemorate ASEAN’s 50th anniversary in 2017 and beyond.

Meanwhile, AHRA will continue to promote multiple destination events and cultures in ASEAN member countries through two new websites that will be launched in 3Q2017.



When we create a buzz among member countries to visit South-east Asia, the message will catch on in markets outside of the region.

HAMZAH RAHMAT
PRESIDENT,
FATA

Mutual cooperation for the greater good



I GEDE ARDIKA
MINISTER OF CULTURE
AND TOURISM, INDONESIA
(2000–2004)

*** ASEAN involvement** I was involved in ASEAN for more than 25 years, ever since I headed a hotel school in Bali until I retired as minister of culture and tourism in 2004.

*** Golden moment in ASEAN marketing** Reaching the agreement of ASEAN as a single destination.

*** Favourite ASEAN tagline** *ASEAN, Single Destination*, which reflected ASEAN’s spirit as one community.

*** Most memorable incident** During an ASEAN Tourism Minister Meeting in Bangkok one year, the Thai tourism minister hosted a welcome dinner onboard a boat and invited his guests to sing a song of their country.

The tourism ministers of Malaysia and Brunei both sang *Burung Kakak Tua* and claimed that was their countries’ song. I too sang *Burung Kakak Tua* and said that song was created by Indonesia’s ancestors.

For that reason, I proposed *Burung Kakak Tua* as an ASEAN song to everyone’s consensus – an ASEAN principle in decision-making – and we continued to enjoy the dinner cruise. Viva ASEAN!

*** Hero in ASEAN marketing** Sheikh Jamaluddin Sheikh Mohamed, Brunei’s former director of marketing director general of tourism, who led the marketing of ASEAN, *Single Destination* when it was launched. – **Mimi Hudoyo**



PHORNSIRI MANOHARN
GOVERNOR, TOURISM
AUTHORITY OF THAILAND
(2007–2009)

*** Golden moments in ASEAN marketing** The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) started more intensive marketing of ASEAN around 2003–2004, working with

regional NTOs to launch bilateral promotion brochures featuring taglines such as *The Golden Civilisations* (Thailand and Myanmar) and *The Reflection of Everlasting Civilisations* (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand). We worked with the private sector to promote these destinations and roll out multi-country itineraries.

The launch of ATF in Malaysia in 1981 is definitely another highlight, as it marks the joint collaboration between the public and private sectors while member countries take turns to host ATF.

*** Most memorable incident** In the mid-1980s, I worked with Singapore’s Tradewinds Airlines and SA Tours to organise 12 charter flights to Utapao for Pattaya packages. It was the first time a commercial airline came into Utapao and it became the talk of the town. We even ran full-page joint advertisements on *The Straits Times* and *Lianhe Zaobao*.

*** Hero in ASEAN marketing** Paisan Wangsai, who passed away in 2006. All of us in TAT and the Thai travel industry would call him Mr ASEAN, as he was instrumental in promoting tourism to and within the Mekong region.

*** What’s needed from the private sector** The private sector should work closer with the governments to offer new products and marketing. We had the *Visit ASEAN* campaign in 2002, and ASEANTA launched the ASEAN Circle Pass and ASEAN Hip Hop Pass. We should promote more multi-country packages in ASEAN for long-haul markets and identify target segments – youth travel will be a good one. – **Xinyi Liang-Pholsena**



DANIEL CORPUZ
UNDERSECRETARY FOR
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT,
PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT
OF TOURISM (2011–2014)

*** Favourite ASEAN tagline** I might be biased but the 1970s tourism campaign of the Philippines with the *Where Asia Wears a Smile* tagline was a perfect description of the destination.

*** Hero in ASEAN marketing** Pakir Singh of Singapore’s SHATEC. While he was not directly involved in the marketing field, his pioneering and dedicated efforts

in raising the quality of tourism education and skills training led the way for the region to elevate quality of service as a promotional tool in showcasing our tourism products.

*** What’s needed from the private sector** Embracing a deeper commitment to designing and pushing ASEAN tour programmes featuring multiple (at least two countries) destinations. It could be initially for special interest or niche segments, say student groups for heritage tours, multi-country diving experiences or even trekking and foodie trips.

Also, the private sector should push harder to completely take over the organisation of TRAVEX at the annual ATF and let the NTOs concern themselves with the government meetings. I’d also like to see a more active role of the private sector in pushing for more tourism investments in the region. – **Rosa Ocampo**



ELLY HUTABARAT
PRESIDENT OF ASEANTA
(2006–2007)

*** ASEANTA involvement** I started joining ASEANTA meetings in the early 1990s. My first ASEANTA meeting was in Davao. Pak Sri Mulyono Herlambang, who at that time was the president of ASITA (Association of Indonesian Tours & Travel Agencies), introduced me to ASEANTA.

*** Golden moments in marketing ASEAN** When I was president, the ASEANTA board successfully launched the *Visit ASEAN*, *Perfect 10 Paradise* website. We have all the products on this site, including airline passes, multi-destination packages comprising at least two ASEAN countries and a beautiful ASEAN song. Tunku Iskandar was instrumental in making this possible.

