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Business Traveller

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RAFFLES HOTEL



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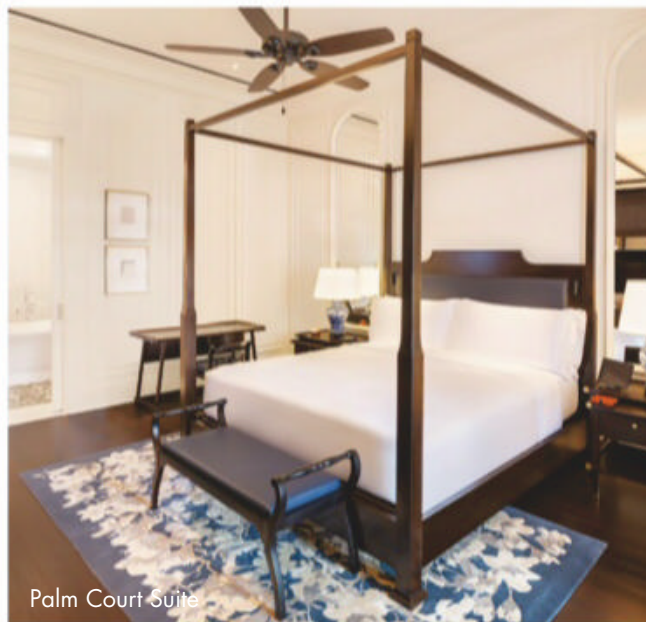
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RAFFLES SINGAPORE AN ICON REBORN

Raffles Singapore has reopened after a careful and sensitive restoration, reinvigorating an iconic landmark while retaining a heritage that stretches back more than a hundred years.



Palm Court Suite



Verdant Palm Court

Following a tasteful transformation of its social areas, suites, restaurants and bars, the hotel offers the perfect venue for discerning business and leisure travellers thanks to its unparalleled service and facilities.

The careful and sensitive restoration was designed to ensure that the hallmarks of Raffles Singapore – from the striking architecture to its graceful service – were left intact. The hotel continues to offer luxurious all-suite accommodation, with an expanded suite count of 115 that features new categories, as well as enhanced amenities and technology.

The Arcade at Raffles Singapore is now home to Raffles Boutique (previously the Raffles Gift Shop), accompanied by new-to-market retail and dining



Iconic marble colonnade

concepts and a brand-new Raffles Spa, a sanctuary for hotel residents and visitors looking to escape the bustle of the city.

After more than a century of providing unsurpassed service excellence, the reborn destination continues to create extraordinary experiences for its esteemed guests.

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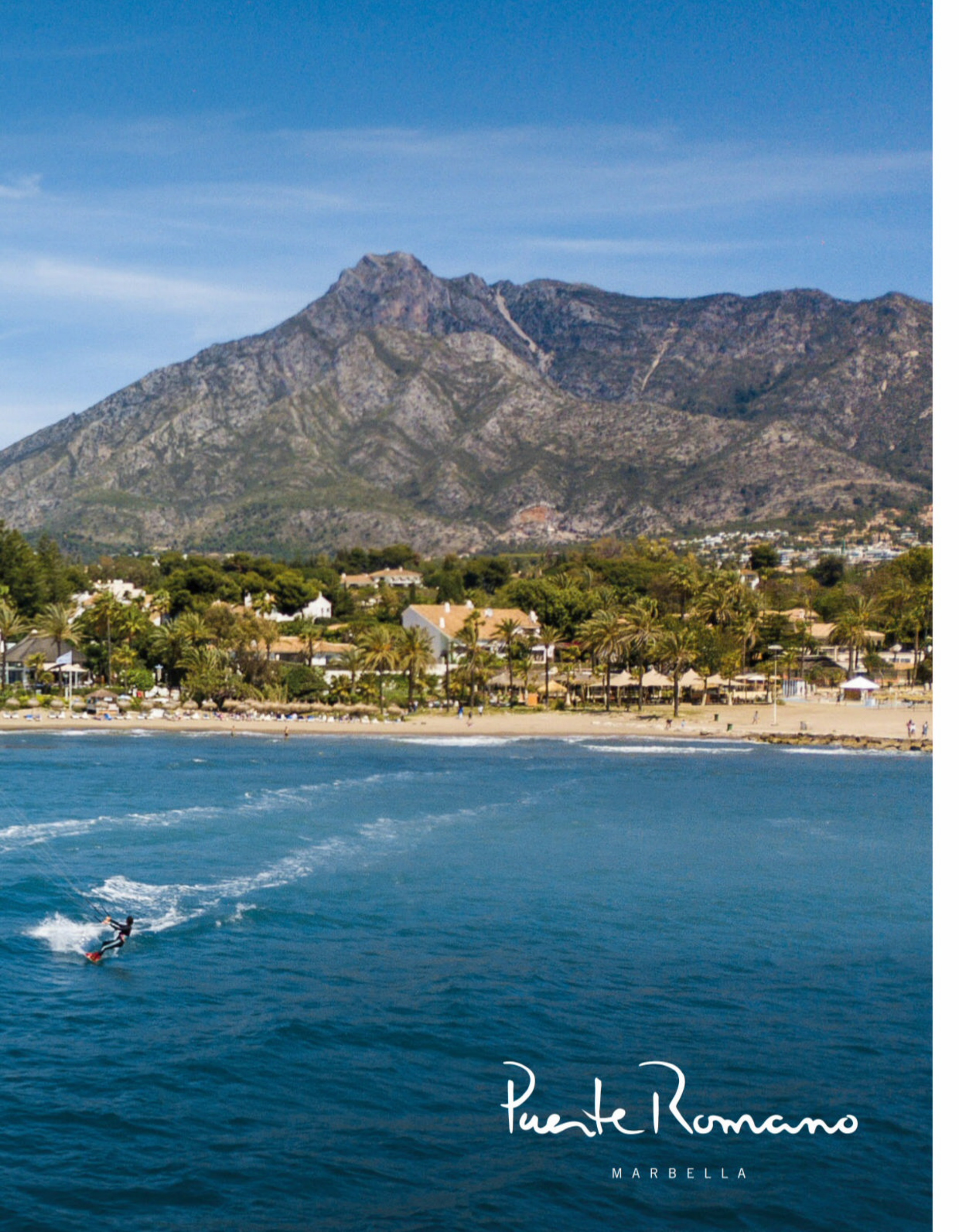
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An illustration of the interior of a train car. The perspective is from the back of the car looking forward. The ceiling has long, recessed light fixtures. On the left and right sides, there are rows of blue seats with green accents. Above the seats are luggage racks with various bags and suitcases. Passengers are visible: a man in a red jacket is reading a newspaper on the left, and a woman is using a laptop on the right. Large windows on the right side show a landscape with green fields and trees. The overall lighting is warm and golden, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

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WELCOME



Welcome to the March issue of *Business Traveller*. I'm hoping that this month is better than the last. About the only thing February had going for it was its brevity but, being a leap year, it still found a way to hang around for an extra day. As we head into March, it's also into more uncertainty. When will the coronavirus – or Covid-19, as no one is calling it – disappear to wherever viruses go and let us get back to normal, or is this the new normal?

Having just returned from Hong Kong, where I walked past dozens of closed shops and was temperature-checked before entering empty hotels, all while wearing a mask (despite most experts agreeing they are next to useless), I understand it isn't an easy time to be a traveller. You can argue which is the real problem – the virus or the virus of fear – but for many Asian airlines and hotel groups it has been the worst possible start to the year, and the effects are going to be felt for months to come.

While battling to keep going, we should, of course, think of those who are far less fortunate, particularly those in Wuhan and Hubei province, along with the medical staff who have sacrificed so much. Against that perspective, I hope your business is not too badly affected and, if it is, that it can recover. Perhaps this latest emergency will help to bring us all together.

Tom Otley Editorial director

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CELLARS IN THE SKY

Which airlines served the best wines last year? We reveal the winners of our annual awards
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Paris is seeing a flurry of smart new hotels and opulent revamps, with more on the horizon
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OPEN ACCESS

Why the aviation world needs to do more to make travelling easier for people of reduced mobility
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Must-have gadgets unveiled at January's mammoth Consumer Electronics Show
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ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN SOUTHAN

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HANNAH BRANDLER

Our staff writer Hannah reports on all aspects of business travel for the magazine and website, as well as acting as our resident Francophile for all things French. Her past articles have tackled subjects including sustainability in hotels, start-up fever in Paris, and the rise of female-only members' clubs. For this issue, she explores innovation (and cheesesteaks) in Philadelphia (page 26), and rounds up the latest hotel openings in the French capital (page 40).



JOHN STEPEK

John is executive editor of *MoneyWeek* magazine, and author of *The Sceptical Investor*, a guide to contrarian investing. Topics he has covered previously in his regular *Business Traveller* column include investing in gold, the new breed of digital "challenger" banks, and peer-to-peer lending. This month he advises on how to get more bang for your buck if you are buying currency or earn sterling while living abroad (page 56).



RICHARD TAMS

Richard Tams is a London-based airline consultant who has worked in a wide variety of markets in Europe, North America and Asia. He has spent most of his career in the airline business and has sat on a number of boards, including those of both airlines and tour operators. He now runs his own consultancy, coaching and moderating business, Tailwind Advisory. Here he recalls the first world problems that used to populate his passenger complaints inbox (page 58).



DAVID PHELAN

David has been writing about consumer technology for more than two decades. He is based in London but travels to tech events worldwide, regularly visiting San Francisco, Berlin and Silicon Valley. Most recently, he headed to Las Vegas for CES, the world's largest consumer electronics show, which attracts 175,000 enthusiasts from around the globe – check out the standout products that were unveiled this year on page 68.

BENJAMIN SOUTHAN

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VIRGIN RETURNS TO CAPE TOWN

VIRGIN ATLANTIC IS LAUNCHING daily Heathrow-Cape Town flights for the winter season on October 25, after a six-year absence. It will use a B787-9 aircraft with economy, premium economy and business class (although not the new Upper Class Suite on the carrier's A350). Flight VS478 will depart Heathrow at 1620 and arrive at 0555 the next day, while VS479 will depart Cape Town at 0800 and land at 1800. British Airways also serves the route.

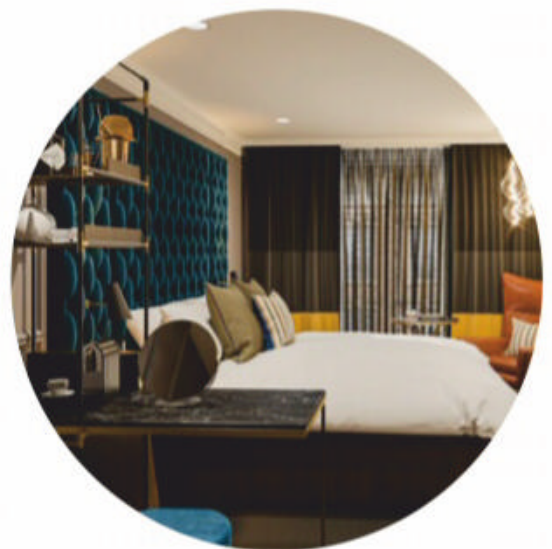
Coming to London



THE LONDONER: Opening in June, this 350-room, 35-suite hotel on the corner of Leicester Square will have nine floors above ground and six floors below, going down 30 metres. The Edwardian Hotels property, a member of Preferred Hotels and Resorts' Legend Collection, is part of the redeveloped Odeon West End site, also hosting a cinema, spa and dining options.



NOBU HOTEL LONDON PORTMAN SQUARE: This former Radisson Blu property is undergoing a complete refurbishment to open as a 249-room Nobu hotel in July. The 15-year-old Nobu Berkeley Street restaurant is set to close and move into the new hotel, which will also have a bar, an outdoor terrace, a 600-capacity ballroom, a gym and wellness facilities.



THE GUARDSMAN: A new-build on Buckingham Gate, this member of Preferred Hotels and Resorts' LVX collection is set to open in June. It will have 53 rooms and six residences, including a penthouse with a wraparound terrace. The developers say it will offer the "atmosphere, discretion and personal service associated with a private members' club".



ONEWORLD POISED TO WELCOME ROYAL AIR MAROC

ROYAL AIR MAROC will officially join Oneworld on April 1, becoming the alliance's first African member. (With LATAM leaving on May 1, following its purchase by Skyteam's Delta Air Lines, membership will remain at 13 airlines.) The Moroccan flag carrier brings with it 39 new destinations in 23 countries. It has a fleet of 60 and flies to 105 destinations. Members of its Safar Flyer scheme will be able to earn and redeem across Oneworld airlines. The carrier is also adding a top tier to the programme offering Oneworld Priority Emerald privileges, such as access to business and first class lounges, priority check-in and boarding, and fast-track security.

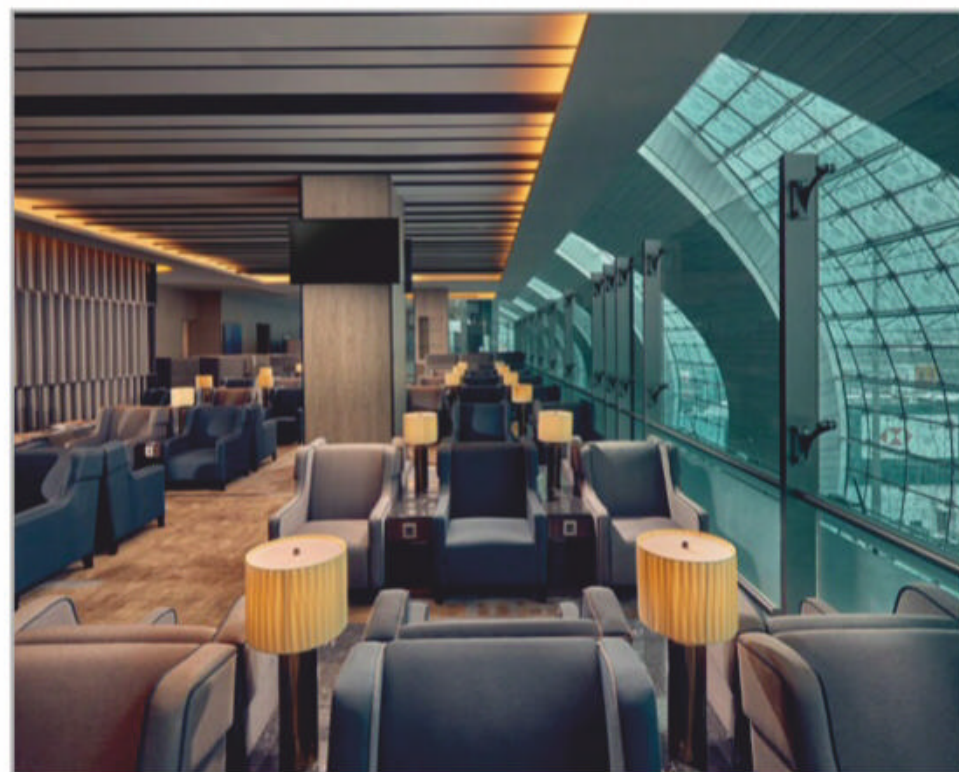


Double Dutch with Eurostar

EUROSTAR IS INTRODUCING two daily direct services from Amsterdam to London, with no passport checks in Brussels, on April 30. Currently passengers are required to take a Thalys train from Amsterdam to Brussels, disembark to clear immigration and security checks, and then get on a Eurostar train to St Pancras. The London-Amsterdam leg has been a direct Eurostar service since 2018 and runs three-times daily. Now that a smoother system has been worked out, the operator says it plans to add additional services in both directions.

PLAZA PREMIUM DEBUTS IN DUBAI

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT has its first Plaza Premium Lounge. Located airside in Terminal 3, the 1,260 sqm facility offers "relaxation seats" that can be converted into a private napping space, work stations, buffet dining, a cigar lounge, prayer rooms and five showers, as well as private family suites catered by butlers. Entry starts from US\$53 per person for a three-hour stay.



13

Air France-KLM, Virgin and Delta seal the deal

KLM, AIR FRANCE, DELTA AIR LINES AND VIRGIN ATLANTIC have launched their long-awaited joint venture. The agreement covers 110 nonstop routes and represents 23 per cent of total transatlantic passenger capacity. Frequent flyer members can earn and use miles, and get elite benefits for flights on any of the four airlines' worldwide route networks.

Passengers can also now book flights, check in and select seats with any of the carriers through the airlines' respective apps. The group said it would work towards "ensuring a smooth and consistent travel experience," with flight schedules altered to reduce connection times.



MAKE THAT CALL

WHILE SAMSUNG'S PHONES are very popular – the company is the biggest smartphone manufacturer in the world – some of them are quite pricey. Happily, the South Korean giant has unveiled a Lite version of its flagship S10 model, which comes in at a lower price. It's half an inch taller and a little wider and heavier than the regular S10, so may not suit everyone, although this does mean the battery is one third bigger, so it should last several hours more than the S10. There are three cameras, as there are on the S10, including one with 48-megapixel resolution. The Samsung Galaxy S10 Lite is priced at £579.99. samsung.com/uk



AIR MILES

BERNARD SHAPERO is an international dealer in rare books, and is founder and chief executive of Shapero Rare Books in London's Mayfair.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE PROFESSION?

The excitement of owning and handling something from the past, touching a piece of history.

BEST BOOKSHOP ABROAD?

The Strand Bookstore in New York's East Village. It has a great selection of art books.

WHICH BOOK HAS LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION?

I had the great privilege of owning a copy of the first printed Bible after the one made by Gutenberg. It was printed in 1462 in Mainz, Germany, and was complete in two volumes in a beautiful 15th-century binding. I sold it for a seven-figure sum.

HOW DO YOU SOURCE RARE BOOKS?

Often the hardest book to find is the one that is rare but not considered very valuable. A very rare book that not many people are interested in can be incredibly hard to find because people don't bother to offer or advertise it.

ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS INTERNATIONAL?

We sell to the whole world, that's the beauty of books. They are global and the range of subjects they encompass is universal.



IS TRAVEL DIFFICULT WITH FRAGILE BOOKS?

We send books around the world daily. As long as they're packed well, there is no risk.

WHICH BOOKS HAVE INSPIRED TRAVELS?

My career began with buying and selling Baedeker and Murray guide books. Part of the enjoyment is reliving history, reading about exotic countries in the 19th century, with descriptions of the people, hotels, monuments and everything one needed to know as an early traveller. My shop has a range of illustrated travel and natural history books.

WHAT UNUSUAL DESTINATIONS HAVE YOU VISITED FOR WORK?

Chitral and the Hunza Valley in northern Pakistan. I've also been to Argentina and Brazil, and some remote places in the US.

DREAM DESTINATIONS?

I would love to visit New Zealand, it looks spectacular.

ANY INDISPENSABLE TRAVEL GADGETS?

I always travel with an iPad.

YOUR IFE PICK?

Comedy programmes – it's always nice to be in a good mood on planes.

Visit businessstraveller.com for the full interview.

Back to nature in Namibia

KWESSI DUNES NAMIBIA, a member of Natural Selection safari camps, opens this month in the 200,000-hectare NamibRand Nature Reserve, one of the largest private reserves in southern Africa. The resort has 12 air-conditioned lodges with striped canvas walls and high thatched roofs, each fitted with a separate open-air star-gazing room to appreciate Africa's first designated International Dark Sky Reserve – one of the least light-polluted areas in the world. Activities include game drives and hot-air ballooning, and lodges can be booked as part of a Natural Selection safari. The camps support the Giraffe Conservation Foundation as well as other projects. naturalselection.travel

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KEEP CLIMBING



FLIGHT NEWS

*Who's going up and
who's going down in the
world of aviation*

ASCENT

FINNAIR is to add an additional frequency to its Heathrow-Helsinki route, taking it to eight daily flights for summer 2020 from March 29. The extra flight will depart Helsinki at 1715 and depart Heathrow at 2030.

EASTERN AIRWAYS is launching several routes from Teesside International airport. Cardiff flights began on February 10, Belfast City, Dublin and Southampton start on March 9, and London City on April 27.

