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TOUR



# South Korea, Getting on the Wave

안녕하세요!  
Annyeonghaseyo!

South Korea, one of the world's 20 leading economies, is often perceived as a modern and hip destination to go on vacation, the Asian country is internationally known for Samsung, Hyundai and *Gangnam Style*; a place where you can relish delicious food, traditional palaces, Buddhist temples and shrines, and also enjoy Korean modern culture, K-pop, K-drama and Korean cosmetics. Nevertheless, after being ranked among the world top destinations for several years and reclaiming the throne in the Union of International Associations (UIA) ranking 2018 for the number of events held in 2017, South Korea has earned its leading spot and international associations know why.

**Jesús Guerrero Chacón reports**

▲ Photography: Steve Roe, Unsplash

Last June, Headquarters Magazine joined a group of 21 international media specialised in the meetings industry to tour around South Korea on the occasion of the **Korea MICE Expo 2018** organised by the Korea Tourism Organization. This 6-day discovery tour took us from modern metropolis to heritage sites. As a part of the Korea Tourism Organization new brand campaign **Korea Unique Venues**, destinations such as **Seoul, Busan, Gyeongju** and **Incheon** showcased some of their special and most recent MICE venues and products.

And what a great time it is to be in this particular place at this particular moment. Important political breakthroughs this year will pave the way for more businesses to come to the nation. During our stay in South Korea, we followed (with great expectancy) a historic summit taking place kilometres away from the country, whose implications will help the nation secure even more international

business. The one-to-one meeting and now famous handshake between US **President Donald Trump** and North Korea's **Kim Jong Un** in Singapore promise to lower international tensions, boosting South Korea's image as a safe destination to hold events. Though this perception has already been reinforced by Mr Moon Jae-in from being the former President of G20, and also the hosting of the 2018 **PyeongChang Winter Olympics**.

## The New MICE Korean Wave

Our group was lucky enough to attend the welcome reception at the exclusive hanok (*traditional Korean style*) hotel Gyeongwonjae Ambassador and opening ceremony of the 19th edition of Korea MICE Expo (KME) at Songdo Convensia, Incheon's exhibition hall. The annual KME is Korea's largest trade show specialised in the meetings industry, this year's edition brought 175 international hosted buyers from 31 countries to experience

the nation's best offering. During the opening speech, Mr. Ahn Youngbae, CEO of the Korea Tourism Organization, thanked the support of the Ministry of Culture, sports and tourism and introduced the first ever theme of the expo 'MICE Meets Hallyu'. Mr. Youngbae described how Hallyu can be included in international events by incorporating the top K-POP bands, such as 'Shinee' to welcome groups to Korea at their concert. KTO will also collaborate with Hallyu Experience Facility such as SM Town to have MICE visitors discover the unique Hallyu experience. Meeting planners would do well to keep South Korea on top of their minds as a business events destination as the country's rapid transformation is constantly improving its offering for international events: *world-class meetings infrastructure, connectivity, high-tech supported by traditional culture*.

## SEOUL, THE ALL-IN-ONE MEETING DESTINATION

Ranked third in UIA's top international meeting cities in 2017 and number ten in the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) top city ranking the same year, it is no wonder South Korea's capital offers a wide range of world-class meeting facilities and services including the latest technology to host successful events. Seoul Tourism Organization (STO)'s MICE support program PLUS Seoul offers meeting planners a wide range of financial, non-financial bidding and promotional support for events meeting the requirements.

Seoul, Korea's largest city, is a modern metropolis where some of the world's tallest skyscrapers coexist with royal palaces such as the **Gyeongbukgung Palace** and traditional hanok villages such as **Bukchon**. Here, visitors are able to learn about Korea's history and immerse in the Korean culture. Talking about local culture, KTO's former headquarters in Seoul have been transformed into a one-stop visitor attraction, **K-style Hub**, and this was exactly the place where our journey started!

Delegates will find in K-Style Hub everything they need to discover and experience South Korea with different hands-on activities offered to groups, from an information centre to different exhibition halls and a medical tourism centre. Visitors will be able to take Korean cooking classes (*delegates will learn how to cook tasty bulgogi or bibimbap among other dishes*), wear the traditional hanbok dress or uncover the hallyu experience.

After learning about Korean food (*often described as medicine for body and soul!*), our group had the chance to taste some of these Korean delicacies during the welcome luncheon at Korea House. Listed as one of Seoul's unique venues, the exclusive Korea House has been receiving VIP guests since 1957. Offering different high-end possibilities including traditional cuisine, clothing and performances, it is bound to leave delegates with an unforgettable experience.

On the last day of our trip, our media tour took us back to Seoul, where three

different venues showcased different infrastructure solutions and services that can cater to every kind of preferences and possibilities. Opened in October 2017, **Seoul Dragon City** is Korea's first-ever lifestyle hotelplex offering four different brands by Accor-Hotels from luxury to economy to suit all budgets (*Grand Mercure Ambassador Seoul Yongsan, Novotel Suites Ambassador Seoul Yongsan, Novotel Ambassador Seoul Yongsan, ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Yongsan*). This new hotelplex offers 1,700 rooms, and meeting rooms, and ballrooms which can accommodate 4,900 guests. Visitors to Seoul Dragon City should visit Sky Kingdom, an exclusive lounge located at the 34th floor which includes a breath-taking glass walkway, and Sky Beach, a private beach club located on the rooftop.

The floating islands of **Some Sevit** opened in 2014 and offer delegates remarkable views of the Han River and Seoul's Instagram-friendly skyline. The meeting facilities at the waterfront are good choices for planners organising events up to 500 people.

 *Hallyu literally means "Korean wave", it refers to the growth of Korea's global popularity thanks to its pop culture K-pop, K-drama, Korean cuisine, made possible by Internet & social media.*



▲ Korea House, Seoul



Last but not least, **Coex**, Seoul's largest convention and exhibition centre is a city within Seoul. Located in the world-famous Gangnam district, the MICE complex has it all under one roof and is connected underground with a shopping mall, different hotel brands, shuttle and metro station and even some tourist attractions such as the new SMTown Coex Artium, and Seoul's new landmarks - Starfield Coex Library and Samsung Coex LED screen (*Korea's largest LED screen*). Some of the delegates flying with selected airlines will also benefit from having a convenient City Airport Terminal. Coex started a renovation plan three years ago and will also see its meetings space increase with the opening of its new expansion Jamsil which will extend approximately 720,000 sqm between Coex and the existing Jamsil Sports Complex.

During our site inspection, Coex was able to show us its know-how in hosting several exhibitions and conventions concurrently, spreading across the different exhibition halls and meeting rooms. We were lucky to witness some

in-action examples of large-scale events such as: **International Smart Factory SEOUL Conference & Expo**; the largest ever edition of **Job Fair for Foreign-Invested Companies 2018** organised by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency; and **In-Cosmetics Korea 2018** organised by Reed Exhibitions.

Korea Environmental Preservation Association recently organised the 40th International Exhibition on Environmental Technology & Green Energy (*ENVEX 2018*) at Coex, held from 31st May to 1st June 2018. When asked about her experience organising the event at Coex, Mrs Sun-Mi Kim, the manager of the association responded:

*“Coex is not only the largest centre of its kind in Seoul but its high brand recognition adds value to the events hosted there. Its ease of access helps with attendance numbers while the speedy and thorough response from the staff and pre-equipped facilities make organizing events so much smoother for meeting planners.”*

▲ ▼ Starfield Coex Library



## BUSAN IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Our journey continued in Busan, the country's second largest city and first seaport city, easily reachable from Seoul by KTX (Korea's high-speed train) in less than three hours. Busan is not only Korea's favourite holiday destination for its white-sand beaches like Haeundae Beach, but it has also achieved a high position as an international meetings destination. A regular host of international conventions and exhibitions, Busan ranked seventh on UIA's top cities for international association meetings in 2017. As part of the MICE Alliance, the Busan Tourism Organization (BTO) offers a strong MICE support programme to meeting planners.

The city possesses ideal modern venues with the latest equipment. During our visit, our group visited the Busan Exhibition and Convention Center (Bexco) consisting of the large Exhibition Centres I and II, a convention hall and an auditorium. Bexco is planning to increase its capacity and add additional exhibition space by building a third exhibition centre. We were able to catch a glimpse of the venue's possibilities with the Busan International Motor Show 2018 (BIMOS 2018). Among a long list of varied national and international events, Bexco hosted the World Championships of Magic (FISM Korea 2018) last July.



▲ BIMOS 2018 at BEXCO

Busan is also home to some distinctive venues listed by KTO's Unique Venues brand. Just a short ride from Bexco and located at Dongbaekseom island by the shores of the East Sea, Nurimaru APEC House (which could be translated as 'the house where world leaders gathered') was the host venue of the 2005 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit which gathered world leaders from 21 member nations. The room where the Summit was held has been kept to commemorate the important meeting. The venue offers other conference rooms and meeting spaces for high-end meetings. Neighbouring the Nurimaru House, the Bay 101 Yacht Club also offers meetings space, fine dining options and a rooftop bar with stunning views over Busan's skyscraper-skyline and the Diamond Bridge.

The city is renowned in Asia for the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) and its appearance in international blockbusters like Black Panther and Train to Busan, it is only natural that our group walked the red carpet and got on stage at Busan Cinema Center. This unique venue is the pride of Korean modern architecture, it

features the world's largest cantilever roof (recognised by the Guinness World Record), and offers meeting spaces up to 4,000 people in state-of-the-art convention facilities.