*** Heroes in ASEAN marketing** Tunku Iskandar, for his efforts in marketing the ASEAN countries as one destination. He was so committed to market ASEAN as one destination with its ASEAN, *10 Perfect Destinations* tagline.

I would also nominate ASEANTA president, Aileen Clemente, who tirelessly speaks at international events to promote ASEAN and its tourism activities.

*** What’s needed from the private sector** We need to contribute to the creation of ASEAN packages. This should be done by a reputable company but every tour operator in ASEAN can sell the packages. – **Mimi Hudoyo**

Building ASEAN

as a cruise playground

Cruise companies are hoisting their sails for South-east Asia, where holidaymakers are developing a taste for cruise holidays. Leading players discuss trends in the region's markets and share their hopes for a brighter future



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BUHDY BOK
PRESIDENT,
COSTA GROUP ASIA

What is ASEAN's potential for leisure cruising?

Costa Asia is excited about the huge growth opportunities and is anticipating the rapidly rising demand for cruising in South-east Asia. We expect cruising to become even more popular, especially among key market segments such as families, young travellers and incentive groups.

Industry numbers in the next five years are very promising. By 2020, the total number of passengers will grow by over 14 per cent to 3.8 million annually, according to the Asia Cruise Association.

Nowadays, Asian travellers are more educated on the benefits of cruising and there is greater awareness and appreciation of cruising as a holiday option.

Asian travellers will desire more unique experiences alongside the convenience of hassle-free and relaxed vacations. This fits well with our Italy at Sea cruise offerings, which aim to give guests a rich and immersive experience in Italian culture, from hospitality to cuisine and art.

To accommodate the growing demand, Costa Group Asia will continue to expand in Asia-Pacific and China, strengthening the group's position with the diversity of innovative products. Other than developing Costa's fleet in the region, the group will also introduce sister brands, Carnival Cruise Line and AIDA Cruises.

In anticipation of rapidly rising demand from passengers across all Asian markets, Costa Cruises will bring *Costa neoRomantica* to Asia in April 2017, further increasing Costa brand's regional capacity. Costa Asia will continue to develop new itineraries and tailor-made products and services for Asian passengers, e.g. Carnival of Venice programme.

With *Costa Fortuna* joining the Costa's Asian fleet in 2016, we see a growing source market, especially among the most burgeoning middle to upper-middle class in Asia. The majority of guests come from the homeport and nearby countries due to proximity.

Taking the recent Singapore sailing onboard *Costa Victoria* for example, the guest profile tended to be families from Singapore and nearby South-east Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand.

What would you like to see happen to grow ASEAN's cruise business?

Top: SuperStar Gemini calling in Singapore

“
Nowadays, Asian travellers are more educated on the benefits of cruising and there is greater awareness and appreciation of cruising as a holiday option.

Cruise holidays in Asia-Pacific are still relatively new. Certainly, more can still be done to promote cruising itself as a holiday option, and expand the customer base to other segments, such as incentive travel groups.

Visa restrictions and limitations on port infrastructure are major challenges facing the cruise industry in the region. If Asia, including ASEAN, can take this into account, it will accelerate the development and quality of the industry.

Also, there needs to be continuous offerings of fresh and all-round cruising experience with diverse and customised offerings onboard to recruit new customers and retain loyal customers.

Costa Cruises is dedicated to supporting travel agents by providing sales trainings and fam trips. With this, we hope agents can better educate customers about the benefits of cruising and the trainings could help them to provide an all-round cruise holiday experience for their customers.



SEAN TREACY
MANAGING DIRECTOR
FOR SINGAPORE AND
SOUTH-EAST ASIA, ROYAL
CARIBBEAN CRUISES

What is ASEAN's potential for leisure cruising?

The Asian cruise market, including ASEAN member countries, has been experiencing strong growth in the recent years.

Having been based in South-east Asia for close to 10 years, Royal Caribbean International sees strong potential in the

region both as a source market and destination, with its growing middle-class population, greater interest among consumers and trade for cruising vis-à-vis traditional land-based options, as well as favourable year-round climate and numerous attractive port destinations.

All this has been boosted in recent years by the new cruise terminal in Singapore that offers larger berthing capacity, greater efforts by the region's governments to develop cruise tourism, the industry and infrastructure, and more cruise lines and ships entering the region, such as Asia's largest *Quantum of the Seas* in 2015 and new sister ship *Ovation of the Seas* in June 2016.

The above factors have contributed to our continual growth in South-east Asia over the years, in terms of guest numbers, number of sailings, ship and fleet size. The more recent being *Mariner of the Seas*' successful season of over 30 sailings in 2016, with its longest-ever season of 40-plus sailings lined up by the year-end. Between



April and June 2016, we have added a number of regional cruises on sister ships *Voyager of the Seas* and *Ovation of the Seas*, with all of their sailings fully booked.