BRITISH AIRWAYS will fly between Heathrow and Cornwall Airport Newquay five days a week from July 2 to September 7. The carrier also said it would boost frequencies to St Lucia, Cape Town and Cancun this winter.

DESCENT

Airlines worldwide have suspended flights following the coronavirus outbreak. As we went to press,

CATHAY PACIFIC had cut nine international routes until March 28.

VIRGIN ATLANTIC and **BRITISH AIRWAYS** paused flights to mainland China until the end of March. See the latest news at [busesstraveller.com](https://www.busesstraveller.com).

SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS has axed eight international routes from Johannesburg, including Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Munich and Sao Paulo.

AIR ITALY has been placed into liquidation. Qatar Airways bought a 49 per cent stake in the carrier, then called Meridiana, in September 2017.

New Eclipse of the Moon

LUXURY JAMAICAN RESORT HALF MOON opens new accommodation this month. The oceanfront Eclipse at Half Moon joins the resort's two other options, Founders Cove and Rose Hall Villas, which are located at either end of the 162-hectare site in Montego Bay. Half Moon was founded 65 years ago – three of the original families remain owners – and has attracted the likes of the Queen and the Kennedys over the years. Eclipse's 57 rooms and suites are split across the main Great House, timbered Estate Houses and two-storey cottages. Food and drink venues include Italian seafood restaurant Delmare, rum-focused Lester's Bar, and Spice, which serves Jamaican cuisine amid coconut trees and hammocks. There's also a spa, an infinity pool and a private beachfront with a natural swimming cove. halfmoon.com

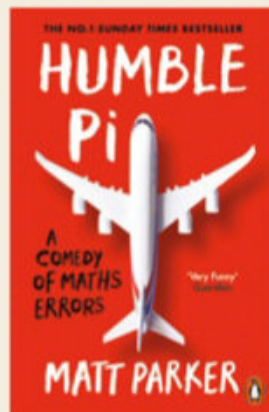


IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

Our tips to make time fly by

READ: *Humble Pi: A Comedy of Maths Errors*, Matt Parker

This humorous book explores how maths is intrinsic to modern society and what happens when we get it wrong in the real world. Matt Parker takes a look at how incorrect calculations can lead to catastrophic scenarios – from wobbly bridges and billions of dollars disappearing into thin air to athletes turning up late to the Olympics. Guess we should have listened at school, then. Out on March 5. Penguin, £9.99.



WATCH: *Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C J Walker*

In this four-part series, Octavia Spencer stars as the African-American entrepreneur who built a haircare empire to become one of the wealthiest self-made women in America. The drama is based on the biography *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C J Walker*, written by Walker's great-great-granddaughter, A'Lelia Bundles. It premieres on Netflix on March 20.

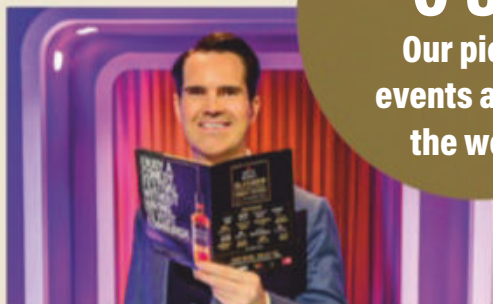
LISTEN: *The Tip Off*

This gripping podcast, hosted by investigative journalist Maeve McClenaghan, explores the detective work behind journalists' biggest scoops, including the forced sterilisation of Native American women and the Windrush scandal. Free to download.



TIME OUT

Our pick of events around the world



DOMESTIC: GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL, MARCH 12-29

The Scottish laughter fest returns for its 18th year with more than 500 shows in 60 venues across Glasgow. Performers include Jimmy Carr (pictured), Arabella Weir, Jerry



Sadowitz and a double act from Steve Martin and Martin Short. Tickets range from free to around £30. glasgowcomedyfestival.com

SHORT-HAUL: LAS FALLAS, VALENCIA, MARCH 15-19

This annual celebration, which combines tradition, satire and art, is the Spanish city's largest festival and sees huge colourful *fallas* – some almost 20 metres tall



– set alight on the final day. Street parties take place all week with music, food and firework displays. fallas.com

LONG-HAUL: STUDIO 54: NIGHT MAGIC, NEW YORK, MARCH 13-JULY 5

Explore disco culture, history and social politics in the 1970s with this exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. It looks at the city's legendary Studio 54 nightclub through illustration, film and photography (pictured: Pat Cleveland on the dance floor during Halston's disco bash at Studio 54, 1977). Tickets from US\$25. brooklynmuseum.org

STEVE ULLATHORNE: HELENA GH/ISTOCK; GUY MARINIAU/WWD/SHUTTERSTOCK



BEAUTY SLEEP

JET LAG, BUSY SCHEDULES and new environments can all have a disruptive effect on sleeping patterns. To the rescue comes Neom with its new Bedtime Heroes range, out this month. The collection includes pillow mist, an essential oil blend, a three-wick scented candle, magnesium body butter and bath foam – all specially blended with 11 pure essential oils, including chamomille, ylang ylang and cedarwood, for a sweet, fruity and fresh scent to aid relaxation before sleep. From £20; neomorganics.com



CANOPY BY HILTON HEADS FOR '20 IN '20'

HILTON PLANS TO OPEN 20 HOTELS under its locally focused upscale lifestyle brand, Canopy, this year. It currently has 13 properties across the US, Iceland, Croatia and China. Launches are set for London, Cancun, Dubai, Hangzhou, Paris and Sao Paulo, as well as in 14 US locations, including Austin, Charlotte, Dallas, Memphis, Philadelphia and Washington DC. The London hotel (right) is due to open towards the end of the year as part of the Minories development in Aldgate.





NEW ROUTE: BOSTON

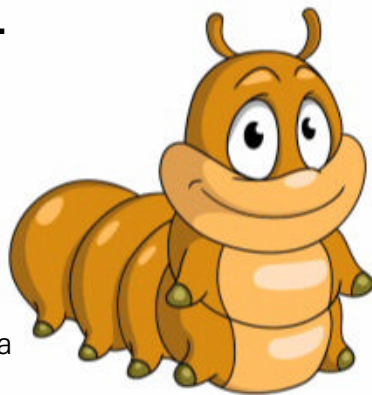
AMERICAN AIRLINES LAUNCHES a daily service from London Heathrow T3 to Boston Logan on March 29, using a three-class B777-200. The carrier recently moved its Boston operations to the airport's newly renovated Terminal B. It says the route will complement the four daily flights offered by its joint-venture partner British Airways, with a morning departure from Heathrow and an evening one from Boston. The capital of Massachusetts will see 5,000 new hotel rooms in the next five years in areas including the South Boston Waterfront, Cambridge, Somerville, Chelsea and East Boston. See our review of the new Citizen M Boston North Station on page 84.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

18

Idioms from around the world that have us scratching our heads. This month, it's a German expression.

Phrase: *Leben wie die Made im Speck*
Literally: To live like a maggot in bacon
Meaning: To live luxuriously
Origin: There's no explanation for the root of this expression, but it paints a great picture of a very happy maggot indeed.



SOFT POWER

The School of Life for Business has uncovered the value of emotional skills (self-awareness, decisiveness, resilience and confidence) in the workplace.

54%

agreed that working on their emotional skills had helped with career progression

66%

are more productive when working in teams that harness their creative skill set

67%

were keen to improve their emotional skills

70%

said having a self-aware manager made them happier at work

74%

agreed that having confident colleagues made them more successful at their jobs

80%

thought empathetic leaders created a tighter team
 Source: The School of Life for Business, January 2020

Business Traveller COMPETITION

THIS MONTH, one lucky reader and guest can win a two-night, all-inclusive stay at the TRS Cap Cana Hotel in the Dominican Republic. palladiumhotelgroup.com
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THE
BIG
PICTURE

Captured in freeze-frame

The Travel Photographer of the Year 2019 competition saw 20,000 submissions from 144 countries, with an international judging panel of experts, including photojournalist and double Pulitzer Prize winner Essdras M Suarez and former official White House photographer Lawrence Jackson. Travel and nature photographer Ignacio Palacios was runner-up in the Art of Travel portfolio category for his eight striking images, which included this intriguing photograph taken in Lapland, Finland, of a frozen forest at sunset. The Spanish photographer says: "I believe that there are many different ways of experiencing a place, and photography is one of them. Every time I travel, in every single moment, I look for possible picture opportunities. This passion to photograph the world makes me focus on details that I was not aware of before." See the winning images on display at Coal Drops Yard in London's King's Cross from April 7 to May 12. tpoty.com

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Star letter

WASTEFUL WASHBAGS

Is it time to end the washbag? At the end of a recent long-haul flight, the business class cabin was littered with half-used bags (also known by the more sophisticated term “amenity kits”), all destined for the bin.

Passenger needs are not uniform. Many people bring their own creams, socks and dental kit. Most regular passengers have drawers full of airline amenity kits at home. As airlines move towards more sustainable agendas, the amenity kit looks wasteful at best, and sometimes poor quality at worst.

Perhaps more airlines should follow the lead of some Asian carriers, who have an “items on demand” service, cutting down on unnecessary plastic, waste and cupboards full of washbags.

Simon Day, Paris



STAR PRIZE

This month's Star Letter winner will receive an open Business First return ticket for use in either direction on Heathrow Express. For your chance to win, email us at talktous@businessstraveller.com and include your full postal address and daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit letters.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

For more than 30 years I have been flying KLM to Asia. Especially on the flights back to Amsterdam, I always looked forward to having a Dutch newspaper. In combination with the KLM blue, it made me feel like I was on the way home.

Suddenly, early this year, there were no newspapers anymore in the Skyteam lounges, nor on the flights. I can understand the decision to stop issuing newspapers in the lounges because travellers often take them on the plane even though they mostly know that the same newspapers are on board. And newspapers in lounges are often read very fast and then thrown away.

All the same, I was disappointed to learn that KLM had stopped issuing them, even in business class. On a flight, I see a newspaper as a kind of in-flight entertainment. Perhaps young people are using their tablets, but at my age, 69, I like to take time to read a newspaper in a comfortable and traditional way.

I hope that the airline changes its policy on this. About 30 newspapers in a business class section is not that costly – and the carrier may even get them free of charge.

Harry Oude Weernik, Netherlands

KLM REPLIES:

We confirm that we have stopped with the uplift of newspapers and magazines from May 1, 2019 on all intercontinental flights. We can understand that this is a major change for our regular travellers who enjoy stepping on board a KLM flight to Amsterdam and reading a print edition of the news. However, the reality is that passengers increasingly read the news on their personal devices, and with the availability of wifi on more and more flights, passengers are also able to receive the latest news while in the air.

In addition, in line with KLM's sustainability initiatives, not uplifting newspapers and magazines on our flights – and for our lounges around the world – means that we are reducing the weight on board (almost 40,000kg annually). Newspapers and magazines are available in the KLM Crown Lounges and guests are welcome to take a newspaper along with them to read on their flight.

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READERS SHARE FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCES AND IDEAS

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FIFTY YEARS OF FLIGHT ON THE BOEING 747

→ CAPETONIANM

On January 22, 1970, the B747 completed its first commercial flight from New York to London. Since then the jumbo jet fleet has flown billions of kilometres and carried billions of passengers. It's a beautiful aircraft deserving of the title "Queen of the Skies". Sadly, they are being gradually phased out, but opportunities to fly B747s will still be around for a few years.

I remember my first B747 flights overnight between South Africa and Europe, parking up on the tarmac in the small hours with half-a-dozen other 747s in a row, gleaming ghostly yellow and white under the artificial lights. That aircraft changed the world – whether for better or worse gives rise to another discussion, but either way this is a 50th anniversary that deserves recognition.

→ GREGGYR

I wholeheartedly agree. I tracked a British Airways B747 (G-CIVE) in from Vancouver that landed at 1410, four minutes shy of the time that the first B747 landed 50 years ago at 1414.

→ MARTYNSINCLAIR

I agree with everything you say, Capetonianm. However, having flown both ways to the US on a B747 in December, the aircraft has certainly had its day. It may have been elegant, but it's creaking at the edges (inside), it's certainly anti-Greta [Thunberg] and it's time for the aircraft to be retired gracefully, while it still can be.

Yesterday's engineering elegance, sadly, becomes tomorrow's derelict, rusting skeleton... except, of course, for the B747-8...

→ KINGSTON

I remember when they introduced the -400 variant, which had winglets. It was a fantastic aircraft to fly and opened up the world for many of us business travellers.

→ W8STER

I have many wonderful memories of this Queen of the Skies – a beautiful piece of engineering. It's sad to see the B747-8 didn't really catch on. I hope to have an opportunity to fly on one before they go.

→ CANUCKLAD

The difference between the A380 and the B747 is simple – the Queen of the Skies is engrained in our popular culture. Whether it be through music or movies, most of the western world, and certainly if you're of a certain age, simply know it as the Jumbo Jet. It's an icon that unfortunately is destined to the same fate as the only other true aviation icon of our time, Concorde.

But the real beauty of the B747 is that, unlike Concorde, it wasn't an elitist icon. It's sort of like our relationship with the Volkswagen Beetle or a Ferrari – we admire a Ferrari, but love Herbie.

My first experience of the B747 was at the viewing point at the end of the runway at Vancouver International. Gazing up at the dusk sky, impatiently seeking the emergence of the glow of the landing gear lights. And then, a glimmer, the lights grew brighter, the drone of the engines became louder, and then the crescendo of noise as the mighty beast filled the sky above.

Sometimes, sitting on my dad's shoulder, I felt I could actually touch the rubber above, then with a twist of the head the huge puffs of smoke rose like a dragon breath as she came back to earth. As she disappeared along the length of the runway, the final deafening roar of the engines signalled it was time

'The real beauty of the B747 is that, unlike Concorde, it wasn't an elitist icon'

to go home. After all, it was a school night.

→ SIMONS1

I used to go monthly to Johannesburg in the early 2000s. BA had not long introduced flat beds and there was nothing better than upstairs on a B747. Great service in a fairly intimate environment.

These days, the planes are tatty and, to be honest, there are better airlines and better aircraft. Everything in life moves on; can't say it bothers me.

→ SCOTSCREW

My first experience of the B747 was at the age of 17. I boarded the Transamerica B747 classic in Manchester bound for Miami and was directed up the spiral staircase to an all-economy upper deck. It was a magical experience. Little did I know that I would be working on the classic and -400 as crew for the last 20 years of my career. She will always have a special place in my heart.

→ AFLYINGDUTCHMAN

My first experience was with Pan Am. My dad was VP at Intercontinental, which Pan Am had founded and owned at the time, so we always flew for free, and always in First. As kids, it was such a thrill. The upper deck turned into a restaurant during mealtimes, stewards changed into tuxedos to serve dinner; it was really a different time then. BT

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PHILLY HITS NEW HEIGHTS

Known for its rich history, Philadelphia also has its sights set firmly on the future

WORDS HANNAH BRANDLER

26

Touch down in Philadelphia International airport and you are immediately reminded of the city's history as the birthplace of the United States. Extracts from the Declaration of Independence, signed here in 1776, are emblazoned across the walls of the arrivals hall, beaming in blue light. Yet, as you drive towards downtown you'll be met by a glistening glimpse of the city's future. Far from inconspicuous, US cable giant Comcast's new Technology Center dominates the skyline, towering above the rest of the city at 341 metres high.

If you haven't heard of Comcast, you'll certainly be familiar with its subsidiaries – NBC Universal, Focus Features and Dreamworks Animation, to name a few. In 2018, the Fortune 500 company expanded its European presence

with the US\$40 billion purchase of Sky, while next month it will join the streaming wars, launching NBC Universal's Peacock service to rival the likes of Netflix and Apple TV Plus.

Founded in the 1960s by Ralph Roberts, Comcast has become the largest cable TV and broadband provider in the US and, since the Sky acquisition, possibly the world's biggest provider of pay TV, according to Wharton School. It has also conquered the Philadelphia cityscape with two skyscrapers in the Center City business district – its corporate HQ, Comcast Tower, gained the US\$1.5 billion Technology Center as a neighbour in 2018, designed by Norman Foster.

Construction of the city's tallest building wasn't without controversy. Legend has it that buildings exceeding the height of the statue of city

founder William Penn atop City Hall have cursed Philadelphia's sports teams – “There's always next year”, goes Philly's hopeful expression. Construction workers, however, topped the Technology Center with a Penn figurine and it seems to have done the trick – the Philadelphia Eagles won the Super Bowl for the first time in 2018, beating reigning champions New England Patriots.

COME ON IN

What's most appealing about the building, however, is that it has been designed for the use of locals as well as staff. Much like London's new Bloomberg headquarters, also designed by Foster and Partners, Comcast's two-level atrium is open to the public and comes complete with a café, winter garden and innovative artwork. It's an astounding space, with →

The scrolling screens of Holzer's installation transmit 17 hours of quotes from architects, writers and children

Jenny Holzer's digital installation *For Philadelphia* spanning the entire ceiling, bouncing off the reflective panels of Conrad Shawcross's *Exploded Paradigm* tetrahedron.

I found it impossible to avert my gaze from Holzer's opus, the scrolling screens of which transmit 17 hours of quotes from architects, Philadelphia-based writers and schoolchildren. You can also visit the Universal Sphere Experience, a 360-degree dome theatre on the first floor, although prepare yourself for a rather cheesy film about the power of innovation.

"I felt there was an appetite to make this building permeable, for it to be a part of the local community," Foster explained during a discussion with Comcast chief executive Brian Roberts in October last year.

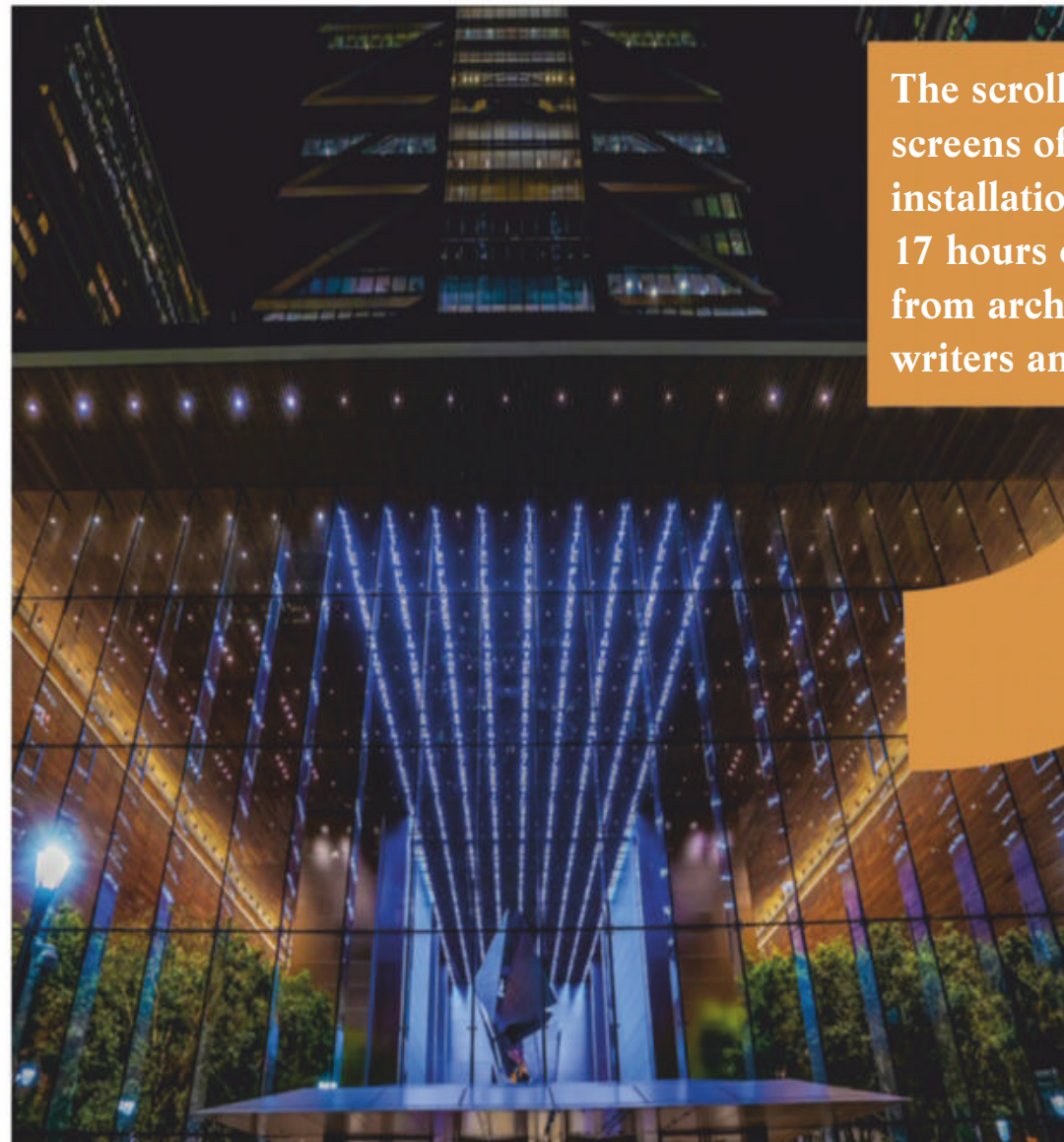
Designed with the company's 4,000 technologists and scientific engineers in mind, the interiors scream Silicon Valley. Three-storey loft spaces filled with beanbags and ping-pong tables encourage free-flowing ideas and collaborative work, while an entire floor is dedicated to the LIFT (Leveraging Innovation for Tomorrow) Labs incubator for start-ups. "We help [start-ups] meet potential investors and partners, work with them on storytelling and encourage them to test and pilot with us," D'Arcy Rudnay, Comcast's executive vice-president and chief communications officer, explains.

