Hilton Worldwide to develop Garden Inn hotels in Bali

Hilton Worldwide is introducing its Hilton Garden Inn brand into Bali, Indonesia’s largest tourism destination, following a signing of a management agreement with PT. Duta Anggada Realty Tbk. The three-storey Hilton Garden Inn Bali – Ngurah Rai Airport, with 292 rooms and well-equipped facilities, is scheduled to open 2.5 kilometres away from Kuta as the first Hilton Garden Inn branded hotel in Indonesia in 2014.

And just a week after the announcement of this hotel, Hilton Worldwide has announced its management agreement with PT. Mastapa Garden to open Hilton Garden Inn Bali – Kuta, scheduled to open in 2016.

This four-storey Hilton Garden Inn hotel, with 125 rooms, will be located in Kuta, the destination island’s popular shopping precinct.

Training and scholarships go local

Hansar Samui Resort & Spa is to introduce a scholarship for local students. They will undergo a comprehensive year-long syllabus consisting of theoretical and practical studies with intensive on the job training. Classes will include English, customer service, finance and management, as well as practical job training. Each student will have a one-on-one mentor/coach from the hotel’s management team.

The scholarships will be provided free of charge and Hansar Samui, a beachfront luxury resort in Bophut Bay, Koh Samui, will offer students uniforms and three meals a day. For those unable to commute from their homes due to distance it will also provide accommodation.

Upon graduation, the hotel will hold a celebratory ceremony for the students and assist them with finding employment, either within Hansar, if there are positions available, or in other properties.

Celebrate with US$12,850 spice fest

The Hutong restaurant at One Peking, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, famed for its fiery but delicious northern Chinese cuisine, recently celebrated its 10th anniversary by offering a HK$100,000 (US$12,850) meal.

Originally born in Hong Kong, the restaurant’s many accolades include being one of the first Chinese restaurants to earn a Michelin Star. Its success prompted Aqua Restaurant Group to open a second similar restaurant in Europe’s tallest building, The Shard, where it is taking the London dining scene by storm.

From the 11-dish banquet menu, diners will enjoy two signature 10th Anniversary dishes – Russian Oscietra caviar laced asparagus and ‘Kung Po’ style foie gras rolled in gold leaf with cashew nuts and chili. Fine wines and champagnes such as Château Palmer 1995 and Dom Pérignon Rosé Vintage 2002 have been paired with the 11 dishes.

2013 hotel investment volumes double

Hotel investment volumes in Asia reached US$7.5 billion at the end of 2013, up by 218% on 2012 and defying all industry expectations, according to the latest figures from JLL’s Hotels & Hospitality Group. This makes 2013 the market’s strongest year since the global financial crisis in 2007, when transaction volumes stood at US$10.3 billion.

JLL forecasts 2014 will be a similarly outstanding year, although transaction volumes are likely to fall on the back of limited supply, despite strong demand.

Singapore, Japan and China led the region’s growth in 2013 with Japan topping overall investment volumes at US$2.7 billion, up by 480% on 2012, as hotel trading performance improved in line with the expansion of the domestic economy and renewed growth in corporate and leisure travel.
Le Passage Mohkan Shan brings gourmet dining to China

French luxury country house hotel and restaurant Le Passage Mohkan Shan in Moganshan, China, is this Spring opening its Oriental Banquet Room for gatherings and entertainment. It offers dining for up to 120 people – ideal for weddings and large gatherings. This will see the further development of Le Passage Mohkan Shan’s Chinese dining options on the menus across the hotel with the best of Cantonese and Shanghainese cuisine.

Located only 2.5 hours from Shanghai and one hour from Hangzhou, the property is nestled in the rolling hills of an organic tea plantation and a lush bamboo forest. Offering fine French and Chinese cuisine plus private dining options and using organic produce from the surrounding mountains, Le Passage is fast becoming a leading gourmet destination in Asia.

Expanded show at Foodservice Australia 2014

New products, features and exhibitors will be on show in Sydney from May 25 to 27 at Foodservice Australia 2014, the only exhibition in Australia aimed solely at the hospitality industry.

The expanded show is running at the Royal Hall of Industries at Moore Park, where extra space will be used to house more exhibitors, a regional producers pavilion and the new Café School focusing on the lunch and take-away food trade.

The new regional producers pavilion will showcase boutique food, drink and ingredient suppliers from all over Australia. Visitors will be able to taste all the new ideas and meet the producers behind the products.