We are confident that with greater cooperation between cruise companies, trade and government across the region, there

Top: North Star, a jewel-like glass capsule that offers 360-degree views, on board *Quantum of the Seas*

is a lot to grow and explore for cruising in South-east Asia.

What would you like to see happen to grow ASEAN's cruise business?

A lot more still needs to be done in South-east Asia to develop more ports to accommodate larger cruise ships as well as the road and tourism infrastructure near the ports, and adding more ports (beyond) popular ones in South-east Asia such as Singapore, Penang and Phuket for the creation of more attractive itineraries.

As for growing the MICE market, we will continue to tap onto our trade partners and invest in travel agent training in MICE business. It is essential for us to boost their cruise product knowledge, especially of the new ships.

Meanwhile, the Singapore Tourism Board's Tourism Development Fund – which supports cruise charter businesses out from Singapore by trade partners – is a positive example of efforts by government partners to boost the industry's efforts.



FARRIEK TAWFIK
DIRECTOR OF SOUTH-EAST
ASIA, PRINCESS CRUISES

What is ASEAN's potential for leisure cruising?

It is heartening to see more travellers choose cruise holidays in Asia. Passenger capacity is expected to grow 39 per cent year-on-year for 2016 to 2017, surpassing the current three million passenger record for the first time.

There is a gradual perception shift – cruising is becoming an ideal first choice rather than an alternative vacation. As consumers in the region become more discerning, they know that a cruise trip allows everyone in their family and social network to experience a rich variety of cuisines, cultures and activities regardless of age and preferences.

The growth potential for South-east Asia's cruise industry lies in addressing the needs of emerging traveller profiles. Princess Cruises provides a multitude of entertainment and activities for multigenerational travellers, millennials, families with young children and

first-time cruisers.

It is also about consistently moving away from the dated perceptions to accurately position cruising as a vibrant holiday with endless exhilarating possibilities for everyone.

What would you like to see happen to grow ASEAN's cruise business?

Based on Cruise Lines International Association's projections, Asia's cruise industry is set to grow 14 per cent annually to reach 3.7 million passengers by 2017.

To increase both leisure and corporate incentive cruise travel in this region, changing perceptions will remain one of the biggest challenges for us.

To address that, we as an industry need to create stronger awareness and engagement with travellers. For instance, we hope to work more closely with travel agents to promote the appeal of leisure and corporate incentive cruise travel. We will also continue to collaborate with tourism boards and government bodies to motivate stronger interest in cruising as a holiday option.

Catering to the specific preferences of the local market will remain pivotal to growing cruise demand. To address the needs of different guests from South-east Asia, when our third home-ported season begins, we will have onboard *Diamond Princess* a multilingual crew in guest-facing positions; programmes and amenities to suit local preferences; and local food on our dining room menus to complement the international cuisine offering.



The potential for leisure cruising in ASEAN remains promising, as sustained growth in the region continues to expand the middle class, stimulating the cruise tourism industry.



MICHAEL GOH
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT –
SALES, STAR CRUISES

What is ASEAN's potential for leisure cruising?

The potential for leisure cruising in ASEAN remains promising, as sustained growth in the region continues to expand the middle class, stimulating the cruise tourism industry.

More travellers are discovering cruising as a vacation choice that offers value, convenience and enrichment, making ASEAN an important source market. Also, the region is fast gaining recognition as a leading cruise destination that is supported by a growing cruise tourism network, economy and infrastructure, and is also rich in culture, heritage and natural beauty.

We continue to observe a year-on-year growth in the number of passengers cruising with Star Cruises. For the ASEAN cruise circuit, the majority of our guests are from within the region. A sizeable number is also from neighbouring Asian countries such as India,

Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and Japan.

At Star Cruises, we continue to grow the contemporary market segment in ASEAN and across Asia, offering unique itineraries and activities for the respective markets.

We will continue to actively work with the relevant authorities to share cruise-friendly measures, and to further develop the cruise tourism industry across the region.

What would you like to see happen to grow ASEAN's cruise business?

In order to grow the overall cruise business and infrastructure across the region, it's important that the relevant stakeholders from both the government and private sectors continue to work collectively, both on a domestic and regional level.

There is also a constant need to educate and increase awareness of cruising as a vacation option that best suits today's lifestyle, as well as a venue destination for MICE events.

Hence, we continue to work closely with our trade partners and intermediaries at all levels, imparting regular and updated training skills to promote awareness and growth of the cruise tourism industry.

Star Cruises remains committed to Asia, having recently announced the order of two Global Class cruise ships to be delivered in 2019 and 2020 and homeported in Asia, which will cater to the increasing demands of both the leisure and MICE businesses in ASEAN and across Asia.



MARNIE TARSINOS
DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL
SALES, CRYSTAL CRUISES

What is ASEAN’s potential for leisure cruising?