Comcast has also extended beyond telecoms into the world of hospitality, filling the building's top 12 floors with a Four Seasons hotel (reviewed at businessstraveller.com), of which it owns 80 per cent.

"We built our headquarters in the centre of the city for a reason: to create a vertical campus for our employees to work and innovate, and a place our community and visitors could come and enjoy," Rudnay says. "The idea for a hotel was born from that goal, to build something unique that would add to the vibrancy of our city. And not just any hotel, but one that would be among the best in the world."

LEFT: Jenny Holzer's *For Philadelphia*
BELOW: Ben Franklin bridge

MICHAEL PENN/STOCK





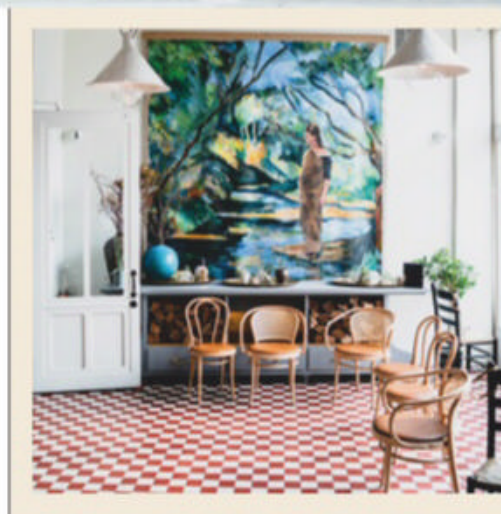
CONNECTED CITY

Some 42 per cent of the city's jobs are located in the 5.4 sq km Center City. To connect the new building with Comcast Tower across the road, Foster and Partners created an underground concourse area filled with food outlets, which also links to Suburban station (confusingly, located in the heart of town and not in the suburbs). I'm told that 90 per cent of the Comcast workforce arrives by public transport, and it also improves connections for other city workers.

Aside from the subway, Philadelphia has great domestic and international transport links. Sandwiched between two major US power hubs – New York and Washington DC – it's a popular stop for business travellers commuting along the Northeastern corridor. Amtrak's Acela Express reaches both cities within two hours, and the high-speed Washington DC-Boston service was the rail provider's busiest service in 2018.

Meanwhile, the city saw a 7.5 per cent year-on-year increase in overseas visitors in 2018, with the UK retaining the title as its top overseas market since the turn of the century.

In tandem with this, the hotel scene is booming, seeing a larger annual rise in room occupancy than any other US city in 2018, according to the *Philadelphia Business Journal*. There has been a 300 per cent increase in hotel construction in the past two years. Along with the 219-room Four Seasons, additions in Center City last year include the 499-room Notary Hotel, part of Marriott's Autograph Collection, and the millennial-targeting



Pod Philly. Stylish private members' house Fitler Club also opened its doors, with 14 rooms that can be booked by non-members.

Stalwarts such as the Rittenhouse and the Renaissance Philadelphia Downtown, meanwhile, have undergone multimillion-dollar renovations in the past two years. The Philadelphia Marriott Old City rebranded from a Sheraton last year.

The city anticipates adding around 2,700 hotel rooms this year, to include the May arrival of Canopy by Hilton in Center City, the first-ever co-located W and Element properties

DOWNTIME TIPS

WHAT TO SEE

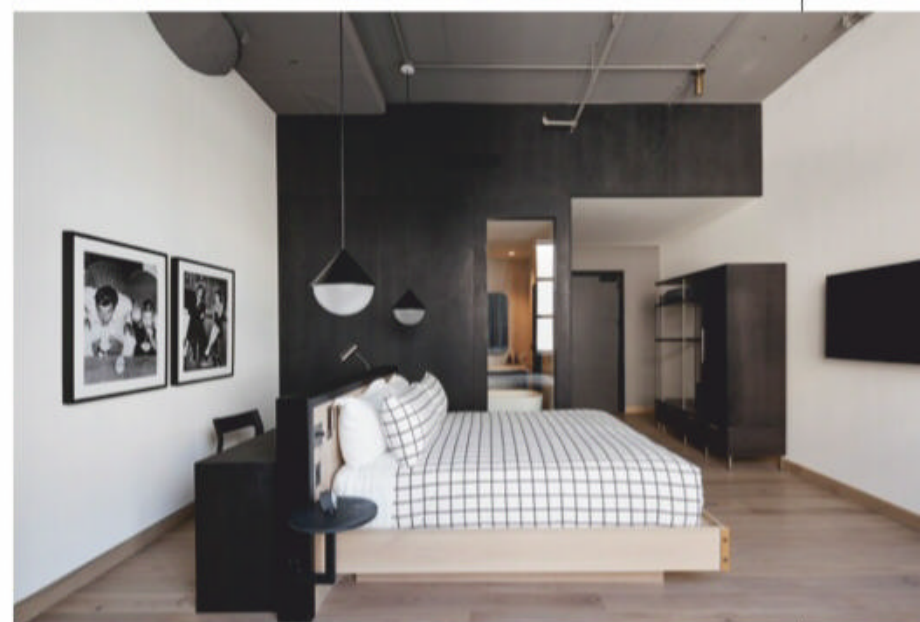
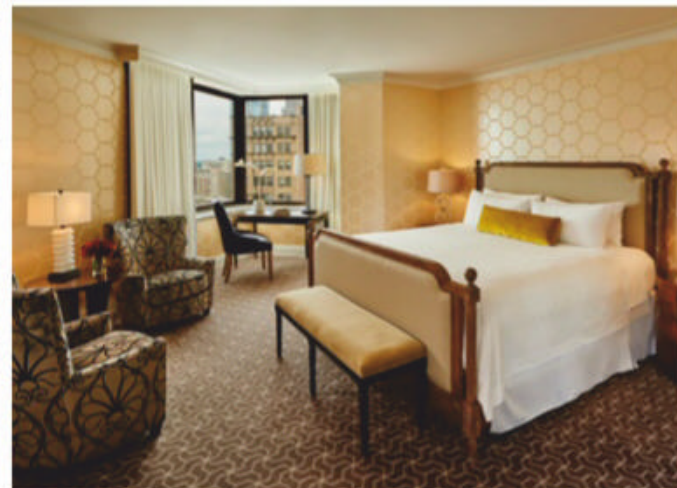
Known colloquially as Museum Mile, the Champs-Élysées-inspired Benjamin Franklin Parkway houses the Barnes Foundation and the Free Library of Philadelphia, culminating at the legendary Rocky Steps (pictured), which lead up to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

WHERE TO EAT

Lebanese restaurant Suraya (below left), in Fishtown, specialises in sharing plates. Choose the "A Taste of Suraya" menu (US\$58), which includes a selection of mezze, followed by a large meat or seafood plate, and dessert. I recommend the Kanafeh, a pastry filled with melted cheese curd (a combo of cream cheese and mozzarella, in this case) and topped with rose blossom syrup and crushed pistachios. surayaphilly.com

WHERE TO SHOP

Head to Rittenhouse Row for local boutiques and luxury department stores, or take advantage of the city's tax-free clothes shopping at the recently opened Fashion District retail centre.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: Pod Philly; the Rittenhouse; the Fitler Club



norm, whereby colleges educated men for the clergy. It continues to promote innovation across its departments, notably at the world's oldest business school, Wharton. Later this year, Tangen Hall, the school's first dedicated space for cross-campus student entrepreneurship, will open in University City, providing incubator spaces, a test kitchen for food start-ups and a virtual reality environment.

Still, more needs to be done to ensure that all of the city's residents can flourish. Philadelphia remains the poorest major city in the US, with one of the highest crime rates, in part owing to its lagging employment rate. Last November, the US Bureau of Labour Statistics reported that the city's annual rate of growth was slower than the national average (1 per cent versus 1.5 per cent).

Things are looking up – the poverty rate declined from 25.7 per cent in 2016 to 24.5 per cent in 2018, the lowest it has been since the global recession in 2008, according to the US Census Bureau. "Philadelphia changes slowly but powerfully," Sorrentino says, adding that the universities are poised to play a big role in the global economy thanks to their medical research.

→ CONTINUED ON PAGE 74



TOP: Pennovation Works **LEFT:** Reading Terminal Market **BELOW:** University of Pennsylvania

and a Hyatt Centric near Rittenhouse Square in June. The Live Casino and Hotel is due to open in South Philadelphia in December, creating 2,000 permanent jobs in the city.

KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

While for overseas visitors Philly is primarily a tourism destination – leisure travellers made up 88 per cent of visitors in 2019 – it still draws a strong business crowd. Major industries include biotech, healthcare, financial services, telecommunications and higher education.

Its Ivy League institution, the University of Pennsylvania, is the largest private employer in the city thanks to its "Eds and Meds" facilities – a nickname for its impressive

education and medical departments. The university generates US\$10.8 billion for the Philadelphian economy and attracts talent to the city thanks to its approximately US\$1 billion worth of research grants, according to a study it carried out in 2015.

"More scholars and researchers are moving to Philadelphia to be associated with the university and its hospitals... particularly in the field of gene therapy," Anthony Sorrentino, its assistant vice-president, tells me. "It's a significant reputation builder [for the city]."

It was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1751 to train young people for leadership in business, government and public service – a departure from the 18th-century



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TURKISH AIRLINES

NIGERIA



Business
Traveller
Cellars
IN THE
Sky
2019

32

Who serves the
best onboard
wine, and
which bottles
should you
choose?

TOP-FLIGHT VINTAGES

WORDS HANNAH BRANDLER

Over two busy days at the end of November, some of the world's finest wine experts assembled to select the best bottles served by airlines in business and first class in 2019. Our judges – masters of wine Sarah Abbott, Tim Atkin and Peter McCombie, journalist and wine writer Kathryn McWhirter and head judge Charles Metcalfe, co-chairman of the International Wine Challenge – took up residence at London's Amba Hotel Grosvenor in Victoria to conduct extensive tastings.

Business Traveller's Cellars in the Sky awards has been running since 1985. This year, 35 airlines entered, with judges sampling more than 250 bottles to find the winners. The competition is open to any carrier that serves wine in business or first class on mid- or long-haul routes, with each airline invited to enter two reds, two whites, a rosé (a new category), a sparkling, and a fortified or dessert wine from both cabins. Although they can compete in as many categories as they like, to be eligible for the overall award of Best Cellar they had to enter at least one red, white and sparkling wine.

All of the tasting is done blind, meaning the judges are not aware of the wine make or the airline that entered it. Given their extensive knowledge, "blind tasting is the only way to do it properly", Metcalfe said. To ensure their anonymity, bottles were encased in black plastic bags labelled simply with a letter and two numbers. I watched, for example, as the judges silently filled their glasses with the first flight of first class white wines – or, as they had come to be known, FC1 (followed by an additional number to differentiate each entry).

Perhaps silence is misleading. The swirling, smelling and swishing of the contents did create a rather amusing chorus of sounds, interjected by a few remarks as the experts jotted down notes on their trusty clipboards. Other senses were called upon, too, with the judges holding their glasses up to the light to examine the appearance of the wines.

To avoid lingering headaches, spittoons were arranged around the room – although these tended to lose their purpose during the final flight of first class sparkling wine, which, as McCombie chuckled, was "basically a



To be eligible for the Best Overall Cellar, airlines had to enter at least one red, white and sparkling wine

pleasure". A plate of crackers provided a much-needed palate cleanser between flights.

HOW THE WINES ARE ASSESSED

The judges paired up and tasted half of the entries for each flight. Once they had tasted them independently, they convened in their pairs and compared findings, scoring the wines out of 100. I watched as they discussed their remarkably close scores, which were averaged to get a fair mark. Team A then picked their favourite wines of the flight and put them up against Team B's selection, with the quartet then re-tasting the final selection and awarding Gold, Silver, Bronze and sometimes Highly Commended. "By the time we get to the final top winners, they're bloody good wines and they've been through the mill to get there," Metcalfe said.

Broadly speaking, the judges tended to agree, but disagreements were always welcomed as they were "a way to get deeper into the wine", Abbott said. "We know each other's strengths and weaknesses," Metcalfe added, although Atkin quickly tweaked this to "our likes and dislikes". →

COMPETING AIRLINES

Aegean, Aer Lingus, Aeroflot, Aircalin, Air Canada, Air Italy, Air New Zealand, Air Tahiti Nui, American Airlines, ANA, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, Brussels Airlines, Cathay Dragon, Cathay Pacific, Delta Air Lines, Emirates, Etihad Airways, EVA Air, Finnair, Gulf Air, Icelandair, Japan Airlines, Jetblue, Jetstar, Korean Air, LATAM, Malaysia Airlines, Oman Air, Qantas, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, TAP Air Portugal, Virgin Atlantic, Westjet. *Our thanks to all of the airlines that took part.*

PICTURED: The judges blind-tasted the wines then compared their findings in pairs





UP IN THE AIR

While our judges have their feet on solid ground, they are well versed in the quality of wines at 35,000 feet. Experts in the field – or air, should we say – they look for balance and structure. White wines, I was repeatedly told, perform better than reds as the latter are high in tannins, which are more pronounced in the air and thus more intrusive. “What you tend to find is wines that have a kind of juiciness, a succulence about them, and have aromatic generosity, can work really well in the air,” Abbott said. “You don’t want anything too lean or austere.” Mature wines are preferred, but it can be hard to find these in the large quantities needed.

Red Bordeaux wines are often served on board as the estates, by and large, produce enormous quantities, but these don’t tend to fare well at a high altitude. That said, this time the competition saw some well-chosen Bordeaux, with great fruity vintages that had had time to age. “When you do find something like a posh red Bordeaux which is smooth, nicely mature and doesn’t have too frightening tannins, that’s a really significant achievement,” Metcalfe said.

Carriers also have to bear in mind that first and business class passengers have forked out a lot of money for the fares, and so expect an ultra fine-dining experience. “Just imagine knocking that back, falling asleep on your first class bed and waking up in Tokyo,” Abbott remarked enthusiastically. Meeting such elevated expectations is no easy feat, but Abbott congratulated the carriers: “Overall, they overcome these challenges brilliantly.”

So how do airlines go about grabbing a coveted Gold medal? According to Abbott, it’s all about “good, sensitive buying”. “The airlines that maybe don’t do so well are perhaps buying on label or prestige,” she said. McCombie added: “Sometimes those wines don’t shine in the air.” Still, I was assured that some luxury names had been very well chosen.

‘Wines that have juiciness and aromatic generosity can work really well in the air’

THE JUDGES

FROM LEFT: Master of wine Tim Atkin, head judge Charles Metcalfe, wine writer Kathryn McWhirter, master of wine Peter McCombie (*not pictured: master of wine Sarah Abbott*)



A TASTE OF TOMORROW

So what does the future hold for in-flight wine? The aviation industry is constantly evolving, and new aircraft types with higher cabin pressures create a different environments for how passengers taste them.

“[The wines] should be more forgiving because low pressure and low humidity are definitely not favourable to enjoying wine,”

McCombie explained. Metcalfe agreed: “It dries you out as a person and therefore dries out the inside of your mouth. That’s part of the reason you feel the tannins more.”

Abbott added: “I think those new cabins are trying to replicate more closely the conditions when you’re not in the sky. So I suppose the effect they would have for wine is that they would bring it closer to a natural environment on the ground.”

Then there’s the fact that Asia is a fast-growing airline market, and countries in this region are also starting to produce wines. For the moment, the airlines’ selections often remain traditional and conservative – French-focused old world wines still being a favourite – reflecting the expectations of passengers. Atkin commented: “The airlines are, in some senses, ten years behind the curve.”

The consensus is that European wines will perform better than Asian wines in the current climate, although the arrival of wines from China “might not be too far away”, Atkin suggested. In the meantime, here are the bottles that came out on top this year. Our congratulations to all of the winners.

AWARDS CEREMONY

Head judge Charles Metcalfe presented the awards at a well-attended reception on February 24 in the Grand Ballroom at the Langham London (pictured) – our thanks to the hotel for providing the perfect venue. See our next issue for pictures from the event.

READER EVENING

To register your interest in attending the annual tasting of the Cellars in the Sky winners, please email events@businessstraveller.com, stating your name and company.



WINNING REDS

BEST FIRST CLASS RED

Gold

ANA

Domaine David Duband, Nuit-Saint-Georges Les Pruliers 1er cru 2017, Burgundy, France

Judges said: Dark, alluring and perfectly complex. Incredibly good.

Score: 98

Silver

Emirates

Les Forts de Latour 2005, Pauillac, Bordeaux, France

Judges said: Great drinkability and maturity with a lovely classic Bordeaux palate.

Score: 97

Bronze

Qantas

Giant Steps Tarraford Vineyard Syrah 2018, Tarrawarra, Yarra Valley, Australia

Judges said: Fragrant and crowd-pleasing. Very good for the air.

Score: 96.5

BEST BUSINESS CLASS RED

Gold

Air New Zealand

Brennan B2, 2016, Queenstown, Central Otago, New Zealand

Judges said: Lovely fresh, juicy red fruits with some oak. A lovely balance and very elegant. A sexy crowd pleaser.

Score: 96

Silver (joint)

Air New Zealand

Trinity Hill Homage Syrah, 2015, Gimblett Gravels, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand

Judges said: Charming and delightful. Savoury and oaky. Firm with rather dry tannins.

Etihad Airways

Turkey Flat Butchers Block Red 2016, Barossa Valley, Australia

Judges said: Ripe with a hint of sweet oak. Has an intense, long palate.

Qatar Airways

Astelia Syrah, 2017, Languedoc-Roussillon, France

Judges said: Delightful oak and gentle tannins; fresh, juicy.

Score: 95

Bronze

Singapore Airlines

Catena Paraje Altamira Malbec 2016, Mendoza, Argentina

Judges said: Attractive raspberry nose. Soft with sweet oak and a long palate.

Score: 93



WINNING WHITES

BEST FIRST CLASS WHITE

Gold

Qantas

Shaw and Smith Lenswood Vineyard Chardonnay 2017, Adelaide Hills, Australia

Judges said: Modern, rich, ripe and toasty. Very good.