Other highlights of the event will include the Rare Medium Chef of the Year, free business workshops in the Restaurant Theatre, Australia’s Best Pie Competition, Global Pizza Challenge, World Chocolate Masters and much more.
Global hotel prices rise again

The average price of a hotel room around the world rose by 3% during 2013, according to the latest TheHotels.com Hotel Price Index (HPI). This means there have now been four years of steady rises in hotel prices since the substantial falls during the financial collapse of 2008/9.

Set at 100 in 2004, the HPI tracks real prices that hotel guests actually paid for their accommodation around the world. The HPI for 2013 stands at 110, seven points lower than its peak in 2007 despite the recent growth, and just ten points higher than at its launch.

The Asia region’s HPI fell by 2%, compared with 2012, the only region to record a fall, but the region continues to offer some of the world’s best value hotel accommodation.
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Micros adds iRiS Software Systems

Micros Systems, Inc., has announced the addition of iRiS Software System’s hospitality guest service applications to the hosted Micros Commerce Platform (MCP).

Micros’s recently released MCP provides for the integration of content across a single site, including the integration of multiple third-party solutions. iRiS’ award-winning guest service applications, iRiS Valet, iRiS F&B, iRiS Lobby, iRiS Mobile Concierge and iRiS Spa, will now be part of the MCP community.

“We are pleased to offer the iRiS hospitality guest services applications, which deliver an exciting mobile guest experience that fully integrates with our Micros solutions installed around the world,” stated Tim Brown, SVP eCommerce, Micros.

“The ability to connect an unlimited number of third-party solutions to our customers in such a seamless manner through the MCP management module is a key capability of the Micros Commerce Platform.”

Dusit grows brand family

The Dusit Devarana New Delhi has recently opened its doors, a 50-room urban boutique resort nestled between India’s capital city and the corporate hub of Gurgaon. Its opening signals the first foray of the Dusit chain into the Indian market.

With amenities such as a round-the-clock personal butler service and the first Indian outpost of London’s Michelin-starred Kai Restaurant, the resort is also making waves in the architecture and design worlds.

In April 2014, the brand will also see another resort opening in Thailand, this time on Phuket Island. The dusitD2 Phuket Resort is only steps away from popular Patong Beach, the location of the island’s entertainment and shopping district.

10 years of NRA Kitchen Innovations Award

The US National Restaurant Association recently announced the recipients of the 2014 Kitchen Innovations (KI) Awards, which honour equipment and technology that specifically improve back-of-the house operations and benefit restaurant operators.

The 2014 KI Award recipients reflect the trends and topics most important to foodservice operators today. The 24 selected innovations offer solutions for operators addressing waste reduction and energy conservation, enhanced sanitation, as well as increased efficiency with equipment that showcases hybrid cooking techniques and reduced cooking times.

“In addition to proudly celebrating our 10 year anniversary, this year’s honourees demonstrate the continued tradition of the KI Awards in celebrating innovative companies making a measurable impact on the day-to-day operations of the foodservice industry,” said Sam Facchini, co-founder and co-owner of Metro Pizza and the 2014 NRA Show Convention Chair.
Made with an ideal blend of authentic savory ingredients, asian moonz™ potato rounds deliver bold, exotic flavor and a crisp, golden texture to stand out in any operation. Satisfy adventurous tastes with Sweet Chili, Indian Style Curry, and Roasted Onion varieties.

Make asian moonz part of your menu or create an LTO today! To order a sample, contact your Lamb Weston sales representative.
Preferred Hotel Group has partnered with Himalayas Hotels & Communities, a move that enhances the company’s Asia-Pacific portfolio with the addition of two lifestyle hotels: Himalayas Qingdao Hotel and Resorts and Himalayas Nantong Hotel.

Himalayas Qingdao Hotel was scheduled to open at the end of March 2014. It is located in the seaside Laoshan District at the base of Mt. Lao (Lao Shan).

Meanwhile, Himalayas Nantong Hotel is scheduled to open at the end of April 2014 in Nantong – a fast-growing river port city at the mouth of the Yangtze River in Jiangsu province. The hotel is located between the main city centre and the new CBD, next to Wolf Hill (Lang Shan), one of the area’s most popular tourist destinations.

Dr. Joachim Gauck, the president of Germany, stayed with his delegation at Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon in Myanmar recently while attending the first Myanmar-Germany Business Forum in Yangon, where he met Myanmar president Thein Sein and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. President Gauck also hosted a dinner at the hotel.