The potential is tremendous and while a few key markets in Asia are somewhat developed for cruising, as a whole we have barely scratched the surface. We continue to see exceptional growth in family group travel, with multi-generations enjoying the variety of experiences onboard Crystal. Crystal has a children’s programme with thoughtful, age-

appropriate activities. Crystal has a Nobu restaurant on two ships included in the value of the cruise fare. Also included are beverages, lectures, and a wide variety of activities of interest to the market. We see the opportunity for South-east Asian guests not only travelling within the region, but seeking destinations such as the Mediterranean, Baltic, South America, Australia and beyond. We see this trend in the luxury sector as this market prefers travelling to global destinations outside of Asia.

What would you like to see happen to grow ASEAN’s cruise business?

We would like to see the younger generation of travel professionals not shy away from selling luxury; many of them admit hesitation in selling US\$10,000-\$400,000 for a holiday. We would like to see them shift their mindset and qualify the clients’ wishes and match the client to the experience. It is not about price, it is about value for experience. When agents sell and overcome objections based on value, they will see their repeat business grow and more opportunities in upselling one rung of the ladder at a time. By focusing on this concept, FIT, family travel, group travel and MICE business will continue to grow exponentially. It’s important to remember Crystal has grown past two ships – we now have river, yacht and private air options.



STEVE ODELL
SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT
AND MANAGING DIRECTOR
ASIA PACIFIC, NORWEGIAN
CRUISE LINE HOLDINGS

What is ASEAN’s potential for leisure cruising?

According to the Singapore Tourism Board, South-east Asia has been singled out as a region with immense potential to be the “Caribbean of the East”. ASEAN is home to a large and growing middle class with rising household and disposable incomes, which is key to unlock-

ing greater consumer spending. With growing purchasing power comes greater aspirations, driving stronger demand for travel and cruising. South-east Asia is definitely a growing market in terms of travellers and destinations. Travellers are getting more mature in cruising and appreciating the hassle-free benefit that cruising provides. Family travellers prefer South-east Asian voyages for the benefits of convenience. The *Norwegian Star* will start its deployment from Hong Kong on January 16, 2017 and cruise to Sydney via Vietnam, Singapore, Bali and several northern Australian ports. It will cater to Asia-Pacific travellers.

What would you like to see happen to grow ASEAN’s cruise business?

We’d like support from governments in improving cruise infrastructure, providing tourism training and education to supply a trained workforce, easing visa rules for cruise travellers, and driving joint consumer campaigns. We will continually enhance Norwegian Cruise Line’s product quality and service standard to cater to guests’ needs, develop more bespoke cruise voyages and excursions for South-east Asian travellers and MICE organisers, and keep Norwegian Cruise Line top of mind for repeat guests and consumers who are new to cruising.



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ASEAN tourism at a glance

A look at some of the key numbers, milestones and memorable quotes surrounding ASEAN’s travel and tourism sector



50

The number of cross-border travel packages in South-east Asia that will be rolled out to highlight the region’s diversity and promote multi-destination travel within the bloc.



4.2 million

Foreign visitors into Myanmar in 2015, up from 791,505 in 2010, after the military junta which ruled the country for over 24 years was dissolved in 2011.

The year-long campaign to commemorate ASEAN’s Golden Jubilee anniversary in 2017

Visit Asean@50
GOLDEN CELEBRATION 2017



The number of international tourist arrivals the Visit ASEAN@50 campaign is targeting by end-2017 to drive tourism receipts to US\$83 billion and increase visitors’ length of stay to 6-7 days to at least two ASEAN countries.



The total arrivals into ASEAN in 2015, hitting a new milestone

December 31, 2015 The establishment of ASEAN Economic Community

“We hope that through these trade arrangements, through collaboration in training, in manpower development, and what have you, ASEAN in, say, 10 years’ time, will be a very different ASEAN.”

S R Nathan, late former president, Singapore



August 8, 1967

The day the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in Bangkok, with the five founding nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The original ASEAN logo presented five brown sheaves of rice stalks, one for each founding member. When ASEAN celebrated its 30th anniversary in 1997, the sheaves on the logo had increased to 10, representing all 10 countries of South-east Asia and reflecting the colours – blue, red, white and yellow – of the flags of all the member states.

“Governments can be a little boring without the private sector, as they are the voice of the industry.”

Philippines’ former tourism secretary Ramon Jimenez at ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2015 in Nay Pyi Taw, on getting the private sector involved in the Philippines’ hosting of ATF 2016



The number of editions of the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) this year, since its inauguration in Malaysia in 1981. ATF 2017 will be hosted in Singapore under the theme of “Shaping our Tourism Journey Together”.

1964

Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB) was established and the Merlion symbol was born. STPB was renamed Singapore Tourism Board in 1997.



The year the first LCC emerged in South-east Asia in the form of Malaysia-based AirAsia. By 2013, all 10 ASEAN countries were served by LCC services.

5%
The percentage of tourism’s contribution to ASEAN’s total economy GDP in 2015, according to World Travel & Tourism Council. Over 32 million jobs in the region are supported directly or indirectly by tourism.

1976

ASEAN Secretariat

ASEAN did not have a secretariat until 1976, nine years after its establishment. It is based in Jakarta, and is headed by a secretary-general.