10-minutes' drive away from Busan's busiest beach Haeundae, a new haven of peace for the body and soul keeps upgrading the city's hospitality and services offering. Opened in July 2016, Hilton Hotel at Ananti Cove offers a laid-back atmosphere and state-of-the-art convention facilities for associations and corporates willing to organise their events in style by the sea. Its chic facilities and furniture recreating the Korean vintage style from the 60s has gained widespread recognition by renowned luxury international brands like Hermes. Having a look at the big names who organised their events at Hilton Ananti Cove, you will realise the prestige this hotel has won in such a short time.



▲ Hilton Ananti Cove, Busan

# International Corporates Hosted by Hilton Busan



## 2017

BMW, Toyota, HP, Samsung, Amway, Chanel, Hermes, Moët & Chandon, Philip Morris, Porsche, Lufthansa

## 2018

Mercedes-Benz, AfDB, Jaguar, NIKE, BMW, Sisley, LG, Samsung, Shell, Jaeger-Lecoultré, AUDI, Baccarat, La Prairie, HP, Chanel, Converse, US Navy



## GYEONGJU, KOREA'S ANCIENT CAPITAL

From never-sleeping Seoul and Busan, we journeyed to Gyeongju, capital of the ancient Shilla Dynasty for over 1,000 years. Gyeongju is home to one of twelve South Korea's UNESCO World Heritage sites, celebrating Korean Buddhist art, unpaired temples like Seokguram and royal palaces such as Donggung Palace and Wolji Pond. Planners looking for modern infrastructure will find in Gyeongju's **Hwabaek International Convention Center (HICO)** an auditorium up to 3,500 people, as well as spacious convention halls and meeting spaces. Just opposite to the venue, the stylish Hilton Gyeongju Hotel offers meetings spaces too and 330 guest rooms and suites. Since 2015, regular visitors and delegates are also offered the possibility to immerse in Korea's pop culture and discover its musical history at the **K-pop museum**.

With its deep 'ancient capital' heritage, we can expect this city to offer meeting planners unique venues to immerse delegates in a traditional vibe. Walking distance from HICO, the training and retreat centre **Hwangnyongwon** gives

delegates an unforgettable spiritual experience. Praised by locals as the perfect wife for Gyeongju's Observation Tower, the nine-floor Joongdo tower recreates an ancient-looking wooden pagoda at the Hwangnyongwon meditation centre, which includes state-of-the-art conference rooms and an auditorium for corporates. Last but not least, a Buddhist temple is opened to religious groups which organise their events at the venue. Delegates can unwind and restore the balance between mind and body through a series of post-congress activities like yoga, meditation and tea ceremonies.

Once home to Korea's noble clan Choi, the residential area **Gyocheon Hanok Village** is a real display of Korea's traditional housing and it has been turned into a visitors' attraction where delegates can learn about the country's history and past lifestyle. This hanok village makes available for meeting planners different meeting spaces for small-sized groups including after meeting activities to experience local culture, thanks to different indoor and outdoor activities.

▲ Hwangnyongsa Temple





### INCHEON, THE INNOVATIVE CITY OF THE FUTURE

As Korea's gateway to the world, Incheon keeps developing an active interest in positioning itself as a global innovation hub for international business. There's no doubt having the Incheon International Airport (*awarded World's Best Airport for 12 years from 2005 to 2016*), the world's largest Free Economic Zone (*larger than those in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore or Dubai*) and major events like the Korea MICE Expo, the Incheon Tourism Organization reaffirms the city's commitment to the growth of international business and the meetings industry. This is something our group was able to eyewitness during the welcome reception of KME at Gyeongwonjae Ambassador Incheon Hotel, as well as the opening speech of the annual trade show.

made famous in Asia by the Korean drama 'Goblin: The Lonely and Great God'. The hotel counts with 30 rooms and 5 open-air areas for events. The hotel is currently planning a rebranding campaign which should be completed by 2020.

If the Songdo International City has positioned itself as a global business hub with 15 international organisations headquartered at the G-Tower, the Incheon Global Campus, a Knowledge and Information Industry Complex, and a Bio Complex among other facilities; Yeongjong Area is gaining global reputation as an international aviation & logistics hub (*including BMW Driving Center, the Air Training Center and the Aircraft Engine Maintenance Center*). Last but not least, the Cheongna International City is also a force to be reckoned with in high-tech and financial industries including important complex such as Robot Land or Incheon High-Tech Park.

Often described as the city of the future, Incheon's largest venue Songdo ConvensiA is an extraordinary piece of modern and futuristic architecture. Extending over 54,000 sqm spreading across five floors, it is located at the Songdo International Business District. The venue offers meeting planners the latest infrastructure and technology for all kinds of events. The meeting and exhibition spaces will be increased after the new expansion is opened, allowing for larger events at the venue. ConvensiA is easily accessible and is located by walking distance from Songdo Central Park, and six hotels such as the five-star hotel Orakai Songdo Park and the first traditional-looking hotel in Incheon, Gyeongwonjae Ambassador Incheon. Opened in May 2015, Gyeongwonjae, associated with Accor, is listed as one of Korea's unique venues and has been

Incheon is an eco-friendly and smart city open to the future and organisations all over the world are invited to join the project.

Ms. Kyuree Kim, International Coordinator at the Korea MICE Association commented on her participation as exhibitor at KME 2018:

*"The Songdo ConvensiA is Korea's most representative MICE venue to host events that ensure a fruitful time for delegates. Its multi-complex facilities around the centre also provide great accessibility to Incheon Airport. KME is a great networking event for the MICE industry in Korea, and I look forward to repeat our success story at Songdo ConvensiA for future years to come."*



Located in Gyochoon Hanok Village, the traditional **Yosokkoong restaurant** delights its guests not only with the culinary traditions of a country acclaimed for its tasty healthy food, but also with the specialties of the Choi family's cuisine which stands the test of time.



**KOREA, BEYOND MEETINGS**

VISIT [KOREACONVENTION.ORG](http://KOREACONVENTION.ORG)

OR EMAIL [MICE@KNTO.OR.KR](mailto:MICE@KNTO.OR.KR)



# Buenos Aires – The Perfect Gateway to Latin America

The capital city of Argentina is one of the largest cities in Latin America, rich in European DNA, and known for its vibrant arts and cultural scene. Gonzalo Robredo, President of Buenos Aires CVB shares more.

## **Buenos Aires did really well placing 11th in this year's ICCA ranking, are you aiming for top ten next year?**

This achievement shows that Buenos Aires is proactive in international events, and we've worked hard with the private sector to achieve this. As our MICE industry grows, the ICCA ranking is an important marketing tool for the MICE sector internationally. It is a special year for international events in Buenos Aires, and the ranking is a perfect timing to maximise the awareness and visibility of the city.

This year Buenos Aires will host several G20 meetings including the Leaders' Summit. Our President Mauricio Macri is also the president of the first-ever G20 summit to be hosted in South America. The 2018 Summer Youth Olympic Games will also be held here.

We just opened the Buenos Aires Convention Center (known in Spanish as CEC) in the most beautiful area in town.

The iconic building design consumes less energy with green rooftop and it provides 5,700-delegates capacity. We've already received more bookings than expected!

## **What are some of Buenos Aires selling points?**

The human and social capital in Buenos Aires is different with a wide range of cultural expressions. We also have a strong scientific community. Buenos Aires received the first two scientific Nobel Prize in Latin America. We have three today, and it is a legacy that has continued from 70 years ago. Many scientific associations of Latin America are based in Buenos Aires. We prepare and educate the scientific community in order to capture international events and it has been very successful.

## **Latest developments in connectivity?**

Domestic connectivity was very poor

but it has gotten 50% better from two years ago. America Airlines just announced direct flights between Los Angeles to Buenos Aires. For international, connectivity to Asia will only get better, we already have a couple of long-haul options with only a stop-over in Beijing or Shanghai.

## **What is your top priority for the convention bureau?**

We still have a lot to do when it comes to marketing Buenos Aires, like generating content for digital promotions on social networks, and also through media channels and influencers. The LGBT community is key and their opinions are followed by the other media streams.

We were one of the first destination to analyse big data in order to target market segments better with specific proposals and style of communication.



# Chiang Mai, a Hidden Treasure in Thailand

A lot of us may know Chiang Mai as a popular leisure destination sitting on the Ping River, capturing the royal fragments from the Lan Na Kingdom. However, do you know Chiang Mai is ready to extend its marvellous achievement in the MICE sector now and opening its arms to welcome international association congresses?

**Vivian Xu Reports**



## GRABBING A TASTE OF THAI GLORY

Enchanting Chiang Mai, the second largest city in Thailand, surrounded by the highest mountain Doi Inthanon in Thailand. A one-hour flight from Bangkok, Chiang Mai is a melting pot of Lan Na culture and traditional crafts. In early December 2017, Chiang Mai was awarded the UNESCO title of Creative City.

**Wat Ton Kwen**, a true hidden gem of Lanna architecture. The temple was constructed entirely from wood with a three-tiers aesthetic roof. Decorative structure called Lamyong added extra dynamic visual rhythms to the building. Two legendary Singha lie peacefully at the entrance, bringing a sense of myth and majesty – a perfect open foyer for any desired outdoor activities.

For a well-off exotic flavour, **Khum Kham Convention Complex** is the convention venue of choice! A luxuriously Lanna style decorated convention complex, equipped with hi-tech conference facilities. The stunning Khum Kham Luang Ball Room offers conference space for up to 1,400 delegates in banquet style.

A fairy tale-like resort that recreates the

ancient Lanna City, **Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai** is nestled on a 60-acres ground 15 minutes drive from Chiang Mai International airport. It offers 123 rooms spread out over the tropical acres with two main room categories, Colonial Suites and Private Villas. A unique Ball Room with silk wall coverings sits in front of the summer green lawn, which can host an event for up to 500 delegates.