Other recent guests include Crown Princess Mary of Denmark and the Danish minister for development cooperation, Rasmus Petersen. They were in Myanmar for the princess’s latest charity project with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the country. She serves as the patron of the UNFPA and supports the agency’s work to promote maternal health and safer motherhood across the world.

Orient-Express Hotels Ltd, owners and operators of 45 luxury hotel and travel experiences in some of the world’s most inspiring destinations, began marketing its collection of hotels, trains, safaris and river cruises under a new brand, Belmond, from March 10, 2014. Marking an important new era in the company’s history, the new name is said to embrace all that is special about this unique travel operator.

“The new brand name provides us with a fresh opportunity to tell our story – from romantic journeys across Europe in the authentic restored carriages of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, to cruising along the undiscovered rivers of Myanmar on our river cruiser, Orcaella, and sunset cocktails on the terrace of our newest hotel El Encanto,” said John M. Scott, president & chief executive officer of the company.
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9J2-03 | VERIVAL | www.verival.at
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Sheraton to reach 500 hotel milestone in 2016

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. has announced that its largest and most global brand is poised for record-breaking growth, with 35 new hotels expected to open over the next 12 months. Nearly half of the new Sheraton hotels will open in China, where there will be approximately one hotel opened every three weeks. Sheraton will also enter numerous new markets in the Asia-Pacific region, including New Caledonia, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, and return to Iraq.

In China, the brand will launch in Wuhan, Shaoxing, Nanchang, Zhengzhou and Qingdao, while adding its third hotel in Beijing and fifth in Shanghai. More than 13 additional Sheraton hotels are slated to open in China by 2017.

In India hotel openings are scheduled for Bengaluru, Noida and Chandigarh over the course of this year and 2015.

Thumbs up at topping-off in South Jakarta

The topping-off ceremony of The 1O1 Jakarta Sedayu Darmawangsa hotel recently took place, celebrating the final stage of the 17-storey tower development.

Attended by approximately 30 people from the management team of the owning company, PT Visi Utama Indonesia, and PHM Hospitality management team, the ceremony took place on the 17th floor of the upcoming hotel, with a hotel blessing by directors of both companies. PT Visi Utama Indonesia is a joint venture company of Agung Sedayu Group and PT PanoramaLand Development.

The hotel will be ready for operation by November.

NEXT to be F&B consultant for Waldorf Astoria Bangkok

Bangkok-based consultancy firm for food and beverage lifestyle concepts, design and solutions, NEXT, has been appointed F&B consultant for the forthcoming Waldorf Astoria Bangkok, by Magnolia Finest Corporation Ltd. It will oversee, coordinate and generally represent the ownership during the development of the restaurant and bar concepts. NEXT will also create a branded concept for the project.

Towering 60 storeys high and built as a mixed-user development, Waldorf Astoria Bangkok’s striking design sets it to be Bangkok’s latest icon. It will offer an all-day dining restaurant, two specialty restaurants, two bars and a lounge.

Onyx expands

Thailand-based Onyx Hospitality Group recently announced a number of hotel openings in evolving markets, including Bangladesh, China and Sri Lanka, as well as product developments and innovation across the brand portfolio. With the group’s operations encompassing 35 hotels and an inventory of more than 5,000 rooms, these developments serve to further strengthen its reach in Asia and beyond.

Expansion includes the Amari Dhaka Bangladesh, 5km from Dhaka International Airport in the business district of Gulshan. It is scheduled to open late in 2014 and will feature 134 guest rooms and suites.

Recent openings include the Grand Pujian Residence in Shanghai, China, and Amari Buriram United in the north-east of Thailand.
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At the heart of Cacao Barry®’s breakthrough is the Q-fermentation™ method, the complex process of using specific micro-organisms, naturally present on the soil and plant live in plantations, to induce perfect fermentation. Combined with the careful control and aeration of the fermented bean pulp, the result is the purest cocoa beans ever yielded by nature.

The new range of ‘Purity from nature’ chocolate couvertures by Cacao Barry® utilizes this break through Q-fermentation™ method. It represents the ultimate connection between the farmer and the chef. Every bag of cocoa beans can be traced back to the passionate and dedicated farmers, who receive a premium for their efforts. “Today, when addressing natural resources such as butter, oil and cocoa, traceability is a key driver”, enthuses Chef Philippe Bertrand, Head of the Cacao Barry® Chocolate Academy in France and MOF.

This range sets the new standard in workability; intense flavour and a release of perfect taste intensity, texture and mouthfeel. The intense cocoa flavour allows chefs the liberty to create and pair it with a wide variety of ingredients.