“I would argue that ASEAN has been instrumental in driving both economic growth and political development, and that there can be no clearer example than its relations with Myanmar.”

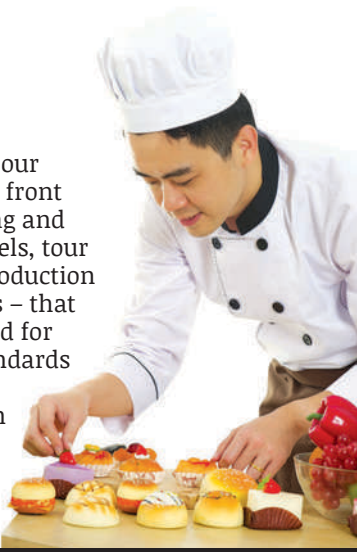
Najib Razak, prime minister, Malaysia



Abdul Razak Latif/Shutterstock.com

32

The number of job types across six labour divisions – namely front office, housekeeping and F&B services in hotels, tour operations, food production and travel agencies – that have been identified for benchmarking standards under ASEAN’s Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals.



37



The number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in South-east Asia, with Indonesia and Vietnam leading the list with eight inscribed sites each. Latest to the list is the Singapore Botanic Gardens.



1,973

The number of cruise calls in South-east Asia across 61 ports in 2015, comprising half of Asia’s total cruise calls.

“Even if we do not agree on all the points, we can still go ahead and sign the ASEAN Tourism Agreement, have a framework and iron out the points in the future.”

Veng Sereyvuth, Cambodia’s then senior minister of tourism, on the decision to formulate the first-ever ASEAN Tourism Agreement, which was signed in November 2002

ASEAN Open Skies

The agreement became fully ratified when Indonesia, Laos and the Philippines joined the pact in 2016, paving way for third, fourth and fifth freedom rights for ASEAN carriers.

7,700

The number of travel agents under the Federation of ASEAN Travel Associations members, serving a population of over 622 million people in the region.

1999

The decision was made to revive the ASEAN Hotel and Restaurant Association which had been inactive for several years. The association was founded in the 1950s.

“Aviation is for the common man. My goal is to enable everyone to fly. It shouldn’t be only for the rich.”

Tony Fernandes, founder, AirAsia



“There should be no barriers between ASEAN countries, and that includes barriers to travel.”

Phyoe Wai Yar Zar, chairman, Myanmar Tourism Marketing, on visa-free travel between ASEAN countries at ATF 2012

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Young Guns on the ascent

Little by little, these young and resourceful travel and hospitality talents are piecing together a brighter future for ASEAN tourism. Plus, a look at South-east Asia's new crop of innovative travel startups



Clockwise from top left:
Sophiya Travel & Tours' Sreat Mom Sophear; Siam@Siam Group's Pratarnporn Phornprapha; BorderPass' Faisal Ariff; Regale International Travel's Natanwan Chadavadh; Deevana Group's Suksit Suvunditkul; and Triip.me's Hai Ho

Rising Industry Stars

OSEP REYES
TOUR PILOT,
CULTURE SHOCK PH

Osep Reyes took a bold gamble when he founded Culture Shock PH at age 21, but is starting to see payoffs just five years later.

The Philippine company specialises in cultural tours to less mainstream places as far afield as Mindanao, an approach that Reyes is convinced will work as demand for such differentiated offerings is still growing. He added: "Beyond Manila, you'll be hard pressed to find a reliable operator who is as in touch with the locals and their stories (as we are)."



The market was missing a portal to local culture with depth and soul that would still over-deliver on comfort and the basics.

WEE TENG WEN,
CO-FOUNDER,
THE LO & BEHOLD GROUP

There's already a sizable market for his products, with Reyes pointing to "balikbayans (returning Filipinos), educational school tours, culture enthusiasts and foodies" as some significant segments.

It may come as a surprise that a communications graduate like Reyes could successfully start his own travel company, but he makes up for the industry inexperience with passion. "It was due to my love for travelling in the Philippines, and learning about cultures that I pursued this."

Today, he sees his greatest achievement as helping local communities understand that what they have – food, traditions, way of life – is valuable and that they must preserve them for generations to come. – Rosa Ocampo

SUKSIT SUVUNDITKUL
CEO, DEEVANA GROUP

From joining his family-owned Deevana Group in 2005 as deputy managing director to becoming CEO, Suksit Suvunditkul has

shown strong leadership and successfully expanded the company's portfolio from one to eight properties.

Consequently, the group is among the five biggest hotel companies in Phuket and Krabi with eight properties and rooms totalling 1,131. Suksit plans to further expand the business to both local and international destinations.

The group has two brands: Deevana, for hotels in resort destinations, and Recenta, a more affordable brand launched in February 2016 to accompany Deevana's expansion in Phuket's downtown. – Chadamas Chinmaneevong

WEE TENG WEN
CO-FOUNDER,
THE LO & BEHOLD GROUP

As co-founder of hospitality company, The Lo & Behold Group, Wee Teng Wen has adroitly contributed to Singapore's lifestyle landscape with cutting-edge concepts. The group is behind trendy

establishments including Loof, Singapore's first stand-alone rooftop bar; OverEasy, an American-style diner; The White Rabbit, a fine dining restaurant in a converted chapel; and Tanjong Beach Club, a beach restaurant and bar.