The **Rati Lanna Riverside Spa Resort** is a home made for travellers. Symbolising the day to day life of the Lanna community, silver, gold, lacquer wares, wood carvings, and woven fabrics are used to decorate the resort. The unexpected waterfall installations in the guestrooms create an immersive Buddhist Zen ambience. The resort is equipped with meetings rooms and a 400m<sup>2</sup> riverside lawn, which can be an ideal open space for a cocktail reception for up to 200 guests.

## EXPERIENCING VIBRANT MODERNIZATION

Not limiting to its historic sites, Chiang Mai provides a mix of business, modern arts and culture. One of most iconic landmark is the **Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Centre (CMECC)**, the key venue for large trade

shows, exhibitions and events. The centre welcomes all types of events from home and abroad, with its 6,000m<sup>2</sup> of usable space.

Another winning showcase is the **X2 Chiang Mai Riverside Resort**, which was newly opened at the end of 2017. This luxury hotel offers uniquely designed guestrooms that blends modern elements with the traditional Lanna style. It is also known for its Oxygen Dining Room – Best Thailand Tatler Restaurant in 2018, led by a Michelin 1-star Chef. This dining room offers your tongue a ride to a spices-infused heaven!

If expensive taste is what gets you licking, then you definitely cannot miss out the Le Meridien Hotel Chiang Mai. In keeping with its well-earned reputation for building and managing boutique hotels of uncompromising luxury, the **Le Meridien Hotel Chiang Mai** is no exception. Offering 384 guestrooms with glowing city night view or peaceful mountain view. The hotel provides plenty of spacious meeting rooms and hi-tech facilities for convention groups up to 1,050 delegates. This gorgeous property is proudly favoured by the Thai princess and other international royal guests as it offers a Royal Suite of 250m<sup>2</sup>!



**PROTECTING THE ELEPHANT KINGDOM**

**Elephant Nature Park** is located 60km from Chiang Mai. Established in the 1990's, it is now home for 78 elephants, and rescued dogs, cats and buffaloes. The estimated number of existing Asian Elephants in the world has fallen dramatically into below 30,000. There are about 3,000-4,000 Asian Elephants living in Thailand and around 300 of them are still suffering under the appalling conditions. There are various reasons behind the dropping Asian Elephant figures, such as losing their natural habitat due to human's environmental destructions; trading of ivory, skin and aphrodisiacs; captured and enslaved for hard labour and entertainment purposes, etc. The goal of the park is to provide a sanctuary for distressed elephants from all over Thailand, building awareness for elephant protection, as well as engaging the local communities and educating visitors about elephants' life, with an anti-animal abuse attitude.

**BANGKOK, A GLITZY MICE BOOM!**

Bangkok, a fast-paced capital city, the heart of Thailand, and gateway to South East Asia. This rapid growing city offers abundant options when it comes to convention and meeting venues, luxurious hotels, fashionable shopping centres, and fine-dining (*not to forget exotic en-*

*tertainments*). The world-class Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre (*BITEC*), is 30 minutes drive from the International Suvarnabhumi Airport, with the expansion of a brand-new curved tent-style event hall that offers 3,600m<sup>2</sup> of event space for up to 3,000 delegates and another 5,070 m<sup>2</sup> of column-free space with a ceiling height of 15 metres, which can accommodate up to 9,200 delegates. *BITEC* is no doubt the favoured venue for meetings, conventions and exhibitions.

Talking about striking convention centres and modern hotels, we have to mention the Avani Riverside Bangkok Hotel. A place where you can host an event with a rooftop panoramic river view of the shiny city skylines, and embrace the tropical sunshine next to the infinity pool. Moreover, the Grand Riverside Ball Room can accommodate up to 900 delegates in banquet style and 1,400 delegates in theatre layout. Similarly, the Shangri-la Hotel Bangkok is another beauty rest by the Chao Phraya River. In contrast to Avani Riverside Bangkok Hotel, Shangri-la Hotel Bangkok inherited the traditional Thai style design smoothly mixed with a sense of modern comfort. Besides meeting spaces for up to 1,500 delegates, come and enjoy the graceful Thai performance at the spacious lobby, and dining in the River Salathip in the midst of tropical green, looking at the sun dipping into the tinted orange river.

*“Every functional space in Le Meridien was logically thought out. A large foyer with high ceilings that leads to the main ballroom that is divisible in a number of flexible ways. All spaces finished to a high standard with inbuilt AV and are extremely bright with bathrooms conveniently nearby.”*

**Serena Barnes,**  
Project Manager  
of GSMA



*“BITEC is an impressive venue due to its wide spectrum of halls and exhibition options and its welcome hall is directly linked to the BTS Skytrain.”*

**Elhav Katzav,**  
Procurement  
Specialist of  
Kenesgroup



*“Apart from situating at the easily accessible riverside, Shangri-la Hotel Bangkok possesses modern facilities for meetings up to 500 people. Simply, it has-it-all!”*

**Ludovic Thanay,**  
Executive Officer  
of World  
Customs  
Organization



# Thailand Extends Its Miraculous MICE Growth

HQ interviews **Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya**, President of Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB).

## What are the latest developments in the country that meetings planners should know?

Market competitiveness has kept Thailand's exhibition infrastructure up to speed. Five airports in Thailand will be upgraded in the next five years: Suvarnabhumi Airport Bangkok, Don Mueang International Airport Bangkok, Chiang Mai International Airport, Phuket International Airport and U-Tapao Rayong Pattaya Airport.

Together with the development of Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC)\* to attract investment and knowledge in S-Curve industries\*\*, ensures Thailand is ready for business and enables TCEB to develop more aggressively its business approach to meetings industry. Moreover, EEC will draw an attention to the east regions of Thailand and pull the regions together to boost MICE industry.

TCEB has initiated various standards to upgrade Thailand's MICE industry and bring it up to international standard. These will strengthen the industry by improving the quality of service, create trusts and professional image of the MICE venues, as well as lift up the confidence of MICE organisers. Currently about 800 meeting rooms among 315 Thai MICE venues has received TMVS (Thailand MICE Venue Standards) certificate.



## *\*What is Eastern Economic Corridor?*

The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) covers Rayong, Chonburi, and Chachoengsao provinces, with a total area of 13,000 square kilometres. The government is also set to accelerate the area's readiness to support all aspects of investment and economic growth, and fully expects that the EEC will be an important centre for trade, investment, regional transportation, and a strategic gateway to Asia.

## *\*\*What are the S-Curve industries?*

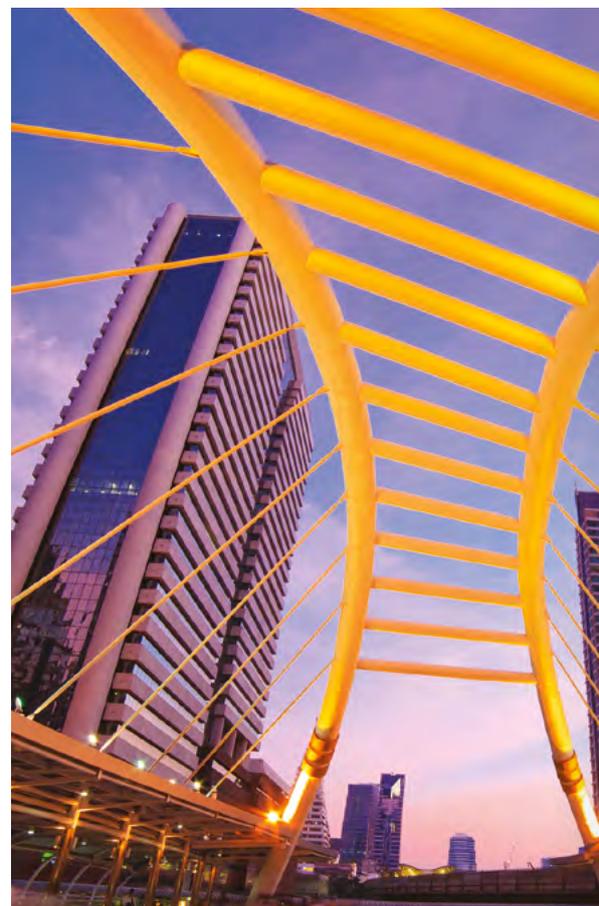
The Thailand 4.0 Policy has highlighted opportunities and investments trends in 10 targeted industries, divided into two broad categories:

### **First 5 S-Curve industries:**

- Next-Generation Automotive
- Intelligent Electronics
- Advance Agriculture
- Biotechnology

### **2nd 5 S-Curve industries:**

- Digital
- Robotics and Automation
- Aviation and Logistics
- Biofuels and Biochemicals
- Medical Hub





**\*\*\*Market survey on Thailand's MICE image**

TCEB assigned the Custom Asia Co., Ltd., a member of Global Market Research Association to conduct a market survey. The research took place in 20 countries, and focused on global MICE professionals and their outlooks on Thailand's MICE brand.

These survey participants comprised of four segments:

- 1. MICE Players
- 2. Business Travelers
- 3. MICE Visitors
- 4. Association and Organisation related to MICE

**According to a survey\*\*\* Thailand is the most preferred MICE destination to revisit. What are the winning elements for Thailand?**

Thailand's factors are great hospitality, value for money, various incentive cultural experiences, convenient accessibility and a good variety of international and local cuisine. TCEB is keen to partner with new MICE cities in Thailand to deliver more diverse experiences to business visitors.