Score: 98

Silver

Cathay Pacific

Nik Weis St Urbans-Hof Saarfeiler GG 2016, Mosel, Germany

Judges said: Delicious and fragrant; a lean, fresh palate.

Score: 97

Bronze

Malaysia Airlines

Palliser Estate Chardonnay 2016, Martinborough, New Zealand

Judges said: Wonderful modern, oaky, elegant chardonnay.

Score: 96

Highly Commended (joint)

Cathay Dragon

Craggy Range Sauvignon Blanc 2017, Marlborough, New Zealand

Judges said: Classy, fresh and balanced with crisp acidity.

Singapore Airlines

By Farr Chardonnay 2018, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Judges said: Lovely depth and texture while still gentle and delicate.

Score: 95

BEST BUSINESS CLASS WHITE

Gold

ANA

Stella Bella Skuttlebutt Sauvignon Semillon 2018, Forest Grove, Margaret River, Australia

Judges said: Delightfully fresh with grassy aromas. Wonderfully aromatic with a hint of oak.

Score: 97

Silver

Air New Zealand

Kumeu River Maté's Vineyard 2016, Kumeu, Auckland, New Zealand

Judges said: Modern and smart with hints of citrus and toast. A lovely crisp, fresh palate.

Score: 96

Bronze

Virgin Atlantic

Van Volxem Saar Riesling 2016, Mosel, Germany

Judges said: Modern and complex with a nice fragrant and apple intense nose.

Score: 95



WINNING ROSES

BEST FIRST CLASS ROSE

Gold

American Airlines

Château Gassier Le Pas du Moine Côtes de Provence Rosé 2018, Sainte-Victoire, France

Judges said: *Lean and fresh with a bright, tangy palate.*

Score: 95

Silver

Korean Air

Château d'Esclans Les Clans Rosé 2017, Côtes de Provence, France

Judges said: *Refined and complex but well balanced.*

Score: 94

Bronze

Etihad Airways

Château Les Valentines Rosé 2018, Côtes de Provence, France

Judges said: *Had some great character as well as freshness and balance.*

Score: 93

BEST BUSINESS CLASS ROSE

Gold

Air New Zealand

Two Rivers Isle of Beauty Rosé 2018, Southern Valleys, Marlborough, New Zealand

Judges said: *Fresh, crisp, delivering a zesty palate with a clean, dry finish.*

Score: 90

Silver (joint)

ANA

Château La Castille Rosé 2018, Côtes de Provence, France

Judges said: *Clean and fresh with a touch of pear drop.*

Emirates, Korean Air

Whispering Angel Rosé 2018, Côtes de Provence, France

Judges said: *Crisp with red-berry fruits and good acidity.*

Score: 89

Bronze (joint)

Air Tahiti Nui

Perle de Roseline Rosé 2018, Côtes de Provence, France

Judges said: *Clean, fresh and attractive with bright berry tones.*

Jetstar

De Bortoli Rosé, 2019, King Valley, Victoria, Australia

Judges said: *Peachy and crisp; a light-bodied palate.*

Score: 88

WINNING SPARKLING

BEST FIRST CLASS SPARKLING

Gold

Cathay Dragon

Champagne Rare Millesimé 2002, Piper-Heidsieck, France

Judges said: *Restrained, with toasty intensity. Absolutely fab.*

Score: 98

Silver

Singapore Airlines

Champagne Krug 2004, France

Judges said: *Really impressive. Gentle and toasty. Very drinkable.*

Score: 97

Bronze

Emirates

Champagne Dom Pérignon 2002 Plénitude 2, France

Judges said: *Rich and creamy, with real depth on the nose.*

Score: 96

BEST BUSINESS CLASS SPARKLING

Gold

Malaysia Airlines

Champagne Taittinger Comtes de Champagne 2007, France

Judges said: *Lovely – complex and serious with an interesting long palate.*

Score: 98

Silver

Air Tahiti Nui

Champagne Charles Heidsieck Rosé Réserve, France

Judges said: *Complex and very complete. Rich and long with lots of depth.*

Score: 97

Bronze

EVA Air

Champagne Castelnau Millésimé 2006, France

Judges said: *Complex, with a hint of honey and lemon curd. Good acidity. Really classy.*

Score: 96

Highly Commended (joint)

Aircalin

Champagne Pol Roger Réserve, France

Judges said: *Rich; serious. Really good for business class.*

Korean Air

Champagne Perrier-Jouët Grand Brut, France

Judges said: *Fresh, bright, vigorous and youthful.*

Score: 95



THE WINNERS



THE WINNERS

MAISON FAMILIALE ET INDÉPENDANTE

CHAMPAGNE

DUVAL-LEROY



DRINK WITH STYLE, PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

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WINNING FORTIFIED/DESSERT

BEST FIRST CLASS FORTIFIED/DESSERT

Gold

Emirates

Klein Constantia Vin de Constance 2013, South Africa

Judges said: Deep and sweetly intense. Wonderfully long and incredibly good.

Score: 98

Silver

Qantas

Morris of Rutherglen Old Premium Rare Liqueur Muscat, Rutherglen, Australia

Judges said: Classy and outstanding.

Score: 97

Bronze

Cathay Dragon

Lions de Suduiraut 2015, Sauternes, Bordeaux, France

Judges said: Rich, honeyed with a lovely lift. Very classy.

Score: 96

BEST BUSINESS CLASS FORTIFIED/DESSERT

Gold

Emirates

Dow's Colheita Port 1992, Douro Valley, Portugal

Judges said: Appealing layered nose with nutty and dried fruit aromas. Gentle and easy in the air.

Score: 96

Silver

Cathay Dragon

Château Filhot 2014, Sauternes, Bordeaux, France

Judges said: Intense, ripe fruit; layers of spice and botrytis.

Score: 95

Bronze

Oman Air

Château Suau 2016, Sauternes, Bordeaux, France

Judges said: Good Sauternes, creamy, honeyed and sweet.

Score: 94

WINNING CELLARS

BEST FIRST CLASS CELLAR

Gold - Qantas

Silver - Cathay Pacific

Bronze - ANA, Singapore Airlines

BEST-PRESENTED

FIRST CLASS WINE LIST

Gold - Singapore Airlines

BEST BUSINESS CLASS CELLAR

Gold - Malaysia Airlines

Silver - Qatar Airways,

Air New Zealand

Bronze - Aer Lingus

BEST-PRESENTED

BUSINESS CLASS WINE LIST

Gold - Singapore Airlines

OVERALL

BEST OVERALL CELLAR

Gold - Malaysia Airlines

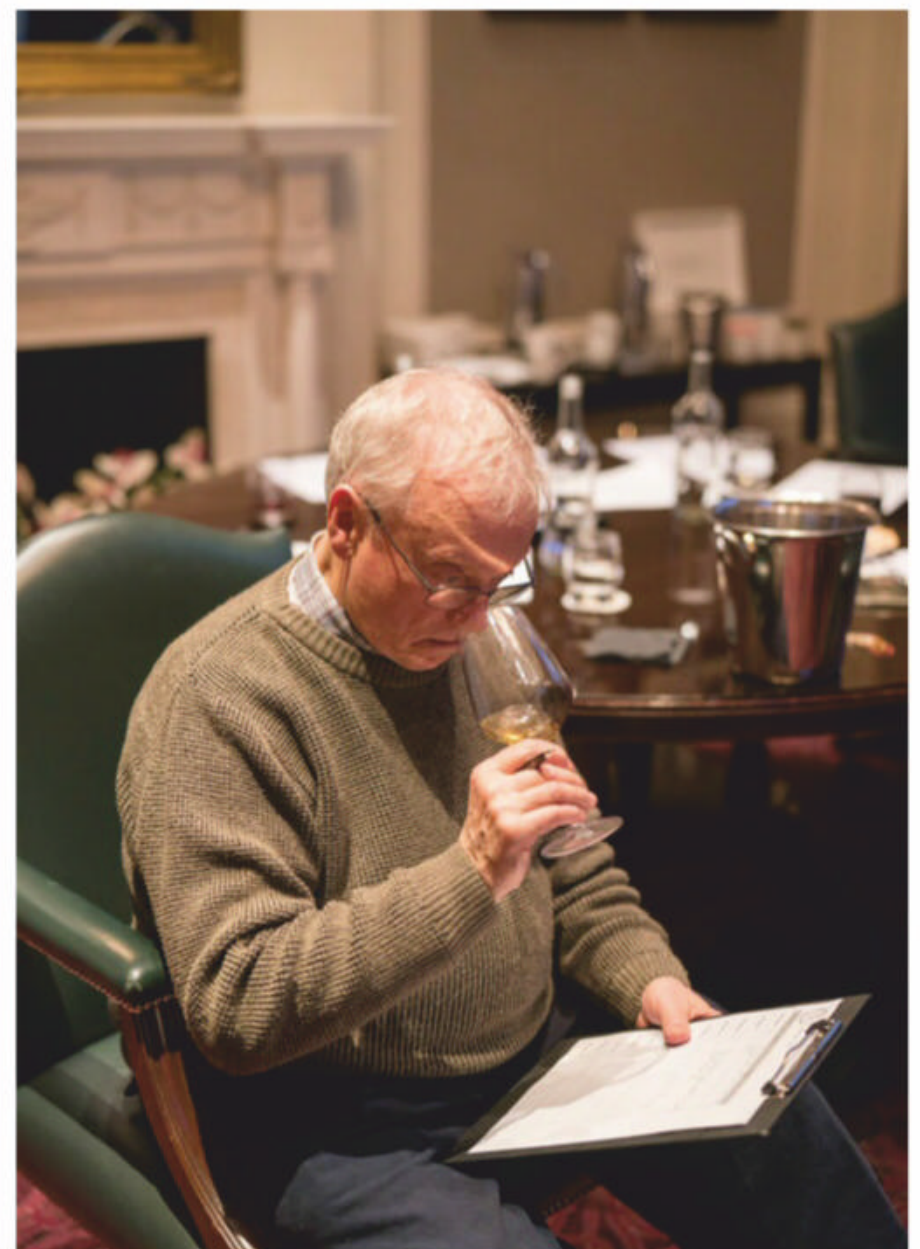
Silver - ANA

Bronze - Cathay Pacific

BEST AIRLINE ALLIANCE

Oneworld

Head judge Charles Metcalfe



THE WINNERS



WELCOME TO HOTEL PARISTER ★★★★★



Ideally located between South Pigalle (SOPI) and Grands Boulevards, just a stone's throw from the Opéra and Les Galeries Lafayette, the Hotel Parister will offer you the most confidential and Parisian experience.

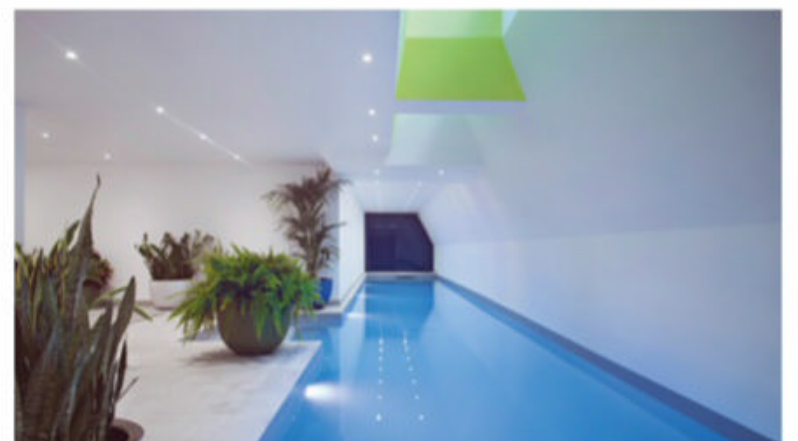
An indoor lap pool, yoga and pilates classes, lunch in the bamboo-shaded inner courtyard and a fabulous cocktail bar offering the city's largest French whisky selection: you will easily find that little something to make your stay special.

All-day restaurant Les Passerelles offers a great buffet breakfast, and lunch from Monday to Friday, before turning into a terrific cocktail bar at night.

This design hotel feels just like home!

Hotel Parister
19, rue Saulnier - Paris 75009 FRANCE

www.hotelparister.com
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bonjour@hotelparister.com




PARISTER
HOTEL

WORDS HANNAH BRANDLER

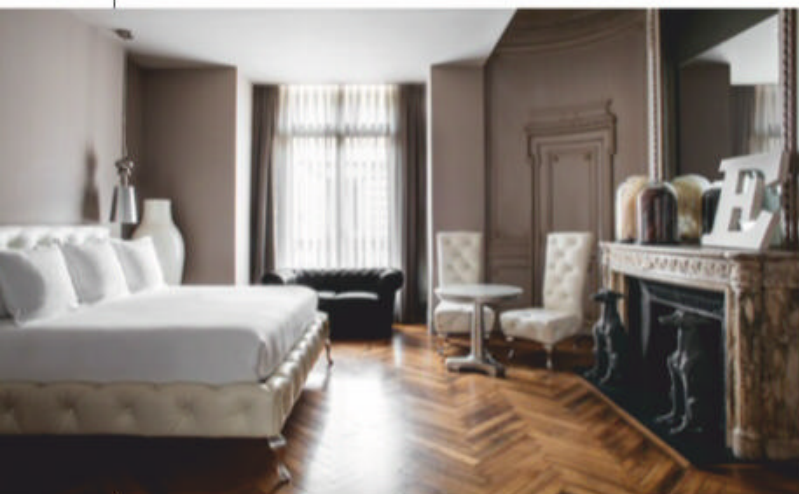
WHEN IN PARIS

Historic hotels are having lavish makeovers while stylish new properties are launching to meet visitor demand

The Parisian hotel industry has not had an easy ride over the past couple of years. It has been rocked by a drop in occupancy rates caused by the *gilets jaunes* protests and seemingly never-ending rail and metro strikes. Competition from Airbnb hasn't helped, either – the city represents one of the home-stay company's biggest markets, with about 60,000 listings.

Still, there are plenty of visitors to go around – the French capital saw a record-breaking 38 million tourists and 24.5 million hotel check-ins in 2018, according to France's national statistics bureau, INSEE. These figures will undoubtedly increase when Paris hosts the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024, when an anticipated 500,000 tourists will descend.

To prepare for the future, a host of renowned hotels have undergone lavish refurbishments, while new properties with quirky interiors are embracing a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Stylish hotels by well-known fashion houses and avant-garde skyscraper properties are also on the horizon.





STEVE HERUD

NEW

HOTEL BANKE AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION

Marriott's Autograph Collection made its Paris debut in May last year with this 90-room property in Opéra, located in a former bank headquarters. Rooms are decorated in a palette of cream and chocolate, with marble bathrooms and plaited leather rugs, and the hotel has an impressive art and jewellery collection sourced from around the world. There are two restaurants – the gold-heavy Josefin and more minimalist Banke – and a bar with an extensive list of cognacs. The Salle des Coffres meeting room has 460 of the bank's safes on display, hence the name. hotelbanke.com

25 HOURS HOTEL TERMINUS NORD

The German-based 25 Hours group opened this 237-room Parisian outpost in January last year, opposite Gare du Nord in the cosmopolitan tenth arrondissement. Designers have incorporated the area's multicultural history into the decor – expect floral motifs, ceramics and portraits of the locals throughout. There's a two-floor lobby with a shop and café, and

Middle Eastern restaurant Neni and Sape Bar. The hotel also has bikes for hire or a complimentary Mini to take around the city. Read our review at businessstraveller.com/trying-and-tested. 25hours-hotels.com

COURS DES VOSGES

French hotel group Evok launched this intimate hotel in October last year in a 17th-century residence in Le Marais. There are 12 rooms and suites over four floors, with four-poster beds, candelabra lamps, and windows overlooking the regal Place des Vosges. There's also a tearoom, a patisserie and, on the lower-ground floor, a guest-only Roman bath. coursdesvosges.com

FRENCH THEORY

This “hotel, concept store and musical laboratory” opened in September last year in the Latin Quarter. In keeping with its literary surroundings, the 48 rooms and suites have shelves of books, with accommodations categorised from “Study” to “Professor” rooms. The ground floor houses a café and restaurant, and downstairs the Audio Lab has studio equipment and a lounge with an LP collection. frtheory.com

OPPOSITE PAGE: Hotel Banke's lobby and LaFayette suite
ABOVE: 25 Hours Hotel Terminus Nord **BELOW:** Cours des Vosges

HOTEL PARTICULIER VILLEROY

The Collection group's first hotel opened in January in the affluent eighth arrondissement. Housed in a 20th-century private mansion, it has 11 spacious apartments, suites and rooms serviced by butlers. Décor is sophisticated, with natural colours and Calacatta marble fireplaces, and there's a spa, a gym and a classic French restaurant. hotelvilleroi.com

JK PLACE RIVE GAUCHE

Italian hotel group JK Place debuted its first international hotel in →



COURS DES VOSGES



LEFT: Le Grand Quartier **RIGHT:** Hotel Grand Powers

MAMA PARIS WEST

In January, the Mama Shelter group opened its second Paris property, in the 15th arrondissement, minutes from the Porte de Versailles exhibition centre. The 207-room hotel has colourful interiors, a restaurant and rooftop terrace, and 11 meeting rooms. A La Défense property will open next year. mamashelter.com

MONSIEUR GEORGE

This 46-room hotel, set across six floors of a Haussmann townhouse, opened near the Champs-Élysées in January. Anouska Hempel was behind the elegant interiors, with



Saint-Germain-des-Prés last month. Located in the former European consulate, overlooking the Seine, its 29 rooms and suites combine marble fireplaces, signature geometric rugs and cashmere throws with items sourced from Parisian flea markets. There's also an Italian restaurant, spa and gym. jkplace.paris

LE GRAND QUARTIER

This new development opened in November in the hip Canal Saint-Martin neighbourhood and comprises an 83-room hotel, café, meeting rooms and pop-up shop surrounding a large courtyard. Interior designers Joyce Urbanus and Dax Roll have created contemporary areas filled with natural light and modern furnishings. The all-day

café serves Mediterranean food, and there's also a rooftop terrace. legrandquartier.com

LES JARDINS DU FAUBOURG

This foliage-strewn hotel counts luxury fashion boutiques as its neighbours in the Champs-Élysées area. Located in a renovated Haussmann townhouse, the 36-room hotel opened in June last year, retaining the building's spiral staircase. There are Parisian rooms with high ceilings, mouldings and draped curtains, and Contemporary ones featuring geometric lines and brass elements. It has a glass-roofed restaurant overlooking an exotic garden, a spa with a 15-metre pool, and a gym with a suitably lush living wall. jardinsdufaubourg.com



GUILLAUME DE LAUBIER



GERITT MEIER

a décor characterised by mirrors and emerald greens. There's a contemporary restaurant, a bar and a spa. **monsieurgeorge.com**

SIMONS HOTEL

This 67-room boutique hotel opened in December in the 18th arrondissement, near Gare du Nord. The design is contemporary chic, and the hotel has an Ice Bar, with thermal jackets and gloves provided to keep out the cold. **simons-hotel.paris**

SINNER HOTEL

Evok's gothic 43-room hotel opened in June last year in the Marais. Interiors appeal to your dark side with a black and red colour palette, candle-lit hallways and ecclesiastical features, such as a crypt on the ground

SECOND ROW, FROM LEFT: Les Jardins du Faubourg; Monsieur George; Hyatt's Hotel du Louvre **BOTTOM:** Sinner Hotel

floor. Rooms are equally dark, with velvet furnishings. A restaurant combines North African and South American cuisine, and there's a spa inspired by Greek and Roman baths. **sinnerparis.com**

NOVOTEL PARIS PORTE DE VERSAILLES

This new hotel located by the Porte de Versailles Exhibition Park opened at the start of the year, with a rooftop restaurant launching in May. The hotel has 245 rooms, a gym and four meeting rooms. **novotel.com**