The ‘Purity of nature’ range has been created for perfect workability, with specific applications in mind

The trio of couvertures in the ‘Purity of nature’ range have been created for perfect workability, with specific applications in mind and for chefs to bring out intense taste and flavour in their creations. OCOTA™ which contains 70% cocoa, is a distinctive dark chocolate created for enrobing and fine moulding. INAYA™ which contains 65% cocoa is an intense dark chocolate yields perfect results in mouches, ganaches and moulles. ALUNGA™ with 41% cocoa is the most intense milk chocolate ever created and promises perfection in mousses and ganaches.

Chefs look for authenticity, purity and intensity of cocoa taste. With ‘Purity from nature’, this next generation of chocolate couverture embodies the evolving tastes of consumers and chefs alike.
Join us to discover the pure intensity of Cacao Barry’s next generation chocolate couvertures.

Wed 9 April 2014, 7:30pm
Universal Studios Singapore, Resorts World Sentosa

To register: +603 3169 3366 or sharon_low@barry-callebaut.com

Event registration is based on first-come first-served basis. This is a complimentary event; no fees apply.

www.purityfromnature.com
In a move designed to help Thai hotels, in the Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has gone digital in a big way and kickstarted an online marketing strategy and outreach programme targeting MICE markets worldwide.

The bureau, a public body tasked with supporting MICE, expects to implement seven marketing campaigns focusing on both domestic and international MICE markets.

This will be done by using a state-of-the-art website – www.businesseventsthailand.com – as the centre of a MICE database to provide updated information for worldwide MICE target groups, the bureau said.

Currently, the website is in three languages: English, Thai and Chinese. But the plan is to add a further five more, including Japanese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Korean and Russian, this year to support more target groups, it added.

This is designed not only to help the MICE segment hold its own in an ever increasing and competitive market but also to restore the sheen to the Thai tourism and hotel sector after it has been dented badly, if unevenly, by Thailand’s ongoing political crisis.

“We would like to clarify that a part of the strategy is to introduce online sales and marketing tools, which MICE entrepreneurs, including hotels in Thailand, can utilise in promoting their

TCEB’s online campaign is targeting potential MICE markets worldwide
MICE offerings through TCEB’s database worldwide,” the bureau said.

“Customisable sales and marketing tool will help save time and online marketing budget. Also, the strategy calls for collaboration between TCEB and MICE entrepreneurs to further penetrate the online MICE market place.”

The initiative started as evidence emerged of just how much of a hit the continual protests in the Thai capital at the turn of the year had been for hotels there. Anecdotally it was known properties in Bangkok close to the protests were down massively, with 10% occupancy along some parts of Sukhumvit being considered normal at times during the disturbances.

Conversely, properties in Phuket and Samui have been faring much better, according to research from the Phuket-based C9 Hotelworks hospitality consultancy.

In Phuket the situation was helped by the record 3.2 million international arrivals clocked at the island’s international airport – amounting to a 26% year-on-year growth, according to the research.

“In 2013 Phuket was able to push up average room rates with only minimal impact on occupancy,” Bill Barnett, managing director of C9 Hotelworks said on the company website.

Across in the Gulf of Thailand it’s a similar story. Koh Samui saw a record 1.7 million travellers visit the island. Foreign visitors account for 88% of the total market with nearly half coming from Western Europe said the website.

“Hotels across the island enjoyed an upswing in performance during the year. Room rate demand and average daily rates increased at 5% and 7%,” Barnet added. This he put down to “the rising prominence” of nearby Surat Thani’s airport as a second gateway to Samui.

Michael Mackey
Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas has announced its first resort in the Seychelles.

Yanqi Lake Kempinski Hotel Beijing opening

Yanqi Lake Kempinski Hotel Beijing, the largest property in China of European luxury hotel company Kempinski, will be unveiled in May. The development is set on 14-square-kilometre grounds in the heart of scenic Yanqi Lake, Beijing. It includes a total of 595 guestrooms and suites, of which 306 rooms are located on the mainland. A further 111 rooms at the State Guest House and 178 rooms spread across 12 boutique hotels are situated on a private island.

Around 14,000 square metres of meeting space, including a 8,277-square-metre conference centre and an outdoor event space set amid natural gardens offers the option of a fully-integrated MICE destination.

Leisure facilities include a marina, an 18-hole golf course designed by Gary Player, a spa, fitness facilities and a children’s club.