**What are the key markets for Thailand in terms of association meetings? What is your strategy to develop these markets?**

There is huge interest in the ASEAN markets, however USA and Europe are targeted markets as well. New markets such as Japan, Korea and China are eager to bring their association meetings outside of their countries. Therefore, Thailand is stepping up to attract these regional meetings. Linking local associations to the international associations (such as UIA, IAPCO, ICCA) is one such way of not only bringing more association congresses to Thailand but also exchanging knowledges and creating legacy for the country.

**What's hindering international associations from choosing Thailand for their events? How do you set out to change that?**

Meetings industry is undergoing widespread creativity and digitalisation. TCEB so far is closely following its pace and established a dedicated sector, performing as a creator and initiator, leading the trends and creating business opportunities for key stakeholders in Thailand. Moreover, the government's Thailand 4.0 programme is encouraging cooperation between the government and private sectors to support innovation and digitalisation of the country.



Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya ▲

**Can you please share with us some of your recent international congress wins?**

One recent success bid is 'The 30th Conference of the Asian Pacific Associations for the Study of the Liver 2021 (APASL 2021)' which will be attended by more than 4,000 participants. The event will take place in Bangkok in 2021. Another key event is '2020 World Universities Debating Championship', the world's largest debating tournament, and one of the largest annual international student events in the world. The event will be held in Thailand in 2020 with more than 2,000 participants worldwide.



 **FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
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# 12 Branding Macao as The MICE Destination

Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (*IPIM*) built a strong MICE brand to strengthen Macao's profile and positioning as a global destination – to great results. According to the statistic provided by the Macao Statistics and Census Service, Macao hosted 1,381 MICE events in 2017, (8.2% increase from 2016), with 1,901,000 attendees (10.4% increase from 2016). HQ sat with **Mrs. Irene Va Kuan Lau**, Executive Director of IPIM to understand more about the strategy involved.

## What are the challenges for Macao, as a destination for association meetings?

Macao is still a relatively new destination for large scale events. Despite our recent success with large scale corporate and incentive groups, many associations are not aware of Macao's large capacity, growing diversity of attractions and new venues with less direct access to gaming areas.

The lack of local hosts also reduces the opportunity to bid for international conventions. As the development of associations in Macao is relatively new, not many are actively engaged with their international association counterparts. IPIM has strengthened the support to local entities by including bid support for international conventions, and the

provision of membership fee support to local associations wanting to join their affiliated regional or international association.

## What is your strategy to promote Macao as a MICE destination?

Consolidating Macao's value proposition as an attractive MICE destination, with effective online and offline promotional activities. We have been actively promoting Macao as a business event destination by participating in international trade shows such as IMEX Frankfurt, IMEX America, IT&CM China, CI-BTM, and IT&CMA.

We have also launched Macao's 'Conference Ambassador' programme and the Ambassadors will promote Macao through their professional networks and

identify new business opportunities for Macao.

## How does IPIM make Macao more attractive as the MICE destination?

The 'Convention and Exhibition Financial Support Programme' was launched to attract more international events. It covers expenses such as accommodation, F&B, keynote speakers, transportation etc. It was also developed to encourage conference delegates to enjoy local experiences and engage with the local community. This is part of a strategy to generate greater benefits from MICE for local SMEs and the broader community of Macao.

We also provide bidding and event support towards organisations wanting to





澳門貿易投資促進局  
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 Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute



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[WWW.IPIM.GOV.MO/EN/](http://WWW.IPIM.GOV.MO/EN/)



stage regional and international conferences in Macao. We will assign an event specialist to develop and assist international events scheduled to take place in Macao, and assist event organisers to apply for the Green Lane, a fast track visa service exclusively set up for event delegates at Macau International Airport, Macau Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, Macau Taipa Ferry Terminal, Border Gate and Cotai Frontier Port.

### What sets Macao apart from regional competitors?

Macao is in the unique position of being able to accommodate large scale events under one roof or within a compact and fully integrated convention precinct. With over 190,000m<sup>2</sup> of meeting space and 38,700 hotel rooms all conveniently within 30km<sup>2</sup>, meeting planners can

enjoy the convenience of dealing with minimal properties and transportation. Besides Macao's 25 UNESCO Heritage sites, centuries-old ruins and structures that reflect its strong Asian identity and long history as a Portuguese settlement, visitors can also enjoy a growing diversity of attractions that cater for different tastes. Macao has also been designated as the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, which adds to Macao's credentials and profile for attracting both tourism and MICE business.

### What does the future hold for MICE industry in Macao?

Macao's government is focusing on non-gaming industries to diversify the local economy. We are experiencing unprecedented growth and discovering market opportunities as our prod-

uct offering diversifies and our capacity for large scale events expands. Macao's success is reliant on the commitment and collaboration of the MICE industry in Macao to position and promote the destination internationally.

The Macao government and private sector will continue to invest in economic diversity to create a more sustainable economy for the long term, which is in line with the Macao government's policy – *priority to the convention industry*. Private sector investment and confidence will continue to grow in the MICE sector with massive infrastructure developments.

The number of hotel rooms is expected to further increase to 50,000 in the next few years, which will substantially increase Macao's capacity for Business Events.

# Honest Goodness

Adelaide Convention Centre teams up with leading South Australian nutritional experts to transform event dining. General Manager **Simon Burgess** and Executive Chef **Gavin Robertson** share more.

**HQ: What prompted Adelaide Convention Centre’s latest innovation to be Honest Goodness – a fresh new menu?**

SB: Innovation has been core to the Adelaide Convention Centre experience from the very beginning, and when it comes to food trends, we’ve certainly worked to keep ahead of the curve. With increased public conversation on mindful eating and growing demand for healthy conferencing, we wanted to get on the front foot and lead the way. We’ve hosted a number of key Asia-Pacific nutrition conferences and were increasingly being asked for healthier menu options.

In our business, it’s important to continuously evolve your menu, and that’s exactly what we’ve done with Honest Goodness.

**Can you share with us the centre’s Honest Goodness philosophy, and how public nutrition message can transform the convention centre event dining experience?**

SB: Honest Goodness is a menu where nature is the hero. Best described as *‘feel good, whole food, made fresh’*, it brings the public nutrition message to the forefront, celebrating food that not only tastes good but is good in every sense.

Developed by our Executive Chef, Gavin Robertson in collaboration with the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI), our new menu philosophy is focused on using minimal intervention foods and an unwavering commitment to *‘house-made’*. It stands as evidence that it is possible to replace processed elements with fresh, whole

ingredients to make restaurant-quality food for large scale events without compromising flavour.

Honest Goodness’ focus on minimal intervention foods and conscious reduction of salts, sugars and preservatives is transforming the convention centre culinary experience. To deliver on this commitment, salts have been reduced and replaced with rubs and spices, sugar laden drinks swapped for house-made ice teas and fruit-infused waters, and we’ve engaged with more local farmers and artisan producers.

**Was client feedback taken into account when crafting the new menu?**

SB: Client feedback was certainly a catalyst behind Honest Goodness, along with our own drive for innovation and to be a market-leader. Across the board, there’s been growing discussion about the importance of good nutrition, and we found we were increasingly being asked for healthier menu options.

We initially addressed the heightened focus on mindful eating through our Vitality menu – something we’d had in place for the past two years and was offered as an ‘option’ for event planners. While we experienced some traction with it, we wanted to develop the concept further. Honest Goodness is not a ‘sub menu’, rather it is presented as our ‘main menu.’ We view our new spotlight on good nutrition an important part of our community engagement.

The early response to the menu from clients has been extremely positive.



▼ Pineapple carpaccio, lime gelato with mint





▼ Gavin Robertson

## What are the considerations and challenges in designing a menu to cater for very large groups?

GR: There are several important considerations when it comes to reinventing a menu. At the ACC, our focus is on ensuring that we are keeping our menus on-trend and delivering restaurant-quality cuisine made from locally sourced and / or grown produce. Food consumed during a conference plays such a huge part in the success of the event; it's key to the delegate experience and aside from the conference program, is usually what guests remember most. It's also one way you can give delegates a sense of the destination.

In South Australia, we're spoilt for choice when it comes to access to incredible produce. Our Honest Goodness menu reflects this, offering guests a distinct taste of South Australia; 97 percent of produce we use is sourced locally.

As for other considerations and challenges, Honest Goodness was a unique situation as it was such a new approach for our team and changed the way we do business and present our food. It took a great deal of planning and required us to change the mindset of both our kitchen staff and suppliers. It was not without challenge, but both our team and suppliers have enthusiastically embraced the concept, with our suppliers even adapting their own processes and produce to fit our new menu philosophy.

## Please whet our readers' appetite with some distinctly South Australian dishes from the exciting new menu.

GR: Get acquainted with the 'Taste of South Australia' – Spencer Gulf prawns, blue swimmer crab mousse, Smoky Bay oyster, kingfish ceviche, served with fennel pollen wafer.

Our maple-glazed Boston Bay pork belly (with poached apple and pear salad and sesame orange dressing) is also a must try. Another favourite is the Murraylands lamb rump with smashed minted pea, crushed Kipfler potatoes with semi-dried tomato pinot glaze.

▼ Taste of South Australia



# So How *Open to the World* is Russia?



**RUSSIA**

Convention  
Bureau



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[RUSSIACB.COM](http://RUSSIACB.COM)

## What is the main goal of establishing the Russian Convention Bureau, and your strategy to achieve that goal?

The turnover of congresses in the world is about \$1 trillion, and Russia shares less than one percent of it. Our main goal is to improve the situation quickly. The main objective for the first year is to inform professional societies that we are established, and we are here to be a main tool for helping international organisers and companies who are planning or considering possibilities to organise events in Russia.