And it is not stopping just yet. Making its first foray into the hotel space, the group opened The Warehouse Hotel, a 37-room luxury boutique property at Singapore's Robertson Quay, in January 2017.

The 36-year-old Wee hopes to fill a niche "somewhere between big brands and small boutiques". "The market was missing a portal to local culture with depth and soul that would still over-deliver on comfort and the basics," added Wee. – Paige Lee Pei Qi

PRATARNPORN PHORNPRAPHA
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
SIAM@SIAM GROUP

Despite her young age, the 29-year-old Pratarnporn Phornprapha

pha has already proven her mettle in the Thai hospitality sector, heading the Siam@Siam Group as managing director.

The young hotelier also puts her Glion Institute of Higher Education training and love of art to good use, ensuring the group's trio of properties – Siam@Siam Design Hotel Bangkok, Siam@Siam Design Hotel Pattaya and Mövenpick Siam Hotel Pattaya – carry design features to resemble art galleries.

She plans to add at least two more properties to her portfolio in 2020, with investment of around 1.5 to two billion baht each. – **Chadamas Chinmaneevong**

NATAWAN CHADAVADH ASSISTANT MANAGING DIRECTOR, REGALE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Nantavan Chadavadh came into the travel agency business the long way, having started her career in the finance sector before switching industries to work at Regale International Travel, a company her father Jumpol established 34 years ago.

There, she gained experience in entry-level positions for all departments – ticketing, holidays, incentives and cruises – before rising to sales and marketing. Now, as assistant managing director, she oversees all departments and their strategies as well as business solutions.

While groomed to be her father's successor in Regale, Nantavan thinks it's her passion and service-minded disposition that keeps her growing in her job. The company's diversification strategy also "keeps me alert and reminds me that I cannot stop learning".

"The travel business depends on many uncertain factors. The strategy creates the circumstance for the company to grow gradually, which I believe is a lasting and healthy way," she said. – **Michael Sanderson**

APRIL CUENCA FOUNDER AND CEO, TRIPKADA

Tripkada, a mobile app allowing travellers to join Philippine trips organised by fellow travellers, was founded by April Cuenca, when she won the Ideaspace Competition in 2014, qualifying her startup for the Ideaspace incubation programme.

"It has been my dream since I was 11 to put up a business that would help communities develop through tourism," Cuenca explained, adding that her resolve strengthened when supertyphoon Haiyan devastated the Visayas in late 2013.

Cuenca didn't complete her tourism education at the Univer-

sity of the Philippines, but stands as a shining example of learning through experience. She was travel coordinator and tourism consultant before forming Fliptrip, which has evolved to Tripkada.

Cuenca explained: "Instead of paying for an entire package, users can join other travellers, split the bill, meet new friends, and check things off their bucket list for less."

Cuenca's next goal is to go regional. "My vision for the company is to connect travellers to small communities in the Philippines, and hopefully the rest of Southeast Asia, to distribute the economic growth the tourism development generates; while creating valuable experiences for travellers." – **Rosa Ocampo**

SREAT MOM SOPHEAR OWNER, SOPHIYA TRAVEL & TOURS

Sreat Mom Sophear's love of travel was ignited in her time working as a flight attendant from 2002 to 2005.

Yearning to be her own boss in an industry she loved, she managed to save enough to set up her own business, Sophiya Travel & Tours, in 2005. With a focus on inbound and outbound travel, Sreat started with two staff before growing this to 10 in three years.

Currently, across her threefold empire, which spans Sohiya Travel, a spa chain and a hotel construction company, she employs over 100 staff. Rather than branching out, she has pledged to focus on building on the successes she carved out over the years. – **Marissa Carruthers**

CHOTECHUANG SOORANGURA ASSOCIATE MANAGING DIRECTOR, NS TRAVEL & TOURS

In 2014, Chotechuang Soorangura left his job in the financial sector to return to NS Travel & Tours, determined to help push his family business through multiple challenges, including political conflicts, a growing FIT trend and intensifying competition.

With his input, NS Travel restructured its organisation to modernise its reputation and diversified into inbound and outbound businesses.

The company, known for running adventure tours for Thai travellers since 1979, today also runs 18 hotels under its subsidiary Serenata Hotels & Resorts, transport rental with 100 coaches, and camping equipment sales and factory operation.

Not settling for this success, the tenacious Chotechuang now has sights set on growing NS Travel to the top inbound and outbound travel company in the country. – **Chadamas Chinmaneevong**

NANDA KUMAR MANAGING DIRECTOR, HIDDEN ASIA TRAVEL & TOURS

The perceptive and forward-thinking Nanda Kumar has accompanied Hidden Asia Travel & Tours through key changes since he became its managing director.