Six Senses to be in Seychelles and Maldives

Adding to its wealth of experience operating Indian Ocean resorts, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas has announced its first resort in the Seychelles, called Six Senses Zil Pasyon. Scheduled to open in 2015, the resort is located on the private island of Félicité. The island is approximately 55 kilometres (30 nautical miles) northeast of Mahé, with access by helicopter from the international airport or a short boat ride from neighbouring La Digue and Praslin islands.

Meanwhile, Six Senses Laamu in the Maldives will present its second Aqua Season from May 1 to October 31. The season features a series of aqua-focused events including the celebration of International Surfing Day, the yearly turtle nesting and hatching, the popular ‘Maldivian by the Sea’ culinary experience plus AquaFitness.

Wine & Gourmet Japan 2014

Running from April 2 to 4, Wine & Gourmet Japan 2014 at Tokyo Big Sight in Tokyo, is geared up to welcome 72,000 trade visitors from all over Japan, comprising buyers, retailers, manufacturers and professionals from the wine, spirits and food-service markets.

Participating this year are nine country and four product pavilions, featuring a varied selection of Japanese wines and sake, plus zones for international wines and beer. In total, the dedicated wine and spirits networking business platform, along with its partner fairs, is welcoming 900 companies globally, showcasing over 500 wines and a myriad range of gourmet foods. There is also a dedicated speciality coffee zone.

The five partnering trade fairs are FABEX, Dessert, Sweets, Bakery & Drink Festival, PB-OEM, Japan Meat Industry Fair and Japan Noodles Industry Fair.

PR for companies on a DIY budget

Jlnpr, a full-service PR and marketing agency dedicated to the travel and hospitality industry, has launched a new public-relations service for businesses who don’t have the budgets to afford a full-time PR person or agency: the DIY PR package.

The package makes PR accessible (and affordable!) for every business, no matter its size, goals or budget, by providing all of the information and the step-by-step instructions necessary to execute a successful campaign, start-to-finish, without the significant investment that outsourcing PR can sometimes require.
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Solve your equation at www.hennypenny.com
Yangon building 250 more hotels

The hotel industry in Yangon is set for a massive expansion as the number of hotels will more than double from the current 190 to 340, according to Yangon region minister for Hotels and Tourism U Soe Min.

Yangon’s current stock of 9,000 hotel rooms is set to more than double in coming years to 29,000, according to the minister. “As tourist arrivals have increased, more hotels are needed and some hotels are expanding,” U Soe Min said. “Some of the new projects have already opened and some are under construction.”

Among the new investors is Adventure Myanmar Tours & Incentive. A spokesperson said the company planned to invest US$56 million in a five-star hotel in Yangon and had received permission from the Myanmar Investment Commission.

Welcoming Chinese guests

Luxury resort chain One&Only has introduced a number of features to its properties that are designed to make Chinese guests feel at home.

Chinese guest services at the resorts now include Putonghua language services, Union Pay access, Chinese newspapers and news channels availability, as well as Chinese food and beverage options.

“Chinese guests are of ever-increasing importance to us and we want to make sure that they are well looked after and comfortable at all times during their stay,” commented Mark DeCocinis, the chain’s Chief Operating Officer.

One&Only has resorts in the Maldives, Mauritius, Dubai, the Bahamas, Mexico and South Africa. It recently announced plans to open three new resorts, including one in China at Sanya on Hainan Island.

US hospitality jobs boom

Job openings in the US restaurants-and-accommodations sector rose to a six-year high in January, according to the latest figures from the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Statistics programme of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

There were 534,000 job openings at restaurants and lodging places on the last business day in January, on a seasonally-adjusted basis. This represented the highest level since December 2007, when 535,000 restaurant and lodging jobs were available.

“After hitting a cyclical peak in late 2007, job openings fell sharply during the recession,” explained Bruce Grindy, chief economist of the National Restaurant Association. “During 2009 and 2010, the restaurants-and accommodations sector averaged fewer than 250,000 jobs openings each month. Job openings trended upward as the economy improved, with the number averaging roughly 450,000 each month during 2013.”

Sheraton appoints 350 club managers

Sheraton Hotels & Resorts has appointed 350 full-time club managers to its Sheraton Club lounges worldwide. Club managers will offer a range of personalised services as part of the Sheraton brand’s continued effort to enhance the club experience.

This initiative comes on the heels of a US$120 million investment to upgrade Sheraton Club lounges across the globe, which resulted in a 125% increase in bookings. Sheraton Club is now a US$500 million business, driving 15-20% of total revenue at each Sheraton and far exceeding initial forecasts for the premium upgrade offering from Starwood’s largest and most global brand.