The Russian Convention Bureau is a one-stop contact and support for them. We also provide special conditions for our members and companies from the events industry with financial support and exposure.

## How do you set out to achieve your main objective in the first year?

We actively promote the top 20 destinations in Russia abroad, each has different infrastructure development that caters to different kinds of business and sports events. The top 20 bid for events according to their capacity.

Russia is rich in useful resources and new ideas because we have a developed event industry. There are 2,000 professional business event organisers, 2,000 service companies that provide a wide range of services for event organisers, 3,500 event sites, and 12,500 congress events are held in Russia on an annual basis.

Participating in specialised events of the event industry allows us to promote a positive image of Russia as a favourable place to hold events of any kind, and attract large international events. We present the event-driven potential of Russian regions and infrastructural possibilities of each destinations to the world's largest players.

## What else is on your agenda?

The Russian Convention Bureau would also like to establish regional convention



When Russia was represented for the first time at IBTM World trade show by the collective stand RUSSIA OPEN TO THE WORLD, it became one of the most visited stands at the show, in 2017. HQ had a chat with **Alexey Kalachev**, director of the newly established Russian Convention Bureau during IMEX Frankfurt 2018.



▲ HQ's Vivian interviewing Alexey Kalachev, Director of Russia CVB

bureaus. We have eight of them in Russia at the moment, and we looking forward to support the establishment of 30 regional convention bureaus in five years' time.

**Can you share with us the impact the bureau has experienced so far with international trade shows?**

The IBTM World Trade Show at the beginning of last November was our first project, it was an intense moment for us, and it happened before we were officially established at the end of that month. It drew about 2000 visitors to the stand, which was a great opportunity for us to promote our destinations abroad to the international market, and inform everyone that Russia is a huge country with different features in culture, long-term history, modern infrastructure for different events, and so on...

It is our first time here in IMEX Frankfurt, but this is our second international trade show experience. We have here with us the key players of the Russian event industry from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Republic of Tatarstan, Sochi, Sverdlovsk and other regions. By collecting the Russian industry professionals at Russia 'Open to the World' national stand, we are here to show the possibilities of Russia but also to create a cooperative relationship with our foreign colleagues.

**Surely, Russia has other strengths as a meetings destination, can you list some for our readers?**

Russia has profitable price conditions on the market, and offers great value for money on a high level. We have a rich cultural and historical heritage. As we are composed of 85 regions united administratively and territorially, and eight federal districts, the country offers a wide diversity of territories for business and cultural events organisation. Russia

is also one of the top ten places in the world by the number of UNESCO World Heritage sites, with 17 cultural monuments and eleven natural reserves.

As we are supported by the government of the Russian Federation, we are cooperating with main state corporations and ministry of international affairs to reduce potential bureaucratic barriers for delegates. We achieved a no-visa policy for Asia, visa-free entry to Russia for the citizens of over 30 countries, and 72-hour visa-free regime for foreign citizens arriving to Russia on cruise liners. The visa regime is simplified for organisers, operators or participants for the period of important international events.

**What do you foresee the World Cup 2018 can bring to Russia?**

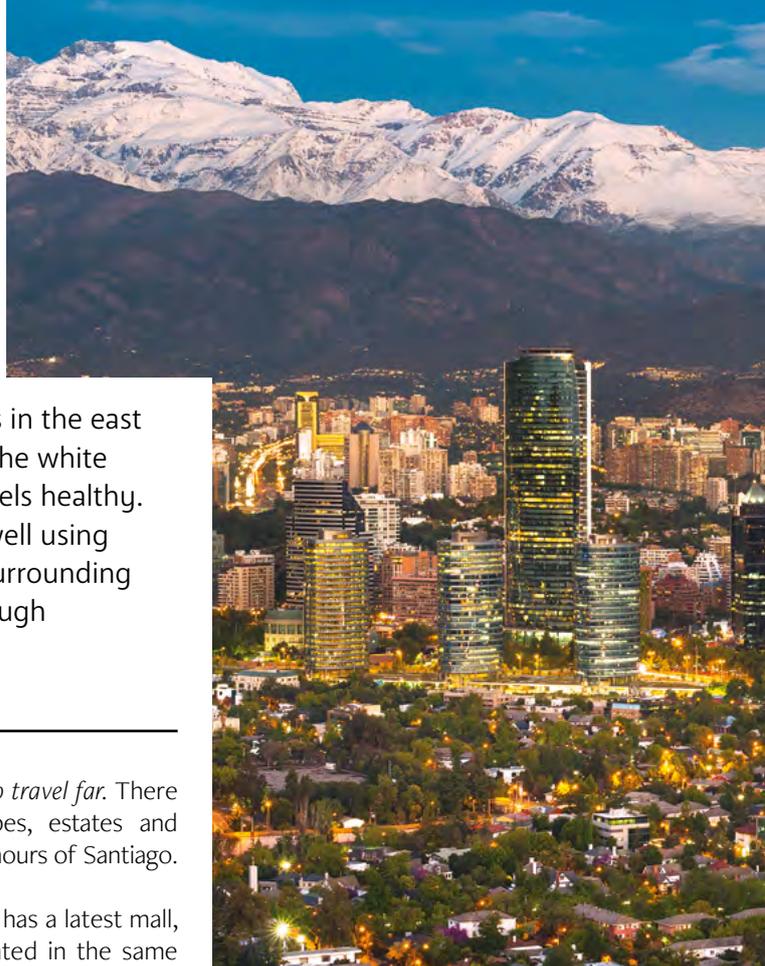
The World Cup will leave behind new infrastructure in the eleven regions. On a positive note, there will be new stadiums, hotels, conference centres and media centres for us to promote abroad. This also poses a big challenge for us, to fill up these venues with other events when the World Cup is over. The Sochi Winter Olympic Games put Sochi on the map and we are still reaping the benefits post-event.



▲ Russia at IMEX Frankfurt 2018

# 18 Santiago de Chile

## The Andes Congress Destination



Santiago de Chile is wedged between the majestic Andes in the east of South America. At all times of the day you can enjoy the white mountain peaks above the capital Santiago de Chile. It feels healthy. Those who have never visited South America would do well using Chile as a stepping-stone. In Santiago de Chile and the surrounding area there is more to see than you might think, even though the majority of the city is a bit American.

**Marcel A.M. Vissers reports**

### FIEXPO LATINOAMERICA SHOWS THE WAY

The MICE trade fair Fiexpo Latinoamerica takes place every year in June, in Santiago de Chile for 2017-2019. It has grown steadily in the Latin American congress landscape for five years. There are two congress locations in Santiago de Chile, the most intimate is **Casapiedra** and the second is the more commercial **Centro Parque**. Many conferences take place in the big hotels, and there are many.

Chile enjoys a stable economy, and has become a tourist attraction for many neighbouring countries. Personally, I think that the construction of a new iconic congress building could give the local economy a big boost. An architect who can create a design with the Andes as a backdrop needs to be found, and success will be guaranteed for the future, just like the Harpa Conference Centre in Reykjavik which also has a view of a mountainous landscape.

A congress building is always strongly connected to a city and people had told me beforehand that there is not much to do in Santiago. They've miscounted the real value. With the charming guide Soledad Bahanmonders, I moved into the city and surroundings for three days and discovered some nice places for delegates who want to do a post-event

tour – *you don't have to travel far*. There are beautiful landscapes, estates and vineyards within a few hours of Santiago.

The '*shopping mall city*' has a latest mall, Costanera, that is located in the same building as the **Costanera Center**. The skyscraper offers a 360° sight of Santiago from 300 metres high. This is the best introduction to the size of the city and the magnificent Andes mountains.

### CHILE IS A WINE COUNTRY

No conference is possible without a visit to one of the wineries in Casablanca, about two hours from the capital. The best preparation for an introduction to the Chilean wines is a wine experience in **Vinolia**. During a conference, a social event can be organised here for about 40 people. I can assure you that it is a special experience. Here you can discover the secrets of Chilean wine in one hour without leaving Santiago. You will learn about aromas, wines and vineyards through their sensory exploration room and in an exclusive cinema room where you will travel through Chilean geography and its wine valleys.

The real experience is of course a visit to wine country **Casablanca**. Well-known names are Veramonte, William Cole and **Estancia el Cuadro** – *which I myself have been very charmed by*.

## Activities in Estancia el Cuadro

*It is almost a must for event organisers to organise an event in this beautiful estancia. There are horse-drawn carriages to lead you along an extraordinary journey that tells the story of the various planting techniques that the Casablanca Valley offers.*

*The Wine Museum has well-trained and multilingual guides to explain about a collection of original machinery used to make brandy, some from the cellars from 1900. There is wine tasting, and those who really want to party must book 'Show and Rodeo Costumbrista'.*

*Huasos will give you a demonstration of Chilean customs and folk music.*

## The Colours of Valparaiso

*Every visitor to Santiago needs a full-day private tour to the coastal cities of Viña del Mar and Valparaiso, driving through the Curacavi and Casablanca valleys.*

*In Viña del Mar, known as the Garden City, you have to visit San Martin and Peru Avenues by the ocean side.*

*After driving pass a beautiful flower clock, continue to Valparaiso, the largest port city in Chile to admire the colourful neighbourhoods built along the city hills. Visit the Victory Square, Yugoslav and Atkinson corridor, and Sotomayor square.*

*Closing with a dinner restaurant in Valparaiso will often remind you of the ocean and the colour of the city.*



▼ Valparaiso, more colourful than the rainbow

### GOOD FOOD FITS WELL WITH GOOD WINE

You can eat well in Santiago. There are so many cosy streets filled with restaurants, and I want to recommend the readers a few special places to eat. My magazine manager Jesus had pointed me to **Galino** (*Dardignac street*) where the best fish soup is served (*caldillo de congrio*). This area is full of restaurants and is also close to Patio Bellavista and La Chascona, Pablo Neruda's museum house. Also a must to visit if you have lesser days for a refresh of Chile's history.