LE MEURICE
Dorchester Collection's palatial property unveiled 29 restored suites in September, including the avant garde Pompadour Suite and the seventh-floor Belle Etoile penthouse. Located opposite the Jardins des Tuileries, the historic hotel has hosted Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso in rooms with opulent 18th-century interiors. The revamped suites have panoramic views and mimic what a modern-day Versailles might resemble today – which means silk, damask and velvet fabrics, bespoke furniture and artworks depicting the hotel's illustrious past. **dorchestercollection.com**



HOTEL DU LOUVRE

Originally opened in 1855, this 164-room hotel in the Palais-Royal district reopened last year after a two-year renovation. Part of the high-end Unbound Collection by Hyatt, the hotel has retained its 19th-century grandeur with restored high ceilings, mouldings and a period glass roof, while illustrator Emmanuel Pierre has provided artwork. The Brasserie du Louvre, under chef Paul Bocuse, serves traditional French dishes, and L'Officine du Louvre offers herbal-based cocktails inspired by Napoleon III's love of botany. **hyatt.com**

PULLMAN PARIS CENTRE-BERCY

Following a complete refurbishment led by designer Tom Dixon, this 392-room hotel in the 12th arrondissement reopened last year. It now has a private cinema and an artist "playground" showcasing a rotating selection of works. Adopting Pullman's "Junction" concept, the lobby has been transformed into a multifaceted meeting area. There's also a wellness space, 21 meeting rooms and a bistro. **accorhotels.com**

PULLMAN PARIS MONTPARNASSE

Following a three-year renovation, the 957-room hotel reopens this month with five restaurants and bars (including a rooftop spot), and three floors dedicated to events. **accorhotels.com**

HOTEL GRAND POWERS

This 1920s property in the eighth arrondissement reopened in January last year after a suitably grand renovation. A Small Luxury Hotels of the World member, its 50 rooms and suites have chic interiors – some feature period fireplaces, oak flooring and moulded ceilings. Materials pay homage to its history, with lavish velvet and silk fabrics along with lacquered paint and aged brass furnishings. There's an all-day restaurant, a bar and a marble-clad spa. **hotelgrandpowersparis.com** →

COMING
SOON**CHEVAL BLANC
PARIS**

Cheval Blanc will debut in Paris next month in the 1920s art deco La Samaritaine building in the regal first arrondissement – the former department store has undergone a €750 million renovation project by LVMH. It will have 72 rooms and suites, plus a single private apartment. Dining options include a restaurant by three Michelin-starred chef Arnaud Donckele, and a contemporary brasserie with a terrace overlooking the city. There will also be a spa in partnership with House of Dior. chevalblanc.com

CHOUCHOU

This 63-room hotel, named after a French term of endearment, opens next month in Opéra. It has a “Bar Guingette” (a bar-cum-dance venue), and three pools in the basement that can be rented by the hour. Room interiors embrace the Parisian style, with mouldings, herringbone parquet

flooring and striped sailor-style duvet covers. chouchouhotel.com

CANOPY BY HILTON

A 123-room hotel will open in Trocadéro in the 16th arrondissement in the middle of this year, close to Palais Galliera and Palais de Tokyo museums. This will be followed by a 150-room Canopy in summer 2022 in the Latin Quarter, in a renovated historical mansion featuring a living wall façade, a garden, a restaurant, bar, tearoom and gym. hilton.com

BULGARI HOTEL PARIS

Bulgari Hotels and Resorts’ seventh hotel will open later this year in a Haussmann building at the crossroads of the Champs-Élysées and Avenue Montaigne – the “Triangle d’Or”. It will have 76 rooms, a spa, pool, a restaurant and a bar with courtyard garden. bulgarihotels.com



ABOVE: Chouchou
BELOW: Bulgari

KIMPTON PARIS

The IHG brand’s first hotel in France is expected to open in the Opéra district at the end of this year. The property will have 149 rooms and 24 suites, with facilities including a rooftop terrace cafe, a gym, pool, sauna and five meeting rooms. kimptonhotels.com

MGALLERY

Architect Jean Nouvel’s mixed-use Duo skyscraper complex, composed of two asymmetrical towers, is set to open in the 13th arrondissement in 2021. The second tower will house a 139-room hotel from Accor’s upmarket MGallery brand on the top ten floors. The complex will also have a restaurant and panoramic sky bar. mgallery.accor.com

**RADISSON COLLECTION
HOTEL AND SUITES, PARIS
LA DEFENSE**

Radisson Collection will make its French debut in 2023 in the mixed-use Sisters Towers development in the city’s business and commercial centre. Radisson Collection Hotel and Suites, Paris La Défense will have 309 rooms and apartments, as well as a bar and restaurant on the 26th floor, a gym and spa, plus an indoor infinity pool on the top floor. radissonhotels.com **BT**



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PARIS

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PARIS 75001 - PLACE VENDÔME

A few steps from rue de la Paix and rue Saint-Honoré • Recently renovated • Large living room • 3.80m high ceiling • Calm and bright • 2 bedrooms • 2 bathrooms • 145 m²

E 3.360.000* - Réf : 4754



PARIS 75007 - DÔME DES INVALIDES

On the sixth floor in the Carré Vauban • Open view of Paris • Large living room • 2 balconies • Elegant renovation by Maison Jansen • A ceiling height of 3.30 m • 2 bedrooms • 2 bathrooms • 128 m²

E 4.350.000* - Réf : 3906



PARIS 75007 - QUAI VOLTAIRE

On the third floor of an elegant 18th century building • Exceptional views of the Seine and Louvre • Perfect condition and outstanding features • Air conditioned and furnished • 2 bedrooms • 2 bathrooms • 134 m²

E 5.000.000* - Réf : 4737

* Fees payable by the seller



PARIS 75008 - PARC MONCEAU

In a lovely private mansion • Duplex apartment • Double living room • Reserved access to a patio of 22 m² • Air conditioner • East-west exposure • Sun and calm • 3 bedrooms • 2 bathrooms • 186 m²

E 3.750.000* - Réf : 4891



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infos@agencevarenne.fr - www.agencevarenne.fr

HILLS ALIVE

Nestled in the foothills of the Alps, Grand Resort Bad Ragaz is a wellbeing destination that redefines indulgence

46



WORDS BECKY AMBURY



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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Grand Resort Bad Ragaz is set in "Heidiland"; the Grand Hotel Quellenhof and its garden pool

For a clue about what to expect of Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, look to the name. Not the "Bad" bit, rather the "Grand". This Swiss wellbeing and medical resort in the foothills of the Alps enjoys a setting that reinvigorates purely by sight. Wooded peaks slope down towards vineyards, while the fresh mountain air is a revelation after London's diesel-saturated streets. Add to that the presence of a natural thermal spring in the Tamina Gorge, a 15-minute drive from the village of Bad Ragaz, and you have all of the ingredients for a world-beating spa resort.

Benedictine monks discovered the spring in 1242, and the first bathers had to endure a 70-metre descent into the gorge in straw baskets before they could take a dip in its 36.5°C water – not the most relaxing start to a spa visit. In 1840, the waters, known as "blue gold" for their precious healing powers, were piped into town, turning Bad Ragaz into a spa destination (*bad* means bath in German). Then, just over 150 years ago, the Grand Hotel Quellenhof was constructed, accepting its first guests on July 10, 1869.

That property was to become the first part of the puzzle that makes up the extensive Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, which comprises a further three hotels – Grand Hotel

Hof Ragaz and Palais Bad Ragaz within the resort and the more rustic Hotel Schloss Wartenstein, perched on a hillside on the edge of the village – plus two golf courses, two spas (a public one and one for guests only), a medical centre, eight restaurants, four bars, a bistro, a café and a sushi takeaway. Taken together, they form an intriguing hotchpotch of architectural styles dating from different eras, all interconnected. Getting lost is almost inevitable and always interesting.

LUXURIOUS REVAMP

Located only 90 minutes by train from Zurich through spirit-lifting, classically Swiss scenery, the hotel reopened in July last year following a SFr 45 million (£35.2 million) refurbishment under the helm of Swiss interior designer Claudio Carbone. The revamp included new furniture and furnishings, dramatic lighting with a natural theme and thermal fountains installed throughout.

The building's striking exterior makes a memorable first impression, and the lobby does nothing to contradict that. Capacious in size, it features gleaming marble so shiny you could use it to apply make-up. Two curving staircases lead up to the rooms, with a 16-metre-high →



48

chandelier fashioned out of blue and white glass baubles spilling down between them through four floors. Beyond, an open-plan bar and seating area with fires beckons guests further inwards. It is elegant, opulent and comfortable, with just enough bling to satisfy its well-heeled clientele.

While smaller (and cheaper) rooms are available in the other properties in the resort, the most basic accommodation in Grand Hotel Quellenhof are the Junior suites at 50 sqm, all of which have been refurbished. Floors are made of burnished Swiss walnut, while glimmering velvety and silky fabrics and wall coverings in neutral and blue tones mean the temptation to bed in and do absolutely nothing is strong. The marble bathrooms feature glittering gold floors, Japanese-style toilets and TVs embedded in the walls.

The pinnacle of the hotel's revitalisation isn't here, however, but rather in Memories, one of two new restaurants from acclaimed chef Sven Wassmer, the resort's culinary director. Showcasing modern Swiss Alpine cuisine, it celebrates local ingredients and serves them up in a beautiful, peaceful setting. Descriptions of the food were elaborate and I sometimes felt I was reading from *Private Eye*'s Pseud's Corner. "Pull beets from the plump, black soil, brush them against your trousers, take a bite," one menu said, but the food itself drowns out any hyperbole. I enjoyed a tasting menu of delicacies, including pigeon leg topped with shaved mushrooms, and celeriac somehow magically transformed into exquisitely delicate, wafer-thin autumn leaves atop a tender, rich pigeon breast.

The hotel already has a Michelin star, awarded to IGNIV by Andreas Caminada, a cosy, convivial eatery

To get such a wealth of facilities in a glorious, natural setting is rare



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: Grand Hotel Quellenhof concierge service; IGNIV restaurant; a Junior suite; thermal spa pool at the Helena baths



with an emphasis on fun small plates, such as an upmarket take on chicken nuggets and barbecue sauce, and a sweet stall brimming with fancy handmade treats and chocolates. You can fill up a small bag to take away with you, should you have room after dessert. For less extravagant fare, there is Verve by Sven – dedicated to health and wellbeing. This is also where breakfast is served.

SPARKLING SPA

As you may have grasped, indulgence, not asceticism, is the order of the day at Grand Resort Bad Ragaz. To wit, there is an astonishing 6,050 sqm of spa facilities for the use of hotel guests, and that excludes the separate (and unmissable) Tamina Therme public baths that are also located on the complex, with their own sauna village.

Facilities at the hotel include the ornate, historic Helena pool with its whirlpools and jets, decorative columns and arching ceilings. There is also a Finnish sauna, a steam bath and sanarium, and a non-nude salt sauna. During my visit, I enjoyed a blissful morning bobbing around like a lady of leisure in the liquid glamour of the pool, which was never anything but peaceful. Afterwards, I braved the nude section of the spa, also thankfully empty, roasting myself in the sauna before dousing myself in the icy plunge pool – an exhilarating experience that was worth the pain, honest. Signature treatments include the excellent 75-minute Tamina Flow massage, which involves a variety of movements for the joints alongside massage techniques.

While staying within the resort complex is tempting, the lure of the Swiss scenery is hard to ignore. I headed out on an electric bike into the “Heidiland” region, named for Johanna Spyri’s well-loved children’s books, and cycled past vineyards, through villages and up and down hills, following the line of the turquoise Rhine river as it flowed over white pebble beaches, where locals lounge in the warmer months. This landscape is particularly fine at sunset, especially in the knowledge that a delicious meal at one of the resort’s restaurants awaits.

Other outdoor activities include hiking, exploring the region’s wines, or a trip to see the origins of the spa in the Tamina Gorge, where a spellbinding light show is projected on to the limestone walls throughout the day. Then there is the quaint village of Bad Ragaz itself, which is worth a visit for its chocolate box cuteness.

To get such a wealth of facilities in such a glorious, natural setting is rare. The Grand Resort Bad Ragaz manages to offer a package of everything the weary business traveller could want for an indulgent, recuperative break, bringing glamour and a thoroughly good looking-after to one of the most beautiful parts of the world. **BT**

■ Junior suites in the Grand Hotel Quellenhof in April start from SFr 895 (£700). Rates include breakfast, use of the thermal spa area and Tamina Therme, and daily fitness and relaxation lessons. resortragaz.ch

WORDS TOM OTLEY

50

New York Hudson Yards

Manhattan's new hotspot is home to cutting-edge art and architecture, including the highest sky deck in the Western hemisphere

1 THE HIGH LINE

Hudson Yards is the name given to a new US\$25 billion real estate project on the west side of Manhattan, between 30th and 34th Streets. There are many ways you can approach it, depending on where you are staying. One possibility is via the High Line, a public park built on a historic freight rail line elevated above the streets on Manhattan's West Side, which was saved from demolition and first opened in 2009. It runs from 14th to 34th Street. Get off at 30th Street next to Hudson Yards and the Shed culture space,

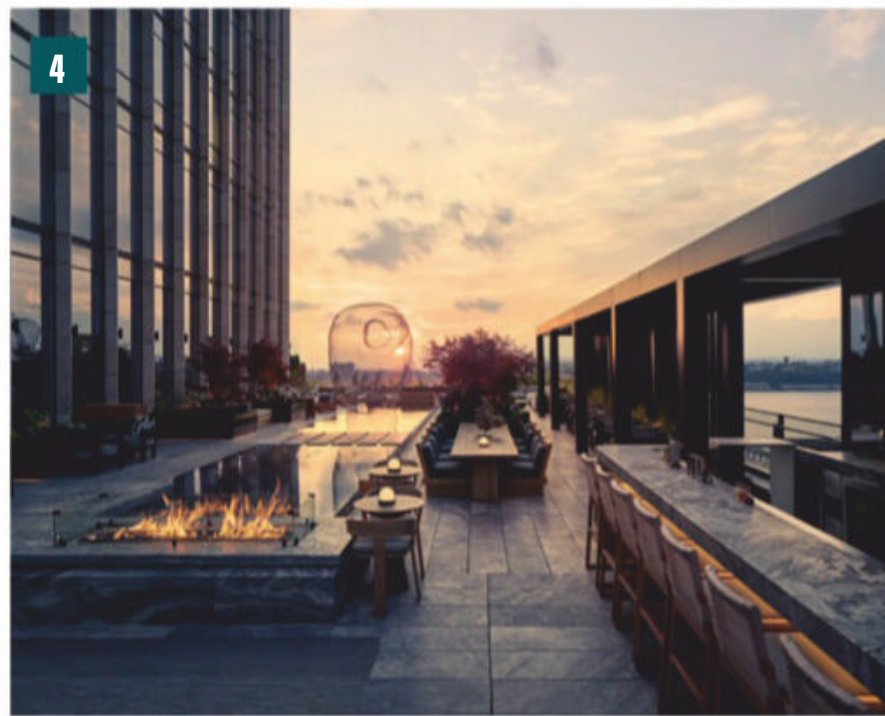
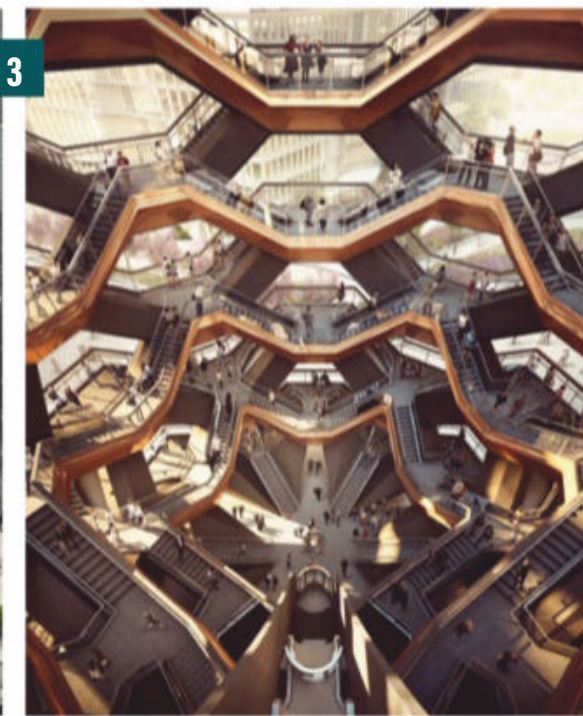
which showcases the arts across all disciplines. The High Line also has lots of commissioned art to get you in the mood. thehighline.org

2 THE SHED

Opened last year, this new cultural centre and arts complex was designed by lead architect Diller Scofidio and Renfro, and collaborating architect the Rockwell Group. It has a roof that can be wheeled out over part of the plaza in front of it, although it's hard to imagine when you are looking at it, which is why most people watch a

video on their phones to see it in action (dsrny.com/project/the-shed).

Inside, there is a cultural programme of events and exhibitions – a retrospective of artist Agnes Denes is on until March 22, featuring photos of her public work *Wheatfield – A Confrontation* (1982), for which she grew a field of wheat on waste ground in sight of Manhattan and the Twin Towers. In May it will stage *Particular Matter(s)*, an exhibition and installation involving “spiders, air and the cosmic web” by Argentina's Tomas Saraceno. Open Tues-Sun 11am-6pm (8pm Thurs-Sat); exhibition entry US\$10. theshed.org



3 VESSEL

By now, you won't have failed to notice *Vessel*, Thomas Heatherwick's giant installation in the centre of Hudson Yards. Many critics don't like it – *The New Yorker* asked: "Is it genius or is it folly?" – but it has become a must-Instagram feature of the city and tens of thousands have already used free timed tickets to climb its 154 interconnecting staircases and 80 landings. A Flex Pass (US\$10) allows you to visit at any time on your chosen day. Open 10am-9pm. hudsonyardsnewyork.com/discover/vessel

4 EQUINOX

Either while you are up on *Vessel*, or back on ground level, take a look at

the buildings around you. Equinox is a mixed-use development from the eponymous luxury gym brand that encompasses a fitness centre, a co-working space, private apartments and the first Equinox hotel (you can see its outdoor pool from the top of *Vessel*). If you aren't staying there, your best bet of getting a taste is to book a table at the 24th-floor Electric Lemon, which serves mid-Atlantic cuisine from restaurateur Stephen Starr. 33 Hudson Yards; equinox-hotels.com/nyc

5 SHOPPING

You've ignored it long enough; now visit the Hudson Yards shopping mall. It has 100 shops, 25 restaurants, cafes and bars and, from this month, the new Edge viewing platform – the

highest sky deck in the Western hemisphere, suspended in mid-air 100 storeys up. It's estimated that New York's other high spots – the One World Observatory at One World Trade Center, the Top of the Rock at the Rockefeller Center, and the Empire State Building – each attracts nearly one million visitors per year. Tickets for Edge cost US\$31-\$36 – if that's too steep (ho ho) or you hate heights, head to Mercado Little Spain, where there's a huge range of affordable food in a market-style arrangement. Alternatively, hang out at one of the bars. Vinos offers an extensive Spanish wine list at an attractive bar where you can rest after all that exploring. You could spend all four hours propped up here... edgenyc.com, littlespain.com **BT**

RIGHT OF PASSAGE

How accessible is
air travel for persons
of reduced mobility?