Hidden Asia may be a small outfit, but Nanda was able to get volume by selling his packages to other outbound travel agents in Malaysia and command better rates from overseas hotels and travel agencies.

In future, the company hopes to develop its online platform, which will include a booking engine for day tours, special interest tours and pilgrimage tours.

Nanda said: "It's a necessary development of the company as making online travel purchases have become a trend. If we don't follow the trend, we will perish."

– **S Puvaneswary**

RITZ HENG OWNER, SPRING VALLEY RESORT

Cambodia was rebuilding itself after the fall of the Khmer Rouge when the Heng family managed to secure a plot of land in the coastal town of Kep. Predicting its tourism potential, the family set up a small guest house at the base of Kep National Park.

A decade ago, Ritz took on the reins from his parents and immediately set about transforming the spot into the stunning boutique Spring Valley Resort, which today boasts sprawling grounds, manicured gardens, a spacious pool and rooms offering privacy, and has become a top accommodation choice in Kep.

Heng has also tapped into Kep's food scene, launching Mr Mab restaurant at the resort as well as seafood restaurants in Kep and Phnom Penh. – **Marissa Carruthers**



I grew up watching my dad doing the travel business his whole life. But the most important thing is I'm a service-minded person, the very reason I love my job.

NANTAVAN CHADAVADH,
ASSISTANT
MANAGING
DIRECTOR,
REGALE
INTERNATIONAL
TRAVEL

New Travel Startups

1. GLOBALTIX

GlobalTix was founded in 2016 by brothers Chan Chee Chong and Chan Chee Kong, both sharing a passion for using the latest technology to promote Singapore's tourism industry.

The cloud-based electronic ticketing platform serves the B2B and B2B2C segments, eliminating the need for multi-distribution channels to provide a single marketplace for merchants to distribute their attractions and activities electronically to travel agents and tourists.

It also allows travel partners to bundle products, track real-time sales, manage distribution and pricing channels and provide finance and data analytics through its open architecture.

GlobalTix is currently used by travel partners such as Singapore Airlines and Universal Studios Singapore, and besides Singapore, the service is available in Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan and Japan. – **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

2. TRIPFEZ

Tripfez emerged as the answer to the needs of a growing market of Muslim travellers, with co-founder Faez Fadhilillah compelled to help Muslims make informed decisions when making travel purchases.

Through Tripfez, users can book halal-friendly hotels from around the world, tours and activities for selected ASEAN destinations, and share their reviews on the site.

Tripfez hopes to bring disruptive change to the market with its application programme interface, which enables other online travel players to tap into the site and provides "a means for (them) to improve their service quality for the Muslim travel segment", said Faez.

Tripfez has so far indexed more than 50,000 hotels worldwide, and Faez aims to grow the inventory to more than 100,000 hotels by 2Q2017. – **S Puvaneswary**

3. TRIIP.ME

Having received US\$500,000 in seed fund from Shanghai-based Gobi Partners in February 2016, Triip is certainly one to watch.

Dubbed the Airbnb for private tours, the company founded by

Below:
NS Travel
& Tours'
Chotechuang
Soorangura



husband-and-wife duo Hai Ho and Ha Lam enables users to create bespoke tours and sell them to travellers. It is currently available in 98 countries, with 5,000 tours created by 9,000 local guides.

The ultimate aim of the Ho Chi Minh City-based crowdsourced travel platform is to have guides in every city in the world, offerings travellers a unique and totally local experience. “We have aimed to be global since day one,” said Hai.

The investment from Gobi is being used to expand the team, attract users and explore new markets. – **Marissa Carruthers**

4. TRAVELOKA

Led by a hunch that demand would grow for a flight search platform, Ferry Unardi set out with eight of his Silicon Valley friends to start Traveloka in 2012.

Soon after, they adapted to users wanting to book tickets after their search, and quickly made Traveloka the go-to platform for bookings in Indonesia, a country where many were sceptical of making online purchases.

The team’s ability to adapt quickly to market demands would prove to be a big part of the Traveloka story. In July 2014, Traveloka added hotel bookings to the mix and in the following month launched its mobile app. It has since become ASEAN-friendly, offering search results in multiple languages and currencies.

Unardi, who has been the CEO since its inception, oversaw Traveloka’s rapid expansion from eight people to a company with multiple divisions, customer service facilities, partnerships with 70 domestic and international airlines, and a global inventory listing more than 100,000 hotels in South-east Asia and worldwide. – **Michael Sanderson**

5. BORDERPASS

Homegrown Malaysian startup BorderPass has lofty ambitions – to enable South-east Asians to travel within the region without a physical passport.

The company is developing cloud passport technology that replaces paper immigration forms with biometrically verified online profiles.

This is a tall order of course, but CEO Faisal Ariff reveals that buy-in from various stakeholders, including governments, have been positive. It even got the green light from Kuala Lumpur International Airport to run a

closed trial of its automated clearance gates at the airport’s Terminals 1 and 2 since the end of 2016.