My guide Soledad definitely wanted to bring me to **Peumayen** restaurant. The New York Times refers to this restaurant as a relief for Santiago. A quick visit to Santiago may leave an impression that typical Chilean food is limited to steak, sandwiches and completes - *the ever-present hot dogs smeared with avocado*. With a mission to change that, the restaurant Peumayen attempts to revive the ancestral cuisine of some of the country's native people: the Mapuche, Aymará and Rapa Nui.



Chile



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# 20 Fresh Air to Feel New and Alive, Every Breath in NZ Contains More Oxygen and Life



Tourism New Zealand invited HQ for a media fam trip in May to experience Wellington and Auckland's all-encompassing MICE assets. I returned with half a luggage of goodies, rejuvenated spirit, and this love letter.

**Ken T. reports**

## ACCESSIBLE, BEWITCHING & COMPACT, WELLINGTON IS A DESTINATION TO DISCOVER

Arriving in Wellington is my best flight descending experience, watching the lush blue waters transform into a sea of forested hills with colourful timber houses sprinkled across the landscape. I was instantly charmed by the welcoming sight and the meandering car ride along the picturesque bay into the vibrant city centre. I've found a new love, in New Zealand North Island's southernmost point.

With an average daily gust of 29km/h, wind is one of Windy Wellington's defining characteristics. The city's Hollywood-inspired signage was designed to look like it is blowing away! But like a cosy hug, the cool black soft-shell jacket (*thoughtfully supplied by our incredible ten-star host Sherylee*), kept us snug and warm throughout the fam trip. This is merely a small extend of the kind and generous hospitality that made our group feel warm and fuzzy inside. I learned that warm hospitality and care for others is the spirit of *Manaakitanga* – one of the three core values of Māori culture.

## VIBRANT & CREATIVE ATMOSPHERE

Out of the 3000 hotel rooms within walking distance of Wellington's central city, we checked into an eccentric art

museum (*we're in the arts and culture capital after all!*)! The **QT Museum Wellington** indulges in the eclectic taste of the avant-garde and cool luxury, inspiring every guest with their invigorating artistic flair and stimulating collections of curiosities and oddities, tastefully curated by the hotel's ambassador, resident, and previous owner Chris Parkin. Chrissy Cummings, the Director of Sales hosted us for high tea at the award winning French fine-dining **Hippopotamus Restaurant**. We had the best table reserved for us to soak in the views of the Wellington Harbour that packed Sunday afternoon. The artistically presented fine cuisine had exposed my taste buds to little gastronomical planets that I never knew existed.

New Zealand's political and cultural capital is a sophisticated destination with a vibrant F&B scene. I was particularly surprised to learn that Wellington has more cafes, bars and restaurants per capita than New York! Wellingtonians do eat out a lot, and the craft beer brewing scene also exploded in the last five years (*and indication of a trendy creative hub*). Wellington's proximity to the wine regions of Wairarapa and Marlborough is also a win! Simply because one key ingredient for any memorable business event is good wine.

The city is also fueled by a strong coffee culture, there are around 15 roasters in the city – most per capita in the world.

**Prefab Café** is a popular coffee roastery with events facility – Prefab Hall, a venue that can host up to 120 guests for dinner, 160-200 theatre style, 250 cocktail style, and up to 500 across both spaces. Besides providing a delightful menu of fresh-from-the-kitchen fare and bottomless filter coffee, it is also a relaxing setting for bleisure travelers to clear emails or prepare for their next sales deck.

## DIVERSE RANGE OF VENUES

A short five minutes' drive lands us in a larger event venue, the **TSB Arena & Auditorium (Shed 6)**. It has a maximum capacity of 1200 (*banquet*) and 3972 delegates (*theatre style*) across its 2186m<sup>2</sup> of versatile pillar-free space. Shed 6 packs an additional 763m<sup>2</sup> of multi-purpose space that can cater up to 966 delegates in a theatre layout. **Wellington Venues** is Wellington's largest venues provider. Besides these two, they offer other iconic venues such as the Opera House, St James Theatre, Michael Fowler Centre and Academy Galleries.

Māori culture runs deep on this land. The **Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa** (*literally means the container of treasures*) is place to be for an immersive experience. Te Papa Back of House (*Taonga Māori*) Tour is an insightful hosted tour that weaves through the Māori exhibition spaces and exclusive closed-



▲ The beautiful Wellington, New Zealand's capital city

to-the-public vaults, bringing the culture alive through captivating stories, cultural protocols, and objects. The curators (*or more appropriately, custodians*) exude an infectious passion of the culture, many of whom retain deep ancestral linkage to the indigenous Māori people.

This fascinating national museum receives 1.3 million visitors each year. It also happens to be a full-scale conference centre with a wide range of meeting and theatre spaces for hire. **Te Marae** (*communal meeting place*) is a stunning and authentic Māori-ingrained backdrop for canapés and the live presentation of the World of Wearable Arts. Te Papa's major addition this year **Toi Art**, a spectacular two-story gallery (*the size of 15 tennis courts*) was our dining spot. *'Art to Plate'* is one memorable experience not to be

missed. Every dish is art on a plate masterfully crafted by executive chef Steve Logan drawing inspiration from the art collection.

### INCENTIVE ACTIVITIES TO LEAVE DELEGATES STARSTRUCKED

Miramar is the film central of New Zealand, home to Sir Peter Jackson, his workshop and studio. There is no lack of spellbinding incentive activities in a land where legendary cinematic blockbusters are created. **The Roxy**, an art deco cinema with the splendor and glamour of the 1930's, provides an immersive sensorial experience in their restaurant Coco – *'Eat The film'* pairs a classic movie with delicious thematic dishes that are timed to specific scenes. Our table was extremely humbled by

the presence of Oscar-winning special effects designer Sir Richard Taylor and his Oscar (*which was too heavy to steal*).

**Weta Workshop** is a world-leading design and special effects facility that creates blockbusters like the Lord of the Rings trilogy, Avatar, and Ghost in the Shell. The incredibly fun tour through the working special effects studio is a chance to see movie props and hear about how your favourite blockbusters were created, right there. Besides getting a prosthetic dwarf nose from the Hobbit, I can now add 'make fake blood' under the skills section of my resume after attending this hands-on incentive programme.



▲ View from Auckland Harbour

## AUCKLAND, THE ONE TO WATCH IS POLISHING ITS POUNAMU

New Zealand's largest city and commercial hub is situated in the north of North Island, in just an hour from away from Wellington. Auckland is home to 1.5 million people from 200 ethnicities – every delegate who visits this culturally diverse cosmopolitan city is sure to find a special personal connection at least on a cultural level.

Auckland possesses the largest choice of business event options in the country, a conference for 3,500 delegates is not a challenge, the central city alone has more than 7,000 hotel rooms! Situated in the heart of Auckland's CBD is SKYCITY, which encompasses the SKYCITY Auckland Convention Centre, a Sky Tower with 360-degree views of Auckland, a world-class casino, 4.5-star SKYCITY Hotel, and the 5-star **SKYCITY Grand Hotel** – where we called home

during our stay. Behind the curtains of our newly refurbished (*and incredibly spacious*) room is the shimmering view of the Waitemata Harbour. The Federal Street Dining Precinct packed with award-winning bars and restaurants was right at the door step.

### THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Right across the vicinity amidst the cranes and construction lies Auckland's most exciting MICE development – the **New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC)** will be NZ's largest purpose-built convention centre. Five times larger than the current biggest convention facilities in NZ, its grand opening in 2019 will eliminate any perceived barriers for larger scale business events. It has the capacity to host events of up to 4,000 people, in 33 meeting spaces across 32,500m<sup>2</sup> over four levels.

PCOs may get excited about the stellar 2,850-seat theatre, and the new 300 room five-star hotel that will be accessible via airbridge, but I am looking forward to check out the façade – an exemplary example of place branding, and integrating the local art community. The new convention centre provides a massive blank canvas for two of the largest pieces of public art ever created in New Zealand. The works by local artists, Sara Hughes and Peata Larkin, will span a total of 5,760m<sup>2</sup> – comprising of 2,400m<sup>2</sup> of glass over 550 panels that wrap around the top level of the NZICC, and 13,500 terracotta tiles that form a spine wall alongside the retail and dining laneway.

Auckland's significant investment and major infrastructure development also includes more hotels and transport hubs. Complimenting the opening of NZICC, the newly rebranded **Cordis Auckland** (by Langham Hospitality Group)

is set to boast the highest room count in the country, with a total of 650 rooms and suites available by 2020. The highly anticipated **SO Auckland** opens this October. The avant garde and rebellious lifestyle hotel is bound to deliver audacious and stylish experiences in downtown Auckland with its opulent volcanic and gold vault inspired characteristics. The city understands that economy requires accessibility to grow, the AUD3.4 billion **City Rail Link** project will provide greater convenience when it is completed in March 2024.