52



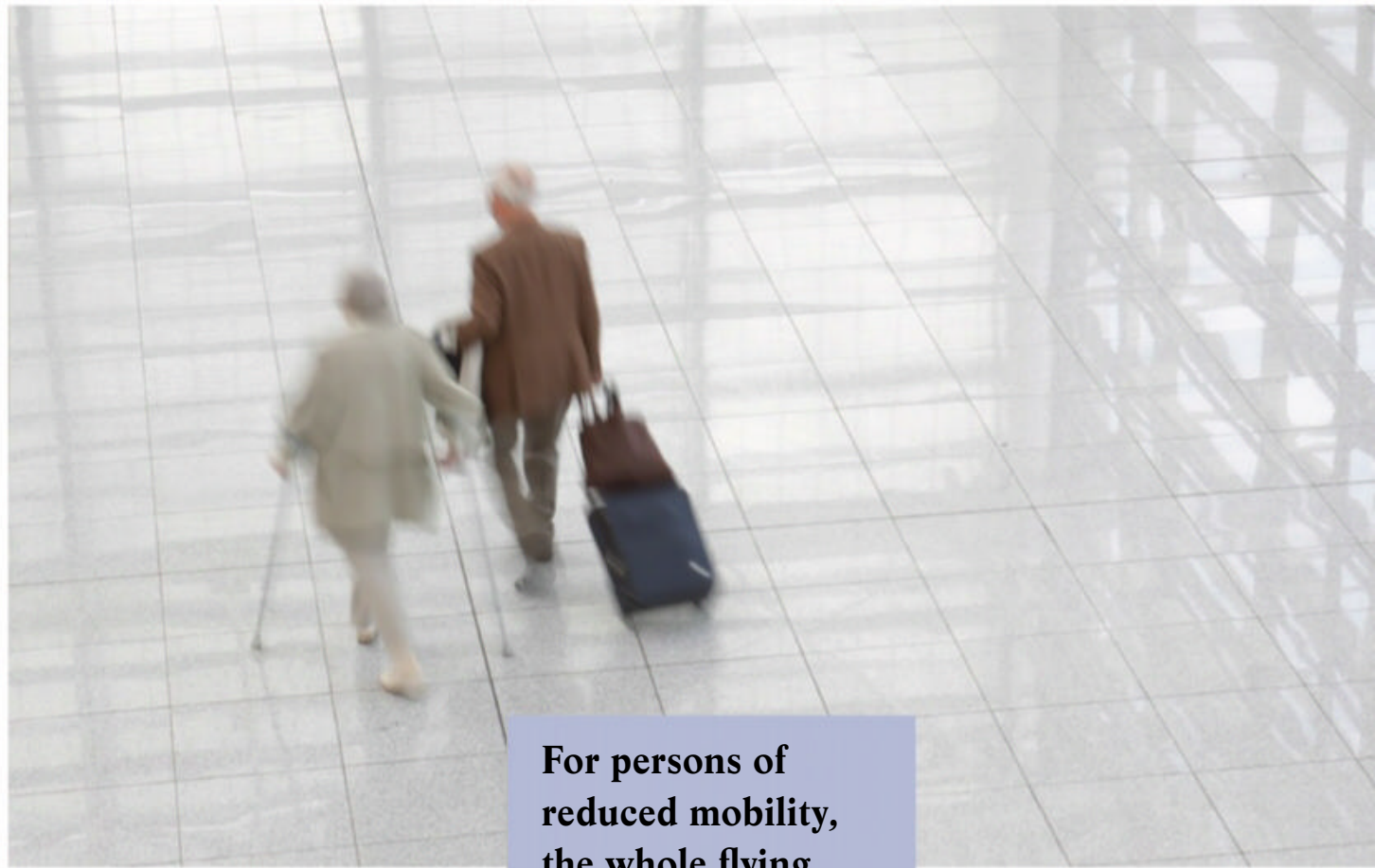
WORDS JENNI REID

We all put up with inconveniences to jet around the world – hurried walks across labyrinthine airports, onerous security checks and being crammed with hundreds of others into a small metal tube for several hours.

Few of us, however, will have deliberately dehydrated ourselves before a flight because we know there will be no way to access a toilet on board. Or watched from our seat as every other passenger disembarked, waiting for our assistance to arrive. Or been left immobile in a new city because our wheelchair has been damaged or lost in transit.

For “persons with reduced mobility” (PRMs) with a permanent or temporary physical disability, the whole experience of flying – from passing through the airport and getting on to the aircraft, to travelling in a cramped seat and then getting off on the other side – can be fraught with difficulty. In a recent survey of disabled people commissioned by *Which?*, almost half of respondents said that a lack of confidence in accessibility services had limited their ability to fly in the past two years.

A *Business Traveller* reader who regularly flies using a wheelchair told us that while Emirates provides excellent service when getting PRMs on and off the plane, once luggage has been collected from the carousel at Dubai International, porters will not provide assistance unless paid in cash. On a recent trip, not having any money on him, he was refused help and had to be aided by police. He described the experience as “unbearable”. Emirates, which manages the service at the airport, confirmed to us that porters require a fee, adding that last month it introduced card payments.



For persons of reduced mobility, the whole flying experience can be fraught with difficulty

The *Which?* survey highlighted that it is not just PRMs for whom accessibility is a concern. A traveller who is blind and has Alzheimer’s was reportedly told at Manchester airport that he could not use the priority queue as he did not use a wheelchair, and was then left humiliated when a staff member shouted to a colleague that the passenger “couldn’t cope” with the boarding pass scanner.

Another of our readers, Brian Pope, struggles to walk long distances because of his age. He says that on a recent London-Bangkok trip – despite assurances from his airline that he would be assisted with a buggy while transiting – he was offered a wheelchair on his outbound journey, which he did not want to use, and no assistance at all on the inbound one.

ACCESS FOR ALL

Passenger numbers are on the rise, and they include not only PRMs but older people who may find airports overwhelming and planes uncomfortable; people with conditions such as dementia, autism or anxiety; people with visual or auditory impairments; or those recovering from an operation or stroke. According to

the UK’s Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), passenger numbers have increased by 25 per cent since 2014, while the number of people asking for airport assistance has risen by 49 per cent.

Adjusting to this demand is no small task. As Sara Marchant, Heathrow’s customer relations manager, points out, the airport is the size of a small city. Marchant is responsible for ensuring that the 80 million passengers moving through it each year come out with a positive impression, and at the latest count, about 1.5 million of them required special assistance.

In 2017, the CAA told Heathrow it was failing these people. In the regulator’s second annual *Airport Accessibility Report*, it ranked the airport’s service “poor”, along with that at Manchester, Exeter and East Midlands. Marchant accredits Heathrow’s rise to “good” in the 2019 report to measures such as establishing an advisory committee and extra staff training. She also chairs meetings several times a year with 12 other UK airports for sharing best practice. →

East Midlands was also ranked “good” last year, and Exeter “very good”. Manchester was judged “needs improvement”, amid reports that disabled passengers had been left waiting on planes for more than an hour for assistance to help them off. Last year the airport told *Business Traveller* that it was working with its own disability engagement forum to improve service, and has hired a new external special assistance provider.

This points to one of the key challenges for airports. Jack Bigglestone-Silk, Gatwick’s accessibility manager, says the airport has more than 20,000 members of staff, most of whom are employed by third-party partners. He says Gatwick has introduced a new accessibility training system for all staff, including security agents and other employees who may be external, and spread awareness of schemes such as hidden disability lanyards, which indicate that a passenger may need extra help. Gatwick has enlarged its special assistance seating area and is looking at how new technologies could help.

“There is a great appetite for innovation and so many people working on solutions,” Bigglestone-Silk says. He cites the location beacon technology now integrated in the Gatwick app, allowing passengers to look up a facility such as “accessible toilet” and then follow a route mapped out as a line to follow.

Heathrow has pledged to spend £30 million on new equipment and technology for accessibility this year, and is trialling an app called Navilens, which provides audible navigational information to visually impaired passengers in various languages. Despite improvements, it has evidently not solved all of its issues. In the *Which?* survey, 28 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with the special assistance at Heathrow.

Since 2006, European Commission regulation EC1107 has required airports and airlines to provide PRMs with “opportunities for air travel comparable with those of other citizens”. The UK has no

legislation related specifically to air travel, although the 2010 Equality Act requires businesses to make “reasonable adjustments” for PRMs. Adherence to EC1107 is overseen by the CAA, although the future of this beyond 2020 will be decided during the UK’s Brexit negotiations.

James Freemantle, the CAA’s head of consumer policy and enforcement, said at a recent London event that he believed “reputational regulation” worked well to force change at airports, hence the launch of the annual report. Heathrow’s Marchant also believes social media has had an impact, providing an immediate way for airports to get feedback (and for passengers to highlight poor behaviour).

It goes without saying that passengers often don’t want to – and shouldn’t have to – use media or social media to demand better standards. Yet people we spoke to who had tried to report complaints said they had been passed between airports, airlines and third-party assistance providers, or told to use generic email addresses, often failing to get an adequate response.

GETTING ON BOARD

Once it is time to board, things can get even more difficult. Personal wheelchairs must be placed in the hold, which is both inconvenient and potentially disastrous if chairs are lost or damaged. When no airbridge is available, PRMs must get up a set of narrow stairs using devices such as a stairclimber – a separate chair that can be lifted up and down – or a lift. At the door of the aircraft, they swap to a narrow onboard chair that can fit down an aisle. All of this is generally overseen by third-party assistance providers employed by the airport.

Passengers must then find a way to manoeuvre on to their seat, either

Heathrow has pledged to spend £30 million on new equipment and tech for accessibility this year

IZUSEK/ISTOCK



alone or with the help of a carer or assistance providers (crew are not permitted to lift passengers, and the more spacious bulkhead rows can often not be used by PRMs for safety reasons). The onboard wheelchairs are then folded and stored until required to take passengers off the plane or to the washroom – unless they are travelling on a single-aisle aircraft, in which case it is all-but impossible for any wheelchair to get into the toilet.

Emma Muldoon uses a powered wheelchair full-time, and blogs about her experiences at simplyemma.co.uk. Boarding and deboarding is generally

TIPS FOR AIR TRAVEL

- Check airline policy before booking. Can everything you need be accommodated in the hold or on board?
- Let your airline or travel agent know during the booking process of any access requirements. Some airports require 72 hours' notice to provide assistance.
- View airport maps online in advance. Check for any tools you can use, such as Heathrow's Navilens app.
- The CAA has told UK airports that they should provide clear and detailed information for people with disabilities ahead of time, and provide clear images and audio messages throughout the airport to help you navigate. If they have failed, let them know.
- Useful websites and blogs about accessible travel include tryb4ufly.co.uk, wheelchairtravel.org, spintheglobe.net and simplyemma.co.uk.
- Share your experiences at businessstraveller.com/forum, or email talktous@businessstraveller.com.

like many others, dehydrates herself before a flight despite the health risks.

Christopher Wood, whose two children use wheelchairs, describes a 2015 flight to Mexico with his daughter as “horrendous” – so much so that he eventually left his job to become a full-time aviation accessibility consultant. “I thought, how can we be so behind?” he says. “For 30 years, the aviation industry has reconfigured cabins with more seats and adapted them. Yet, probably because it hasn’t had to as it is self-regulating, nobody has come up with solutions for improving mobility onboard.”

The ideal for both Muldoon and Wood would be for passengers to be

same chair in the airport and on the plane, which can be attached and detached to a fixed-frame aisle seat on the aircraft, avoiding the discomfort of passengers being lifted on and off.

Yet the firm says that despite “really positive feedback” from the industry and the public, there have been no orders to date, and further investment into certification will still be required.

CHANGE IN THE AIR

The US has led the way on legislating for change. Since 2009, all airlines operating into and out of the US have to fit all new aircraft with at least 50 per cent moveable aisle armrests that allow “reasonable and dignified access” into and out of the seat.

Geraldine Lundy, an aviation accessibility consultant who worked on initiatives for Virgin Atlantic for 21 years, says that in her time at the airline this led to significant change. It became a given that when they approached manufacturers, more accessible seats would be readily provided (although many question how “dignified” the access in and out of such seats is).

The US Department of Transportation is seeking input on a plan to require airlines to include one accessible toilet on all narrow-body aircraft entering their fleets, as they must on wide-bodies. The lack of accessibility on these single-aisle planes is of increasing concern as they fly longer distances than ever before.

For the past year, UK firms ST Engineering and Acumen Design Associates have been collaborating on such a product, which is set to be shown at the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg at the end of the month.

“Even on a wide-body right now, the toilets are essentially just bigger with a second seat that comes down. They don’t give easy access; they don’t have proper grab handles; wheelchairs need to be left outside,” says Daniel Clucas, senior designer at Acumen.

Acumen’s design fits in the same footprint as a standard toilet on a narrow-body such as an A321 or B737, but the back wall can be expanded → CONTINUED ON PAGE 74



ABOVE LEFT:
Accessible toilet
by Acumen
ABOVE RIGHT:
Concept seat by
Priestmangoode

“stressful and unsettling”, she told us, but especially when there is a lack of training, staff, equipment or just basic empathy and communication. She cited a recent experience at London City: support staff who were brusque; being put into a stairclimber with no headrest, which she requires; being asked to wait in a small, cold corridor alone before the flight. The airport told us it was addressing the points raised and investing in its services.

Once on board, she says the main issues are the seats, which “lack any kind of support for disabled people who are immobile”, and toilets. She,

able to stay in their own wheelchair, but this would require airlines to take radical action. Almost no chairs would fit down current aisles or be able to be adequately secured to the floor. Brian Richards, who invented the Airchair used by several carriers, estimates it would cost US\$100,000 to certify one chair for use on board (he would like to see several seats on each aircraft with more room around them for PRMs to get comfortably in and out).

A concept for a process somewhere in between was unveiled by design firm Priestmangoode in 2012. Its Air Access seat sees passengers use the

The currency challenge

The ups and downs of sterling have shown the importance of being savvy when it comes to changing money



JOHN STEPEK

EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF *MONEYWEEK* MAGAZINE

56

It's been a tough few years for anyone living abroad but earning money in sterling. Following the UK's vote to leave the EU, the pound fell precipitously. While it has regained a certain amount of equilibrium in the wake of last year's general election, it is still trading well below the levels last seen before June 2016.

As a result, if your income is in pounds but your outgoings are in euros or dollars, you've lost out. Conversely, if you're in the happy situation of living in the UK but being paid in another currency, you've enjoyed a significant pay rise.

The dramatic ups and downs suffered by the pound have made it clear just how much money can be made or lost on the back of currency swings. The problem is that in the absence of a functioning crystal ball, exploiting these moves is almost impossible. Currency markets are swayed by many factors, from economic data to political mutterings to mergers and acquisitions (big cross-border deals can involve a lot of currency moving around), and trying to second-guess their swings back and forth is little more than gambling.

AVOID RIP-OFFS

What you can do is make sure you get the best deal available when you need to change money. And it's important to do so. Costs across the financial industry generally are coming down, but foreign exchange is one area where there is still plenty of scope for being ripped off. Bureaux de change at the airport can charge double-digit mark-ups on even the most commonly bought currencies.

If you need to exchange money on a regular basis (perhaps you live abroad but draw an income from the UK), or for a one-off transaction such as buying a property, this matters even more. Getting the best rate can make a huge difference to your standard of living – or to the cost of your holiday home.

In most cases you'll find that you'll get the best deals by using a specialist foreign exchange broker, although it's also worth getting a quote from your bank for comparison purposes. Popular brokers include Caxton FX, OFX and Moneycorp, but there are many others. When shopping around, there are a few points to consider.

First, how competitive are they on costs? Look at both the exchange rate you're getting and any fees added. The important figure is the all-in cost – ultimately, how much are you paying for a given amount of foreign currency? Typically, the larger the sum, the better the rate – and for particularly large transfers, it may be worth calling and discussing in person.

Second, what's the service like? Can you speak to a broker easily if you need to? How quickly can transfers take place? Do they trade in the specific currency you need? (All but the most exotic currencies should be simple enough, but it's worth checking in case.) Depending on how complicated your currency needs are, you

may prefer to pay a little more on the exchange rate to get a better service.

Do make sure that the broker is authorised (not simply registered) by the financial industry regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). You can check the FCA register at fca.org.uk/firms/financial-services-register. If a firm is FCA-registered, it means it must hold its clients' money separately from its own, which means the funds should still be there

if the broker goes bust.

Consider also what to do about exchange rate risk. Most brokers will allow you to lock in a specific exchange rate for a period of anything up to 12 months. So, for example, if you know that you'll need to have money ready to send as a deposit on a house in three months' time, but you think the exchange rate is particularly favourable just now, you might want to lock the rate in. Bear in mind that you don't have to take an either/or approach – you could lock in half of the money now, and leave the rest to move where the market takes it.

When considering whether to "lock in" a rate, be aware of how the worst-case scenario might affect you. It's easy to be tempted into trying to play the currency markets – particularly if you are changing a one-off lump sum – but that way lies misery. Considering what would happen if the market moves against you, rather than in your direction, will keep you grounded. **BT**

Foreign exchange is one area where there is still plenty of scope for being ripped off

BENJAMIN SOUTHAN

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Anger management

If you want to gain a unique perspective on human nature, deal with complaints from frequent flyers



RICHARD TAMS

AIRLINE CONSULTANT AND EXECUTIVE COACH

58

Public relations executive and humourist Franklin P Jones once wrote that “untold suffering seldom is”. Having worked for almost three decades at the customer coalface of a renowned air transport provider, I can heartily echo this sentiment.

My many days managing the relationship between the airline and its top corporate customers were peppered with the receipt of complaints of all shapes and sizes. Most would make me wince, some would make me scream, a few would make me laugh, while others would make me ponder on the importance of retaining some perspective.

Being the willing recipient of complaints from our most frequent flyers gave me a clear line of sight as to what the airline was doing right and, more important, what it was getting wrong. While this was an important and valuable part of my role, very occasionally it also gave me a unique insight into some of the more unusual troubles these warriors of the skies had to endure at our behest and why some of them most definitely needed to get a life.

FUR WILL FLY

The first bizarre complaint that I remember receiving was from the chief executive of a company who wrote to inform me of a rather distressing occurrence in first class on descent into New York JFK. The captain had alerted passengers to their imminent arrival into the Big Apple and advised cabin crew to prepare for landing. At this point, the crew retrieved the chief executive’s wife’s

coat from the wardrobe and laid it on her knee for landing.

As is often the case, the aircraft was then put into an unexpected holding pattern above the airfield, delaying its arrival by 20 minutes. This chief executive had put pen to paper to severely reprimand the airline for causing his wife the discomfort of almost half an hour with her fur coat on her knee. From this point onwards, I realised that the perspectives of some frequent flyers and those of the rest of the world differed greatly.

I once received an angry letter from a regular visitor to one of our business class lounges. The missive came shortly after we had replaced the individually wrapped Scottish shortbread snacks with a wider range of unwrapped cookies served in a large glass jar. The author vigorously criticised the airline for not sparing a thought for all of those mothers who relied on such takeaway goodies to stock their children’s lunchboxes throughout the week. How could we have been so thoughtless?

The airline’s catering department, naively believing a reduction in wasteful packaging would be applauded by our frequent flyers, had not bargained on the wrath of the Mumsnet mafia. Legend has it that a couple of weeks later a man was stopped from walking out of the lounge with a whole jar of the offending snacks under his coat.

FIRST WORLD PROBLEMS

Other complaints provided even more unfortunate insights into the soul of man. One of the least pleasurable jobs I had to undertake was to occasionally extract a much sought-after loyalty card from its owner. These cards were highly desirable because they could not be earned or bought but were bestowed on our most important flyers from above.

Perhaps not surprisingly, those who had loyalty cards rarely offered to return them when circumstances changed, and it would sometimes fall to me to notify the holder of the cancellation of their card. This process was never pleasant and seldom without incident. After one rather

tortuous extraction, I received a letter from the now ex-cardholder. He told me that as a result of our action, he had been severely diminished socially. “My friends consider me less of a man now that I no longer have this card,” he wrote. Well, with friends like that...