Plans for public testing are now in the works. If successful, BorderPass will be the first company in the world to implement such technology. – **Dannon Har**

6. LOCAL ALIKE

Founder and CEO Somsak Boonkam set up this community-based tourism company with the aim of using tourism as a tool for developmental work.

Promoting equal access to education and employment and reducing poverty is a core part of Local Alike. “Community tourism helps raise awareness to prolong the way of life of the locals while providing income opportunities for sustainable development,” said Somsak.

The company also set up community-based tourism funds to help improve the lives of each community they work with.

In three and a half years, Local Alike has established partnerships with 45 communities in Thailand, and plans to expand to 100 communities and stretch into South-east Asia.

“The goal is to attract at least 15,000 tourists per year, and inspire and educate them to be our ambassadors,” Somsak said. – **Michael Sanderson**

7. TAKEMETOUR

After earning a master’s degree in robotics and working at Google, Amornched Jinda-

apiraksa decided to build his own business from scratch, a move that resulted in TakeMeTour, an online marketplace connecting travellers with some 10,000 local experts.

“I would say we were born into an Internet business due to the changes in travellers’ behaviour,” said Amornched, who co-founded the travel startup with Noppon Anukunwithaya.

He believes that TakeMeTour carries a fresh and relevant concept that appeals to the FIT-inclined. “When I ask my customers how else they would (travel), about 90-95 per cent say they would be travelling randomly on their own. We’re not really taking business from the traditional agencies but creating our own segment.”

Amornched has two goals for the future: to dominate the market in Thailand in the short term, then expand to other countries in the region in the medium to long term. – **Michael Sanderson**

8. MEGUIDEU

MeGuideU, incorporated in 2015, is an online travel portal that allows travellers to search for and hire guides specific to their travel preferences, such as for shopping or gastro trips. Currently, the site has over 200 guides across six countries.

Prior to its launch, John Ng Pangilinan, CEO of Ovenbaked Ideas (parent company of MeGuideU), noticed the increasing number of FITs using the Inter-



I would say we were born into an Internet business due to the changes in travellers’ behaviour.

AMORNCHED JINDA-APIRAKSA,
CEO &
CO-FOUNDER,
TAKEMETOUR

net for booking activities and air tickets. This led him to think that the portal, which allowed travellers to choose their tour guide, would fill a gap in the burgeoning market.

MeGuideU is also the operator behind Makan Bus, a hop-on, hop-off gastronomic tour that was launched in Singapore in August 2016. The tour brings travellers to 10 neighbourhoods known for their popular hawkers and signature local dishes. – **Rachel AJ Lee**

9. SOCIAL GIVER

Social Giver may be a young social enterprise, having been launched in May 2015, but it has already garnered the support of several big industry names such as Sri Panwa Phuket Villas, Serenata Hotels & Resorts, and Anantara Hotels & Resorts.

The brainchild of Arch Wongchindawest – who was inspired to create a business for society after working with UNESCO and the United Nations Procurement Division – the social enterprise allows hoteliers, tourism services operators and lifestyle product owners to offer their services on its website.

Thirty per cent of sales goes towards operational management while the remaining is channelled to meaningful social causes. This makes an appealing concept as it allows buyers to do good and rewards product owners with a positive brand image.

Arch plans to introduce the business overseas, with the US being a main target, after obtaining the Eisenhower Fellowship. – **Chadamas Chinmaneevong**

10. TOURISTLY

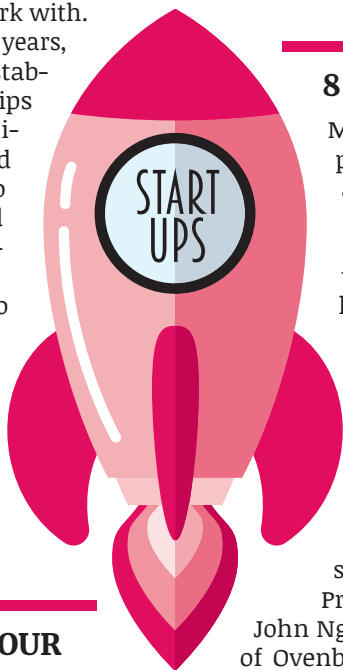
Just over a year into its launch, Touristly was already approaching the 10,000th trip created on its website.

Touristly is a web portal featuring over 7,000 deals on tours, attractions, activities, spas and restaurants in 70 destinations across Asia-Pacific.

In an industry where many consumers are still used to booking packages from a travel consultant, Touristly aims to make the holiday planning process as easy and fun as possible for travellers.

Speaking of plans to enhance the portal moving forward, founder Aaron Sarma said: “We will introduce more features to enrich the entire travel journey for our users.

“We want to be more involved in the holiday makers’ journey, from being inspired to travel, planning the holiday, experiencing the holiday, and then coming back with memories,” he enthused. – **S Puvaneswary**



Clockwise from top left:
GlobalTix’s Chan Chee Chong and Chan Chee Kong; Local Alike’s Somsak Boonkam; Tripfez’s Faez Fadhilillah; Social Giver’s Arch Wongchindawest; and Touristly’s Aaron Sarma



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