**UNIQUE VENUES & ACTIVITIES**

**The Civic** is one of only seven atmospheric theatres in the world. Its dramatic and opulent auditorium sits 2,378. We were hosted to a banquet for 300 on the stage! If you are looking for an even more unique dining experience, **The Grounds at Whoa! Studios** serves up impeccable bespoke fine-dining experiences in one of a kind, creative venues that double as a whimsical film set. Sitting in the backyard of Auckland is another unconventional venue. **Royal New Zealand**

**Yacht Squadron** is the only club in the world to win the America’s Cup, Whitbread/ Volvo Round the World Race and Olympic Gold Medals. Packed with nine event spaces and accommodates 300 for a sit-down dinner, it provides a liberating view of the biggest marina in the Southern Hemisphere. The energising sea breeze (*it could also be the bubbles*) took all my existential worries away that evening, on the private yacht cruise around the Auckland Harbour hosted by AccorHotels.

Approved and promoted by local and international superstar/ Grammy protégé Lorde, **Eat My Lunch** is a self-funded for-profit business that distributes free healthy nutritious food for 2,500 kids from 75 schools every day. As they are on track to hit their one millionth meal this August, volunteering to prepare lunch for kids in the morning is a meaningful opportunity for a corporate team bonding activity.

**CINZ MEETINGS 2018**

We visited the **ASB Showgrounds** to at-

tend the largest business tourism trade exhibition in NZ. New Zealand definitely has the infrastructure and first-class standards firmly in place, it’s evident not only in Wellington and Auckland, but across the South Island like Queensland and comeback-champ Christchurch as well. While outstanding infrastructure can be implemented anywhere, what truly sets a destination apart is their intrinsic culture. Among all the press conferences, I find Karl Wixon’s presentation the most inspiring. Karl provides strategic and creative direction for Aotearoa NZ Story – the national profile campaign and he taught us about the importance of adding impact through engaging experiences. *“You must have great Manaakitanga if you have great ratings on Trip Advisor.”* As we’ve experienced throughout the trip, Māori protocols (*Tikanga*) like pōwhiri and korero can certainly punctuate every event!

31 international airlines fly direct to Auckland from more than 37 destinations around the world, making its world-class infrastructure, wealth of intellectual capital and thriving knowledge economy conveniently accessible for global MICE events. New Zealand excels in the marine, agribusiness, health science and high-value foods industries, which makes it a desirable destination for these associations to consider. Having witnessed how closely Tourism New Zealand works with their partners and stakeholders, any contact of need is really within two-degree of separation away. This connectedness means getting Lorde to perform at your gala dinner is totally possible!



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# 24 Experience Time Travel Through Kraków

Having heard much raves from friends who have returned from Kraków, it's been on my list to experience personally, and explore the popular destination visited by 10 million tourists and business delegates annually. Once the Polish capital, today it is a dynamic and vibrant city that is both academically and culturally rich. Being approximately 1500km from Paris and 1500km from Moscow, it is literally in the middle of Europe. It takes two and a half hours to fly from London to Kraków Airport – which offers regular cost-effective direct flights to major airports across Eastern and Western Europe.

**Ken T. reports**

## INSPIRING HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Kraków is located on the Vistula River in the Malopolska region of Poland, which contains half the number of sites in Poland that are on the UNESCO World Heritage List (*14 out of 27*)! Two of the twelve indexed in the original 1978 list are in Kraków, and one of them is Kraków's magnificent, historical capital of Poland – Wawel castle, the Old Town, and the Kazimierz district. The European Capital of Culture by the EU for the year 2000 also does well on another esteemed list – in the 2017 Michelin Guide, where 24 out of the 52 Polish restaurants are located in Kraków.

As I explore around the Old Town, I felt like a passenger wandering through time one cobblestone step at a time, that my humbling time frame was merely a fragment of the existence of my surroundings. The all-time heart of the city, Kraków's main market square **Rynek Główny** is the largest among Europe's medieval cities, with the best-preserved cloth market in Europe (*Sukiennice, 16th-century renaissance Cloth Hall*) in the middle of the square.

Here you'll hear the only musical signal in the world that has sounded regularly for six centuries, the bugle call that

plays every hour comes from the top (*of the taller tower*) of the most distinctive building in the square – the spectacular 14th-century gothic **St. Mary's Basilica**.

Kraków is known for its universities, scientific facilities and research institutions. Nicolaus Copernicus studied medicine here in one of the oldest universities of international renown – the **Jagiellonian University** founded in 1364. The **Wawel Royal Castle** casts a stately and aristocratic atmosphere from atop the steep limestone hill. It features an astonishing mix of architecture styles with structures dating back to the late 10th century.

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Kraków offers 9000 hotel rooms across a broad range of accommodation types, and there is a wealth of friendly and professional hotels clustered near the centre. Five-star establishments like **Radisson Blu, Holiday Inn** and **Grand Sheraton** (*which offers a view of the Vistula River and Wawel Castle*) will never go wrong with their advantageous location and impeccable standards.

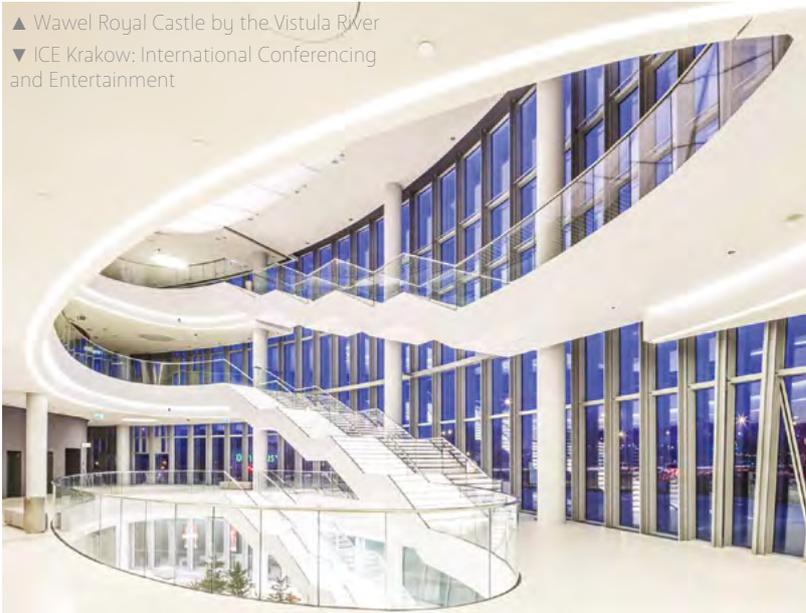
Across the Vistula River, the **Hilton Garden Inn** is a short 150m walk to the ICE Congress Center, and I was particularly



▲ The interior and exterior of St. Mary's Basilica



▲ Wawel Royal Castle by the Vistula River  
▼ ICE Krakow: International Conferencing and Entertainment



▼ Wieliczka Salt Mine



impressed by their excellent and impressively photo-worthy catering services. For a perfect base that is within a convenient distance to Kraków Arena Hall and Expo Kraków Fair Trade Center, look no further than the **DoubleTree by Hilton**. The hotel and convention center comprises of 232 guest rooms and 16 meeting rooms offering space for up to 2,000 delegates.

### INCREDIBLE VENUES

In 2014, the city received its flagship congress facility that is funded from municipal budget. The **ICE Kraków Congress Center** is a beautifully designed multi-purpose building which resembles a melting slab of ice – inspired by its acronym which stands for International Conferencing and Entertainment. The main Auditorium Hall can seat 2,000 people, while two smaller halls (*Theater and Chamber Hall*) add another 900 to the total capacity. It also contains a Conference Hall Complex of 11 rooms, 32 multifunctional rooms, and 2,650 square meters of light-filled glass-walled foyer spread across three floors, facing the historic Wawel Hill. Opened in 2014 too is the **EXPO Kraków**, the largest multi-purpose facility in the south of Poland which provides 13,000 square meters of exhibition space.

The most memorable MICE offering is a true sight to behold (*which also made it into UNESCO's first World Heritage List*). The **Wieliczka Salt Mine** is one of the world's oldest operating salt mines, continuously operating since the Middle Ages (*13th century*), though commercial mining ceased in 1996. The areas excavated for salt were converted into storehouses, workshops, beautiful chambers and chapels, with impressive ornamental statues and decorations carved into the rock salt by the miners. The biggest underground conference hall can accommodate up to 600 people. This authentically unconventional location (*visited by a million visitors from all over the world every year*) has consistently been a distinctive backdrop for various events and business meetings.

# 26 **Warsaw,** the Uprising Mermaid Warrior

*“If you say Budapest is a cheerful and charming young lady; Prague a graceful and aromatic madam, then Warsaw is definitely a brave and motherly Wonderwoman who captured my heart.”* This time, unsurprisingly, this Wonderwoman put down her shield and sword, dynamically merged into the ever-changing meetings industry and emerged as rising MICE destination in Central Europe.

**Vivian Xu reports**

## POST-WAR PROGRESS

The outstanding city skyline appeared among the clouds when the flight captain announced the descend of the plane. Beneath the currently flourishing appearance, I can’t imagine what this city had been through during the war. My heart breaks whenever I think about the devastating destruction of World War II.

Gazing through the plane window, I was seeking for the significant landmark of Warsaw, the mighty **Palace of Culture and Science (PKiN)**. Constructed in 1955 as a gift from Soviet Union to the people of Poland, this giant is the tallest building in Warsaw, not only does it represent the centre of Warsaw, it is also internationally recognized as the symbol of Warsaw.

Situated in the heart of Warsaw, this flagship building currently serves as a complex of exhibition and convention centres and offices. It is also a hub of many cultural institutions and restaurants. The classic Kongresowa Hall used to be the most prestigious place for spectacular performances, galas

and concerts, which can accommodate up to 2,500 people. The conference hall is decorated mainly by the two national colours of Poland, red and white. Currently, this historical venue is under maintenance.