Of course, the vast majority of complaints about airports, missed flights and lost luggage are justified and if you are tempted to write about the various shortcomings of your airline of choice, please proceed. It’s the only way they’ll learn. However, just before posting your letter, or pressing “send”, just remember that some of these occurrences are what we call “first world problems”. **BT**

Some of the complaints would make me ponder on the importance of retaining perspective



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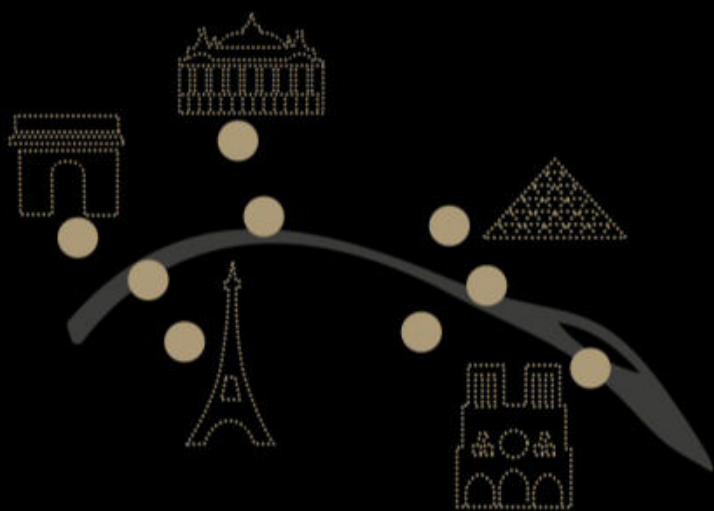
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Ask the pilot

Our undercover captain reveals what goes on in the cockpit



How long is pilot training?

There are essentially two ways to obtain your commercial pilot's licence – by attending an approved flying school on a full-time course, or by self-sponsor. The first way typically takes 18 months and is likely to cost in excess of £100,000. The second will depend on your cash-flow situation – when you have the money you will slowly build up your flying hours and complete all the necessary ground school and flight training. Some airlines will part- or fully sponsor you through training depending on how short they are of pilots. In this case, you would proceed via the first method. To recoup their investment you would have to accept a job with them and your pay would be reduced for a specified number of years (maybe five) to recover some of the costs.

Once you have obtained your licence you will need to take a further course to qualify on the aircraft type you will fly. This takes about another six months. You are only allowed to fly one aircraft type at a time so you couldn't, for instance, fly the B777 and B747. Each time you change you would need to complete another six-month course. This is so you do not get confused between one type and another, so enhances safety.

Can you let people into the flight deck these days?

The short answer is no – only crew and authorised persons are allowed access during flight. Before 9/11, there was either no door,

You are only allowed to fly one aircraft type at a time so you couldn't fly the B777 and B747

a flimsy door or a curtain separating the flight deck from the passenger cabin. Now we have a secure door designed to withstand extreme force, and a CCTV system.

This is a pity as children and adults alike got a real buzz from visiting the flight deck. If someone was a nervous flyer we would invite them up for take-off or landing to explain what was going on and what all the unusual noises were; this was a great comfort.

However, if you would like to visit then you may do so either before or after the flight – after is best as the pilots are usually busy setting the aircraft up at the start. Just ask the crew who will ask the captain, who is usually pleased to welcome visitors.

How is it possible to fly to the wrong airport?

Even with all the technology we have at our disposal, this still happens. It is embarrassing when you park on stand and find there is no jetty or personnel to meet you, and realise you are not where you thought. This has not happened to me, by the way. So how does it happen? It could be that you programmed the wrong airport into the computer; this should be picked up by the other pilot who checks what you have entered, or by air traffic control when you deviate from the route. It could be that the pilots have fallen asleep and overflown

the destination – this has happened and the aircraft ran low on fuel, requiring a landing at an alternative airport. Modern aircraft now sound an alarm if no controls or switches are touched in a certain time, hopefully waking up the pilots!

Or it could be that two airports are close together; in some places the military airport is close to the commercial facility or there is a disused airport next to a new one. The pilot convinces themselves that everything fits. Again, the other pilot, the instruments or air traffic control should pick this up. It is a very rare occurrence but every now and again it happens.

Can aircraft reverse?

Yes, but it is not normal practice. Essentially the engines are put into reverse; this means some of the air/exhaust gas that is usually discharged out of the rear of the engine is deflected forward. This usually happens on landing to help slow the aircraft and save on brake wear. It is not used to reverse a plane as a lot of power would be needed to move a heavy aircraft. It would be dangerous for personnel nearby and could ingest objects into the engine, causing damage.

How much sex goes on between pilots and crew?

Like in most jobs, it happens. Long-haul flying probably has more than its fair share as you are away for longer periods of time. This, coupled with enjoying a cocktail at sunset, is a recipe for this to occur. **BT**

If you have a question you'd like to ask our pilot, email talktous@businessstraveller.com

Quench the thirst

Tour operators launch green initiative to cut the use of plastic bottles by one million in 2020



SIX UK TOUR OPERATORS have formed an initiative called One Bottle at a Time. It aims to grow its membership to 100 operators and travel suppliers this year and eliminate up to one million plastic water bottles from their respective tours and countries of operation by the end of 2020.

On average, holidaymakers use up to four single-use plastic water bottles each day on their breaks, so the target is to eliminate these across all of the companies' holiday operations. The tour operators are Experience Travel, Holiday Architects, Pura Aventura, Selective Asia, Steppes Travel and Wild Frontiers, with all members working on logistics with local partners on the ground to introduce best practices so that clients can safely refill their reusable bottles. onebottleatatime.org



HELPING EASYJET TO GO ELECTRIC

WRIGHT ELECTRIC, the US-based start-up that is partnering with Easyjet on the development of electric aircraft, says it has begun developing an engine for a 186-seat model ahead of planned flight tests in 2023. It is planning to build a 1.5MW electric motor, as well as conducting aerodynamic tests to provide further information on designing a fuselage.

BAE Systems says it is in discussions with Wright about contributing to the development of flight controls and energy management systems. Easyjet chief executive Johan Lundgren says the development is “another crucial step”.



JET BENEFIT

30%

The amount emissions will drop on routes operated by Boeing 747s as they are phased out over the next decade

(See page 24 for our readers' thoughts on the gradual retirement of the B747)

Eco hotel brands

1

VOCO

A “tread light” philosophy, with locally sourced food, paperless check-out and more than half a million plastic bottles recycled so far to make the IHG brand's bedding.

2

GREET

The new Accor brand encourages hotels to “salvage” objects from second-hand sources or eco-responsible suppliers.

3

ELEMENT

Part of Marriott, it offers vehicle charging and bikes for hire, and uses recycled materials and in-shower dispensers to reduce plastics.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Our economy is at war with many forms of life on Earth, including human life”

Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*

HILTON LENDS A HAND

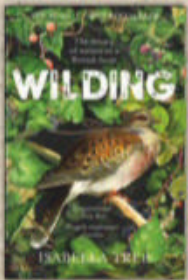
IN THE UK, ONLY 6 PER CENT OF ADULTS with a learning disability are in paid work, compared with the overall UK employment rate of about 76 per cent.

Foxes Academy in Minehead aims to ensure that disadvantaged young people have access to valuable experience and support – both professional and personal – to build a career in the hospitality industry. The academy helps students to work towards nationally recognised qualifications and links up with businesses such as Hilton to provide work experience, while also promoting independent living.

Geor-Dan (pictured middle) is a good example of the success of the programme. She was a student at the academy and now works at Hilton Birmingham Metropole three days a week as part of the larder kitchen team, preparing canapés and starters for functions and guests. “I love the buzz of working here, which has helped me to build my skills,” she says. “I’ve learnt a huge amount, including how to work quickly under pressure, which is important when you work in a huge hotel.”



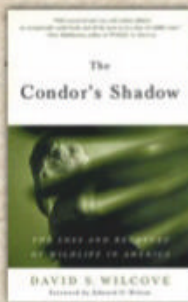
3 ECO READS



Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm

The inspiring story of Knepp, a pioneering rewilding project in West Sussex started by author Isabella

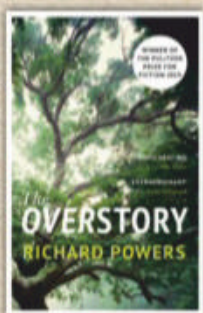
Tree and her husband, the environmentalist Charlie Burrell. Their previously over-farmed and loss-making estate has gradually become a nature reserve that is both profitable and a beacon for those who would like to see a fundamental change to land management in the UK. You can even go wild camping there. *Picador; £6.99*



The Condor's Shadow: The Loss and Recovery of Wildlife in America

Don't be deceived by the title – this is a far-ranging book on every type of wildlife. While it shares

some uplifting conservation stories, the general picture is dire. Published more than 20 years ago, David Wilcove's book is a classic of nature writing, and one that looked forward to a time when the destruction of nature could be slowed or halted. Instead, the opposite has happened. *Penguin Random House; £12.99*



The Overstory

Time for some fiction. Now out in paperback, Richard Powers' winner of the Pulitzer Prize tells the story of a varied collection of individuals and couples who come

to know and love trees, conservation and activism before joining together in a fight to save the giant redwoods being felled by the timber industry. An informative and enjoyable read for your next long-haul trip. *Penguin; £6.99*

Accor's plastic pledge

HOTEL GROUP ACCOR HAS COMMITTED to remove all single-use plastic items from its guest experience, at all hotels globally, by 2022. As part of the pledge, the group is to join the UN Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, which was launched last month by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Tourism Organisation, in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

ONE DROP AT A TIME

CORINTHIA HOTELS has worked with water aid charity Just a Drop since 2012 and says that in that time more than 40,000 people have been helped by seven initiatives in three countries. Buwambo Primary School (pictured) and St Mark's Primary School, both in Uganda, are two of the beneficiaries of the projects funded by Corinthia.

The pupils in each school now have water storage tanks, toilets and hand-wash stations. The next proposed project involves bringing safe water and hygiene management to 1,140 people in Cambodia. justadrop.org



Hahn Air funds school

HAHN AIR HAS INAUGURATED A SCHOOL in Myanmar in the village of Tha Pyay Tan, about 90km from Yangon. More than 200 children aged between six and ten will use the five new classrooms. It took about four months to construct the school building, with the cost (about €30,000) covered by the Hahn Air Foundation, a non-profit charity organisation founded by the German carrier's owners, Hans Nolte and Nico Gormsen (pictured), in 2012.

To show their commitment to the project, the citizens of the village contributed €6,000, a sum that will be put towards future expenditure such as repairs and maintenance work. The school is the second to be opened by the foundation in Myanmar. The Hahn Air Foundation supports 18 projects worldwide. hahnairfoundation.org



NATURAL GOOD LOOKS

WANT TO BE COOL? Well, a light, summery linen suit from Boss could be just the thing, especially when you know it's vegan... But what does that mean? It obviously doesn't use any animal-based materials, but it has also been responsibly crafted in Germany using Italian linen. The slim-fit design has a subtle woven micro pattern and a partial lining for a comfortable, breathable feel. £575; boss.com

DELTA'S CARBON-NEUTRAL PLAN

DELTA AIR LINES HAS MADE a US\$1 billion commitment to mitigate all emissions from its global business over the next ten years, starting this month. The US airline said efforts would focus on three areas. These include carbon reduction, with initiatives such as "a fleet renewal programme, improved flight operations, weight reduction, and increased development and use of sustainable fuels".

It is looking at carbon removal through investment in projects including "forestry, wetland restoration, grassland conservation, marine and soil capture, and other negative emissions technologies".

Stakeholder engagement will also play a part, with a focus on "building coalitions with our employees, suppliers, global partners, customers, industry colleagues and investors to advance carbon reduction and removal goals".

Recent sustainability efforts by the carrier include eco-friendly amenity kits, and upcycling old uniforms and seats as travel accessories.



WORDS CHRIS HALL

PAYING HOMAGE

The latest Carrera is a celebration of 160 years of Tag Heuer

As we entered the Twenty-Twenties, my social media feeds were packed with tedious posts summarising people's achievements over the past ten years (the obligatory then-and-now selfies, plus a list of suitably wry boasts or laments). There was also a stream of new watches as some of the largest brands convened in Dubai to parade their latest creations. It inspired me to look at Tag Heuer, which has covered more ground than most since 2010.

Mid-market, high-volume brands do tend to cycle through designs, strategies and ideas quite quickly – essential when you're in the business of being a lot of things to a lot of people – but even so, a re-read of its 2010 brochure is a look back to a very different time.

Brand ambassadors Leonardo DiCaprio, Lewis Hamilton and Tiger Woods have all moved on, and Tag Heuer's motoring tastes have moved with the times, too – out with the gas-guzzling Mercedes-McLaren SLR hypercar tie-in, in with a sponsorship deal for Porsche's all-electric Formula E team. Gone, and not overly lamented, are the fantastically expensive "luxury" mobile phones; in their place, Tag Heuer has committed more wholeheartedly to smartwatches than any other Swiss brand. Despite not winning the hearts of watch purists, the Tag Heuer Connected watch, launched in 2015, seems to be selling, and this spring a second-generation model is rolling out.

There have been big changes to its traditional watches, too. A decade ago, the Grand Carrera sat proudly at the top of the collection. Modelled by a youthful Hamilton, it revelled in a techy, modern



Today's Carrera uses a genuinely in-house chronograph calibre



MAIN PICTURE AND LEFT: Carrera 160 Years Silver Limited Edition
BELOW: The original 1960s Carrera

aesthetic and saw the brand tinker with dials that displayed time in flashy new ways – on linear displays, or in semicircular cut-out windows with chunky surrounds decorated to look like brake calipers.

Across the board, Tag Heuer was doing its best to epitomise the “avant-garde” of its name (the “Tag” stands for Techniques d’Avant Garde, the Saudi conglomerate that purchased the Swiss watch brand Heuer in 1985), with brave new designs in its Aquaracer, Link and Monaco ranges.

When you look at the catalogue of 2010, ironically, what really dates it is the lack of “heritage” models, which since then have become essential at all major brands. Tag Heuer now offers two distinct streams of products – forward-looking watches for its younger audience, and throwback models aimed at more mature buyers drawn by its historic associations with the likes of Steve McQueen and Ayrton Senna.

The Grand Carrera is no more – it proved too modish to carve out a lasting place in the brand’s canon – but its replacement, the Carrera Calibre Heuer 01, revels in high-tech once again. Since 2010, Tag Heuer has also revived three storied chronographs from its archives: it resurrected the Monza, took the Monaco back to its roots, and made great efforts to put the Autavia, almost forgotten in the 2000s, back on the map.

HERITAGE EDITION

So what of the brand’s flagship model, its most enduring and popular chronograph, the Carrera? Introduced in 1963, it has been synonymous with Heuer and Tag Heuer for nearly 60 years. In 2010, Tag Heuer was proudly unveiling a new movement for the Carrera as the brand celebrated its 150th anniversary: the movement, a Swiss-made clone of a Seiko chronograph movement that it named Calibre 1887, was installed in designs that blended contemporary and classical influences.

Descendants of those watches still populate the 2020 line-up but don’t get as much attention these

days. Instead, as the brand marks 160 years on the clock, it seems almost inevitable that it would celebrate with a new addition to its Heuer Heritage collection – a Carrera created in direct homage to the first 1960s model. Entitled the Carrera 160 Years Silver Limited Edition and on sale from June, some 1,860 will be made, costing £5,295 each.

It’s everything Tag Heuer’s most loyal fans would want (if pricier than might have been expected) – a 39mm case with the retro “Heuer” logo on the dial; a face whose subdials at three, six and nine o’clock are unspoilt by a date window; and tastefully monochromatic looks save for the beige luminous material on the hands and hour markers (it doesn’t glow beige, thankfully).

You could, at this point, conclude how depressing it is for traditionalists – myself included – to prefer it when brands exist in some kind of stasis, forever reliving a gilded past. And it’s true, where Tag Heuer is concerned, that I favour the vintage designs. But it’s not as simple as that. Whereas the brand’s novel creations of a decade ago relied on outsourced or imitated movements, today’s 160 Years Carrera uses a genuinely in-house chronograph calibre, introduced over the past few years and boasting specs that are hard to match: 80 hours of power reserve; a construction that uses a column wheel and vertical clutch – hallmarks of smoother, sharper, more sophisticated movements; and, best of all, a design that allows the use of the period-correct 3-6-9 dial layout. So in ten years, the Carrera has improved in both looks and capability: I call that progress. **BT**





The gadgets of the future were showcased at the recent Consumer Electronics Show

Every year in January, some 175,000 gadget geeks from across the globe descend on Las Vegas for the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), the world's biggest tech gathering. Some 4,500 companies use the exhibition to show off their newest creations – here are some of the best to have been unveiled this year. Some are hitting stores already, but most will arrive by the summer.

WORDS DAVID PHELAN

CLEER MIRAGE SPEAKER

£799

On sale: spring

cleeraudio.com

One day, perhaps, there will be a screen on every gadget. This Cleer speaker has an eight-inch one supplied by collaborator Royole, whose skill is in making flexible displays (it beat Samsung and other rivals to create the first foldable phone). Here, the screen wraps around the cylindrical speaker and can be used for video visualisations alongside the music. A camera on board means video calls are possible, and microphones help it to work with Amazon's virtual personal assistant, Alexa. Cleer's audio excellence ensures it should sound great, too – as you would expect at this price.



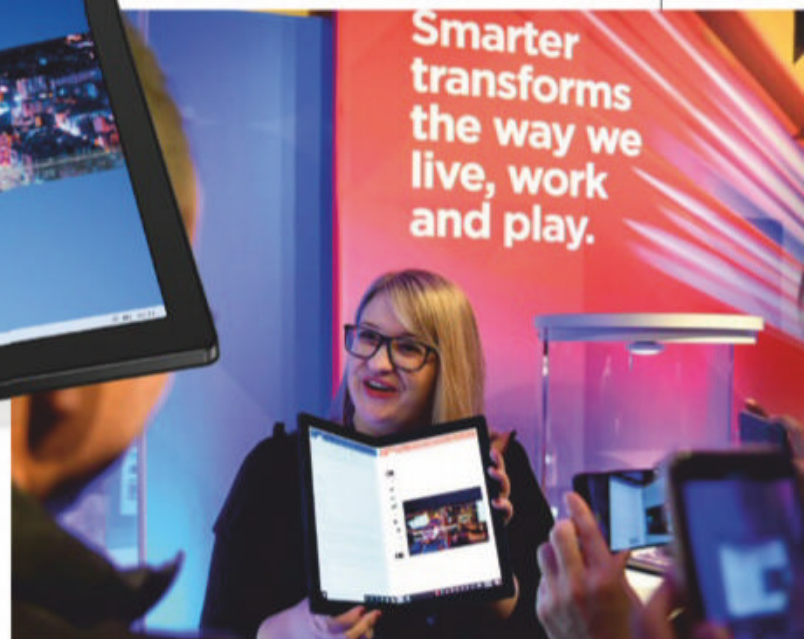
LENOVO THINKPAD X1 FOLD

£2,499

On sale: summer

lenovo.com

The flexible display of this 13.3-inch tablet means it can fold in half. You can set the bottom part up as a virtual onscreen keyboard to create a super-portable Windows laptop, but there's also a Bluetooth keyboard accessory with physical keys that can attach magnetically if you value the sensation of keys moving under your fingers rather than the unyielding glass of the tablet. Fold it in half and the keyboard charges automatically. It's not cheap, partly because of the complexity of the design and the leather folio cover.



JBL CLUB ONE HEADPHONES

£329.99

On sale: spring

jbl.com

CES was awash with in-ear headphones, but over-ear pairs such as these were much rarer. The Club One headphones have exceptional noise-cancelling, using a system that monitors outside noise 50,000 times a second and adjusts to the user's chosen level. They're also designed to compensate for sound leakage caused by the user wearing glasses. The Silent Now feature is especially appealing for in-flight use – with one tap of a button, it promises complete isolation, even from music. The battery lasts up to 50 hours.



NIKON D780 DSLR CAMERA

£2,199

On sale: now

nikon.co.uk

The newest digital SLR from Nikon is powerful enough to satisfy professionals as well as amateurs. It has a 24-megapixel sensor – and, yes, smartphones can have more than that, but the difference here is that the sensor is full-frame; that is, the size of a 35mm frame of film, so the pixels are much bigger and more effective. It records video at 4K resolution and has a multi-point autofocus for sharper shots.