The striking **PGE Narodowy Stadium** is a quick 15-minutes’ drive from the centre. Amounting to 58,000 seats at the stands, 62 exclusive skyboxes (*private/business lounges*), a conference area that can handle up to 2,000 delegates, as well as total office and exhibition area of 16,000m<sup>2</sup>. Nestled next to the Vistula River, this post UEFA Euro 2012 landmark have been regularly utilised for mega events from a yacht exhibition to most recently The Rolling Stones concert.

Less than 10 minutes away from the stadium, in a place where the spirit and energy of innovation have been brewing for ages with Warsaw’s vodka distillery, lies a vibrant community of new urban trends, starts-up businesses, festival gatherings, professional events and exhibitions – all happening in The **Centrum Praskie Koneser**. An event and

conference centre of 2,000m<sup>2</sup> along with an exhibition area of 2,400m<sup>2</sup> is at your disposal. Already easily connected by public transportations, the opening of the new foot and bike bridge in 2019 will make Koneser even closer to the Old Town.

I checked into the newly renovated 5-star hotel **InterContinental Warsaw**, the tallest hotel in Poland which is right across Palace of Culture and Science. The hotel houses 414 rooms of various standards which includes the impressive presidential suite and 76 luxury suites with kitchenettes, and 13 conference rooms. Not to be missed is one of the highest indoor swimming pools in Europe, located on the 43rd floors of the hotel. There isn’t a better place to go to soak in the night view of the glittering city lights after an exhausting day, than in a bubbling jacuzzi 150m above ground level.

The **Warsaw Expo XXI** is a multifunctional venue which provides over 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of adaptable space which includes a 5,000m<sup>2</sup> outdoor area. The biggest hall holds 5,250m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space.



► The magnificent clock tower of PKiN with PGE Narodowy Stadium in the background



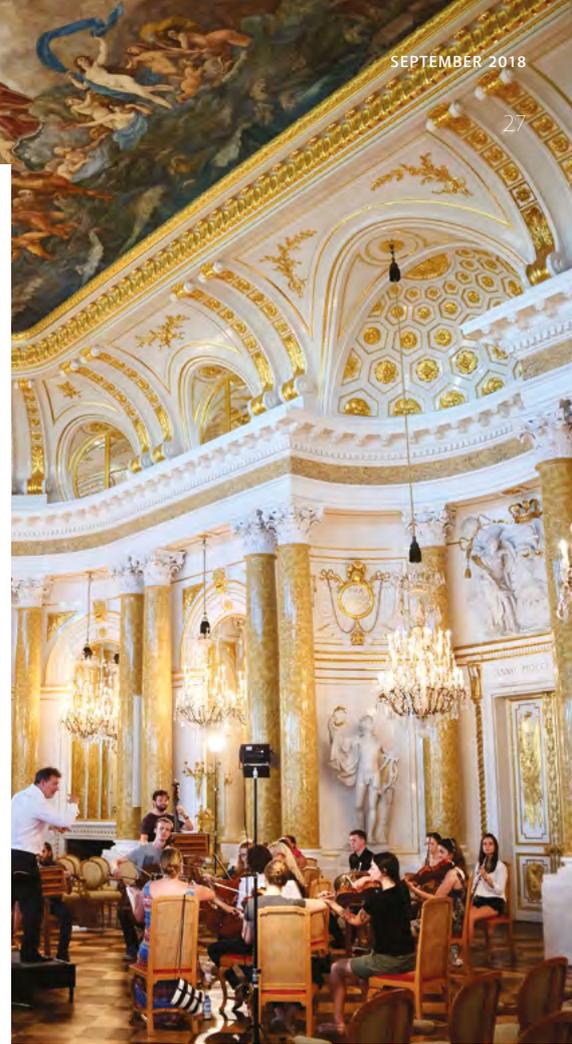
**FOLLOWING THE ROYAL ROUTE**

Walking through New World Street, I appreciated every inch of this historic thoroughfare of Warsaw. The **Old Town Market Square**, transported me back to the last Polish King's era. The entire Old Town was destroyed in the war, but meticulously rebuilt from ground-up based on the incredible 18th century paintings of famous Italian painter Bernardo Bellotto.

Most of Bernardo's paintings are kept in the remarkable **Royal Castle** which used to be the residence of Polish Kings. I was amazed by the opulent and lavish interiors of the castle, especially after knowing most of the decorative elements are original pieces preserved from the bombings and carefully re-installed to where they belong after the Royal Castle's reconstruction. The Council Chamber remained its style from 1784, where the King used to hold the sessions of the Permanent Council. Of course, if you are a fan of 18th century baroque style, the glorious Grand

Assembly Hall is where the imperial experience comes alive! This is the chamber where most of the King's state ceremonies were held. Get prepared to be overwhelmed by the ceiling depicting the Disentanglement of Chaos by Bacciarelli, the atmosphere adds a sense of nobility for any event held in this splendid chamber.

After embracing the beauty of the Royal Castle, if you haven't had enough of the imperial artistic taste, take a ride to the summer residence of the last Polish king! Aptly named **The Palace on the Isle** because it looks like it is a floating palace on the peaceful lake from one side. On the side is an open foyer in front of the pavilion facing the picturesque Royal Bath Lake. Intended as a place for resting, leisure and contemplation for the royal family, this baroque garden pavilion (*and its astonishingly abundant imperial collection of sculptures and paintings*) is now ready to welcome events that aim for grandeur.



▲ The Grand Assembly Hall in Royal Castle



▲ Warsaw Old Town, UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1980

28 **A TASTE OF WARSAW – POLISH TRADITIONAL/FUSION CUISINES**

**AleGloria**

Plac Trzech Krzyży 3  
00-535 Warsaw

Sitting between the painted strawberry walls, accompanied by lovely fluffy decorative white geese, you will immediately get a sense of the traditional Polish art and culture. The menu was carefully crafted with local seasonal products. With their perfect combination of the traditional taste and modern culinary ideas, Alegoria is a great venue to relish the delicious Polish cuisine!



**Belvedere**  
Agrykoli 1, Warsaw

Nestled inside Łazienki Park, Belvedere is a romantic hidden gem filled with a smattering of well-dressed tables among incredible landscaped foliage and summer flowers. Having undergone a head to toe renovation, the restaurant is a stunning venue with beautiful peacocks wandering the grounds. Besides providing a splendid dining environment, the restaurant offers a delightful regional taste made from the highest quality seasonal products, they've also been recommended in the Michelin Guide for the past ten years!



**Warszawski Sznyc**  
ul. Senatorska 2,  
00 – 075 Warszawa

Located at the Old Town Market Square, the restaurant introduces you to a new edition of Polish cuisine. Based on the use of modern techniques, an even finer and more intense flavour from Polish products are extracted to satisfy each of your taste buds.





CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PARTNER!

**Warsaw Tourism Organization**  
**Warsaw Convention Bureau**

 [WCB@WARSAWCONVENTION.PL](mailto:WCB@WARSAWCONVENTION.PL)

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# Don't Just Come to Athens for a Day!

Eliza Tsolakou, General Manager of City of Athens  
Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB) tells us why.

## THIS IS ATHENS!



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### HQ: Can you tell us about Athen's latest campaign – One City, Never Ending Stories?

Our campaign “One City- Never Ending Stories” came as a result of the Athens Tourism Partnership, a unique public-private partnership set up by the City of Athens. The ATP has been established in order to pull resources together. It is a unique alliance between The City of Athens, AEGEAN and the Athens International Airport, joining forces with a common goal, to showcase Athens as a year round city break destination.

It is an awareness campaign, running on This is Athens and co-signed by the City of Athens, AEGEAN and the Athens International Airport, designed to highlight the real experiences a visitor can enjoy in Athens. Our city has many stories to share - *more than one hundred different stories are captured in the campaign!*

We had insight that our visitors were not getting the whole story about what Athens really is and how one can experience it to the full. The campaign tries to bridge this gap and immerse visitors into the real Athens; from the star-studded gastronomy scene to the vibrant art scene and day trips to the Athenian Rivi-

era. One simply cannot take all this in if they stay for just a day or view Athens as a hop-off destination.

### What's new for Athens?

Athens is undergoing a real transformation with many new developments. There are new hotspots and hubs and the city is changing rapidly in a way that resonates with its contemporary vibrant attitude. Beyond our amazing world class heritage, we have new openings like the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, which houses the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera in a contemporary environment that has changed the Athenian sea front.

Concurrently, we are witnessing an impressive hotel boom with established chains like the Four Seasons and Marriott among the fifteen new hotels opening their doors this year. We are also working to consistently provide information about the knowledge economy of the city to attract associations meetings. Especially meetings that fit our city's profile, like the upcoming World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in 2019 with more than 2,500 delegates, and the ICOMIA World

Marinas Conference 2018.

### What makes Travel Trade Athens (8-9 October 2018) a great opportunity to connect suppliers and buyers?

We have been organising the City of Athens's Travel Trade Athens event for six consecutive years now and we have managed to turn it into the top tourism event promoting Athens and Greece in the international travel trade and meetings industry. The event hosts selected international leisure and MICE buyers who see Athens as the exciting, rising destination that it is. The buyers are carefully selected to achieve the best possible matching with local suppliers in order to advance networking and set up real opportunities for new business.

The event's comprehensive program taps on all the important aspects of the promotion of the travel trade and MICE sector for Athens and Greece, including B2B meetings, FAM trips and social events. In its five years of running, Travel Trade Athens has set up more than 12,000 B2B meetings whilst giving buyers the opportunity to experience Athens as a local through an exciting social program.



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**THE ASSOCIATION  
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IN THE MEETINGS  
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