XINHUA/WU XIAOLING/ALAMY LIVE NEWS



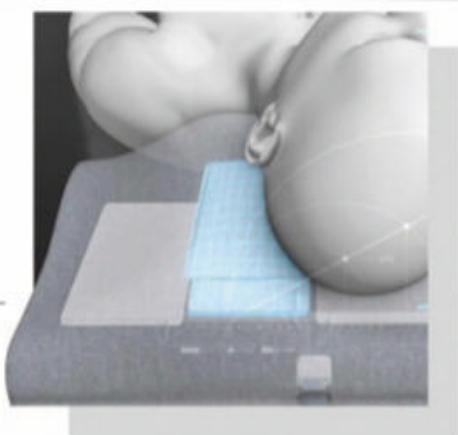
MOTION PILLOW ANTI-SNORING PILLOW

£322

On sale: now

motionpillow.com

You don't snore – of course you don't – but maybe someone close to you does. Enter the Motion Pillow, the second-generation model, which was revealed at CES and aims to restore quiet nights. A small white box, optimistically called the Solution Box, sits next to the bed and connects to the pillow by a cable. Then, when you snore – sorry, when your significant other snores – airbags inside the pillow inflate to move the head, but gently enough so as not to wake you.



WITHINGS SCANWATCH

From £229

On sale: spring
withings.com

Withings makes a great range of health-related tech and this is its most attractive and advanced wearable gadget. Unlike most smartwatches, it has an analogue face, while a secondary dial monitors your steps and an OLED circle at the top displays further data. The watch can monitor your heart rate to flag up issues, such as an irregular or abnormally fast heart rate. When worn at night, it tracks oxygen saturation levels. It can also record an ECG measurement.

**RELIEFBAND FOR MOTION SICKNESS**

From £150

On sale: now
reliefband.com

The second-generation Reliefband slips on to the wrist and treats motion sickness by emitting programmed pulses at a carefully controlled

frequency and intensity. It aims to stimulate nerves on the underside of the wrist to block the waves of nausea that the stomach produces in response to motion. But its uses aren't just limited to motion sickness, although that's the main appeal to travellers – it also helps with feelings of nausea induced by virtual reality, for instance. The battery lasts up to 17 hours – enough for the longest and bounciest car ride or the most topsy-turvy turbulence.

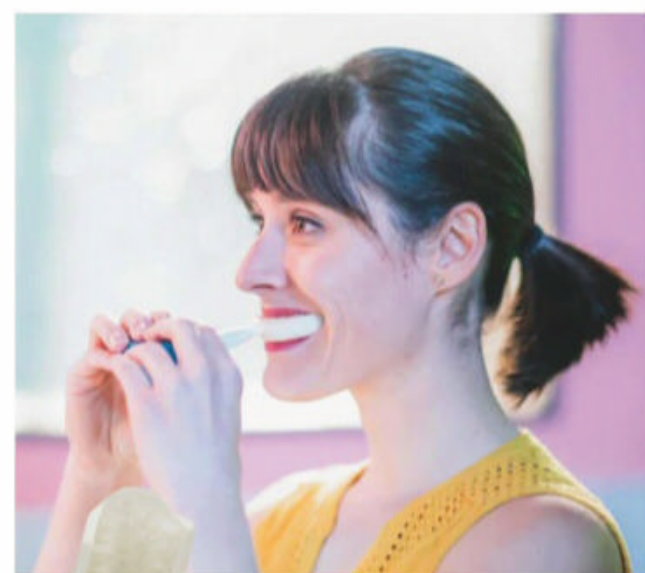
**TECHNICS EAH-AZ70W IN-EAR HEADPHONES**

£239

On sale: June
technics.co.uk

Technics is famous for high-end audio products but hasn't made any true-wireless in-ear headphones until now. True wireless means that there is no cable to connect the headphones to the music source – Bluetooth handles that – but also that there's no wire between the buds. Their design is neat and attractive, with a case that recharges the buds. Like Apple's AirPods Pro, these

have noise-cancellation, whereby an external microphone listens to the outside world and creates noise that is precisely opposite to it to cancel it out. There's also an internal microphone that listens to the noise inside the ear and cancels that out, too.

**Y-BRUSH TOOTHBRUSH**

From £92

On sale: now
y-brush.com

Brush your teeth effectively in ten seconds – that's the claim made by Fasteesh, makers of Y-Brush. The device is a U-shaped tray on a handle. You add toothpaste and fit it over your lower teeth. The dental bristles that fill the tray brush your teeth from different angles. Then, after five seconds, you repeat on your upper gnashers. It vibrates to brush all sides of your 16 lower or upper teeth. It's claimed that it brushes each tooth for four times longer than a two-minute session with a regular toothbrush.



All prices correct at time of going to press, but may change



SAMSUNG BALLIE

The Ballie robot is a smart sphere, the size of a large baseball, that has a built-in camera and can recognise you and follow you around the house (if that's not too creepy). It can control your smart home appliances – turning on your robot vacuum cleaner while you're out, for instance. Not so good on stairs, obviously. Samsung wouldn't be drawn on a release date, which suggests it's several years away at least.

THE PROTOTYPES

CES is always brimming with products that are far from being finished (or that ultimately may never come to market), but give a glimpse of what's coming next, or the direction of travel for an individual company.



ONE PLUS CONCEPT ONE

Chinese phone manufacturer One Plus has created a concept handset with invisible cameras. What this really means is that the lenses use special particles – organic, One Plus calls them – that can shift from completely clear to opaque black in a moment, so that when not in use the rear panel looks like an unbroken surface for a more elegant design. The particles also work as a polarising filter for the camera, which means it can take better photos in brighter light. One Plus has a close relationship with its community of buyers so expect their feedback to inform whether these electrochromic lenses move from prototype to finished product.

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PANASONIC BATTERY-POWERED FIRE ENGINE

Panasonic has partnered with Tropos Motors to create a tiny fire prevention vehicle. At two metres tall by 1.4 metres wide, it's so small it can slip into tiny spaces – handy for a narrow alley in Mumbai or Tokyo where regular vehicles can't venture. The one-person vehicle is powered entirely by battery (Panasonic is a world leader in battery design) and has a Panasonic Toughbook laptop at the driver's elbow for relaying emergency information. The 125-gallon water tank dispenses its contents with a gas-powered water pump. Unlike a regular fire truck, which can cost up to US\$500,000, this is one is just US\$50,000.



SONY VISION-S DRIVERLESS CAR

In the biggest surprise of CES, Sony unveiled a car to showcase its skill in making auto-friendly sensors. There are 33 in the Vision-S, including entertainment devices inside the car plus cameras and other sensors outside. Sony makes some of the best camera sensors already, so to combine them with other movement sensors

makes for a safer driverless ride, the company has suggested. The electric car, which looks streamlined and sporty, may never see production, but Sony has proved that it can come up with the tech for it – and that it can keep a secret. **BT**



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A NIGHT TO SAVOUR

Readers shared stories and delectable Indian dishes at London's Kahani restaurant



**Business
Traveller**
EVENTS

OUR FIRST *BUSINESS TRAVELLER* EVENT OF THE DECADE took place in January at Kahani restaurant, close to London's Sloane Square. The evening was hosted by *Business Traveller* editorial director Tom Otley in the restaurant's private room, but not before a champagne reception at the bar gave attendees the chance to mingle and relax after the day's work.

The inspiration for Kahani, which means "story" in Hindi, comes from chef Peter Joseph's childhood in Tamil Nadu, the southernmost state of India, when his mother would cook wholesome meals for the family enjoyed over storytelling. Opened in September 2018, Kahani has already made its mark in Chelsea and has a Michelin star in its sights. The luxurious and contemporary Indian restaurant is a hidden treasure below street level,

opposite the historic Cadogan Hall on Wilbraham Place, and unites Peter's two home countries, India and England.

Compared with many of our events, this was intimate – just 14 guests, which gave everyone the chance to meet one another over some fabulous food, including vegetarian and vegan options (it was Veganuary for Tom). The menu included sharing starters of spiced green pea cake with cumin, ginger and chilli, served with cranberry chutney; and grilled stone bass coated with browned garlic, with sundried tomato purée. Main courses included chargrilled chicken tossed with red onions, tomato and fenugreek leaves; and braised lamb, fragrant rice, exotic spices, mint and coriander. For those who still had room, there was raspberry and mint cheesecake or strawberry sorbet.



Compared with many of our events, this was intimate, which gave everyone the chance to meet one another

The night wrapped up slightly later than billed, and many guests were already looking forward to the next *Business Traveller* event –

PICTURED: *Business Traveller's* Tom Otley (below, second from left) catches up with readers



these include a dinner at Charlie's at Brown's Hotel in Mayfair (March 9) and an evening with Theo Randall at the Intercontinental London Park Lane (March 31). These events will be followed by the annual tasting of the winning wines from our Cellars in the Sky Awards (see page 32). To register your interest and find out more about future events, visit businessstravellerevents.com **BT**

PHILLY HITS NEW HEIGHTS

BOOSTING INNOVATION IN THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

Continued from page 30



→ One such example is the university's Pennovation Works, a nine-hectare technology park that aims to transform innovative ideas within the industries of biotech, robotics, AI and medicine into economic opportunities for the neighbourhood. The site houses a combination of offices, labs and co-working areas, occupied by both start-ups, who are drawn to the site's various accelerators, and companies Johnson and Johnson and Hershey's. Sorrentino sums it up as "emblematic of the new Philadelphia knowledge economy, shifting away from the older industrial economy".

Greater Philadelphia also retains 54 per cent of its college graduates, according to Campus Philly's *Philadelphia Renaissance* 2019 report.

CONTINUOUS REINVENTION

For a city that could feasibly rely on its history to attract visitors, Philadelphia doesn't sit idly by. "All of America's history started here, so you'll always have that core foundation, but the city continues to reinvent itself [through] all the cultural institutions and world-class art," Ben Shank, general manager of the Four Seasons, says. The Philadelphia Museum of Art, for instance, is undergoing a US\$196 million renovation by Frank Gehry that will add more than 2,000 sqm of gallery space this autumn. The Penn Museum is undergoing a phased transformation, set to finish in 2023, while the city's former opera house reopened as concert venue the Met Philadelphia in 2018.

At the same time, the working class neighbourhood of Fishtown, northeast

of Center City, has transformed into an up-and-coming hotspot. Formerly a commercial fishing base, the district's industrial warehouses are now filled with lively restaurants, galleries and music venues. When Shank first started out in Philadelphia, "it was one of those areas you wouldn't have gravitated towards, but now it's exploding with residential [properties] and restaurants", he says. "That's what's neat about the city. It keeps pushing out really great areas."

Comcast founder Ralph Roberts once said: "A business is only as strong as the community it operates in." This seems to be a recurring theme in the so-called City of Brotherly Love, a name that initially meant little to me but personified the area rather well by the end of my visit.

Take the dining scene, which extends far beyond Philly's famed cheesesteaks and cream cheese. Shank says: "A lot of chefs train in high-profile restaurants in other US cities but return to Philadelphia because it's more affordable." Kimberly Barrett, international communications manager for the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, adds that many restaurants are owned and operated by chefs rather than chains or outposts.

"Everyone is very supportive of one another and that's what makes the culinary scene so successful," she says. Award-winning chefs Michael Solomonov and Greg Vernick have both set up several acclaimed restaurants here, while the Four Seasons has brought Jean-Georges Vongerichten's haute cuisine to the city.

Then there's the more casual but no less enticing fare on offer in Philly's many bakeries and markets – Reading Terminal Market, one of the oldest in the US, warrants multiple visits to sample some of its 80 stalls. On my last day in the city, I took a detour here to stock up on some snacks for the journey home. When I had arrived a few days earlier, my cab driver had warned me that I would gain "a few pounds" during my stay. Armed with a gigantic lox bagel and cinnamon pretzel, I did indeed return home a little wider – and historically wiser – than before. **BT**

RIGHT OF PASSAGE

MAKING AIR TRAVEL MORE ACCESSIBLE

Continued from page 55



→ into the aircraft door area to allow enough room for a PRM and a carer, increasing the space by about 40 per cent. Access is through the corner, providing more wheelchair room, and the door fully closes behind two people. It has numerous grab rails, bright lighting, and taps are reachable from the toilet. Feedback from a group of PRMs is being used to fine-tune the prototype.

There is a sense that change is in the air. Lundy says five or six years ago she would never have had schedule clashes when giving talks on access, yet recently she has found herself speaking at three events in a day. In November last year, IATA (the International Air Transport Association) held a symposium on the issue in Dubai. Used to seeing the same 30 or so people at events, Lundy says it was "amazing" to see more than 150 attendees.

It came after IATA passed a resolution committing members to providing "safe, reliable and dignified travel" for those with disabilities. It also asked the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation to "help harmonise national legislation and regulations which otherwise could create a patchwork of confusing or even contradictory requirements for passengers and airlines". In short: to produce a clear rulebook on the standards and services airports and airlines should provide, wherever a passenger is travelling.

Heathrow's Sara Marchant believes the outlook is positive. "We're on the crest of a wave, there's such momentum behind it," she says. "People's expectations have changed, and they expect things to be done in a way that suits them best."

Christopher Wood is more cautious. "There were a lot of soundbites [at the IATA meeting] but we will see what happens," he says. "This is a trade association with 290 airlines. If they turned around and said, 'We are going to make our aircraft accessible,' something would immediately get done. I was at the symposium, and I had lots of conversations. But I'm getting tired of conversations. We need to stop talking and start creating." **BT**



Image: © Torsten Dickmann

The Seychelles – Perfect!

With almost year-round sunshine and a backdrop of endless blue sea and sky, the Seychelles Islands are just perfect!.



Image: © Chris Close



Image: © Chris Close



Image: © Ennio Maffei

Seychelles Tourist Office - UK & Ireland
Ground Floor, 130-132 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SA
Tel: +44 (0) 207 730 0700 seychelles@uksto.co.uk www.seychelles.travel



BUSINESS TRAVELLER

RESTAURANT GUIDE

Away on business and hungry for something new? Try one of these relaxed, convivial restaurants

LONDON

CORRIGAN'S MAYFAIR

Corrigan's Mayfair is home to acclaimed celebrity Irish chef, Richard Corrigan.

The three AA rosette restaurant redefines the concept of quintessential British and Irish cuisine, fusing seasonal produce with

Richard's unmistakable flair. The menus are inspired by his humble, rural upbringing – combining 21st-century luxury and style with down-to-earth, home-inspired cooking. In addition to the stylish cocktail bar and restaurant, there are also four exclusive private dining rooms, two of which are chef's tables.



FINE DINING

■ 28 Upper Grosvenor Street, Mayfair, London W1K 7EH

+44 (0)20 7499 9943

reservations@corriganmayfair.com

corriganmayfair.co.uk

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LONDON

BENTLEY'S OYSTER BAR & GRILL

Bentley's Oyster Bar & Grill first opened its doors for business in 1916, in the same beautiful Victorian building it occupies today. From the outset, this famous oyster bar and grill has captured the vibrant mood of a metropolis about to embrace the roaring '20s. Bentley's is a haven for shellfish, grilled fish and steaks from around the British and Irish Isles and proudly shucks up to 1,000 fresh oysters daily. The all-weather al fresco dining terrace is a stylish area in which to dine, year-round.



SEAFOOD

■ 11-15 Swallow Street, London W1B 4DG

+44 (0)20 7734 4756

reservations@bentleys.org

bentleys.org

LONDON

SEVEN PARK PLACE

Picture the scene: nestled away in a discreet cul-de-sac in London's prestigious Mayfair lies St James's Hotel & Club, a luxurious icon, synonymous with elegant style and quintessential British

hospitality since 1857. Inside you'll find one of the capital's most highly acclaimed Michelin-starred gastronomic experiences. Welcome to Seven Park Place by William Drabble. Discover why William has held a Michelin star here for ten consecutive years. An eclectic gastronomic journey awaits.



BRITISH

■ 7-8 Park Place, St James, London SW1A 1LS

+44 (0)20 7316 1621

restaurant@stjameshotelandclub.com

stjameshotelandclub.com

LONDON

BURGER & LOBSTER

Burger & Lobster focuses its energy on making two products the absolute best they can be without any other distractions. The restaurant is obsessed with refining techniques, specialising in the simplicity of the mono-product offering in fascinating locations around the world. It crafts prime burgers and only serves wild, fresh Atlantic lobsters. Working tirelessly with the families that catch its lobsters and farm its cattle, Burger & Lobster makes sure it gets the best quality and cared-for ingredients.



■ hello@burgerandlobster.com
burgerandlobster.com

LONDON

BARSHU RESTAURANT

Immerse yourself in a sensational and culturally enriching dining experience at Barshu, indulging in the most lavish and authentic selection of Sichuan cuisine in London. Surrounded by elegant dark wood and unique Chinese décors, expect glorious flavours derived from fiery red chilli, lip-tingling Sichuan peppercorn and other exotic ingredients. Show-stoppers include the Fried Prawns and Beancurd in Fish Fragrant Sauce, the Immortal Soft Shell Crab, and the Red-Braised Pork, all served with pristine presentation and impeccable service.



■ 28 Frith Street, Soho, London W1D 5LF
+44 (0)20 7287 8822
reservation@barshurestaurant.co.uk
barshurestaurant.co.uk

LONDON

ISABEL

From breakfast croissants to cocktails at night, Isabel is a restaurant and bar in Mayfair that radiates glamour and life. An imaginative menu derives from the traditions of various South American-meets-Mediterranean cuisines. A friendly, fun and lively Latin vibe makes Isabel a truly memorable place to see and be seen. The basement bar, the Dragon Room, opens on certain evenings. Unexpected, eclectic, vibrant and beautiful, it's all about discovery. A somewhat mythic place, unknown to the masses, that is becoming more popular thanks to its late licence, attractive intimate space, and excellent service.



■ 26 Albemarle Street, Mayfair, London W1S 4HY
+44 (0)20 3096 9292
reservations@isabelw1.london
isabelw1.london

LONDON

17 ON SLOANE

Nestled in the heart of Knightsbridge, moments away from Harrods, 17 on Sloane is the brainchild of three entrepreneurs who have combined the social aspect of shisha with food, cocktails and first-class hospitality. Situated on a cosy terrace, the design touches are second to none, with a palette of grey and pink hues reflected in the velvety furniture and flower-laden walls. The shisha menu has been carefully curated to use only the finest ingredients, all prepared by a highly trained team. Open Monday to Sunday from 5pm until late. The lounge itself is intimate, so reservations are advised.



■ 28 Pavilion Road, Knightsbridge, London SW1X 0HH
+44 (0)20 7097 3501
reservations@17onsloane.com
17onsloane.com

MANCHESTER

TATTU

Located in the heart of Manchester's Spinningfields district, Tattu restaurant and bar delivers premium Chinese-inspired cuisine, taking guests on a sensory journey from East to West through award-winning interior design and astute attention to detail. From colourful dim sum and luxurious small plates to contemporary main courses and stunning desserts, Tattu offers a unique and unforgettable dining experience. The venue has a large bar and indoor rose garden for corporate entertaining, as well as a private dining room, which can seat up to 40 guests to dine.

CHINESE



■ 3 Hardman Square, Gartside Street, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3EB
+44 (0)161 819 2060
manchester@tattu.co.uk
tattu.co.uk; @tatturestaurant

BIRMINGHAM

TATTU

Contemporary Chinese restaurant Tattu occupies a charming space within the historic building, The Grand. The 150-cover, split-level venue explores the Chinese philosophy of Yin Yang. The ground floor bar and semi-private dining area, inspired by Yang, overlook the lower ground floor Yin dining space and cherry blossom canopy. The Chinese-inspired cuisine combines traditional ingredients with new ideas and techniques. The result is a distinctive menu featuring delicate dim sum and delicious sharing plates

CHINESE



■ 18 Barwick Street, Birmingham B3 2NT
+44 (0)121 236 5556
birmingham@tattu.co.uk
tattu.co.uk; @tatturestaurant

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PRAGUE

POHOSTINEC MONARCH

Using only the finest local and foreign seasonal ingredients, the menu includes modern Czech dishes and dry-aged beef with USDA certification prepared on a Jospier grill. These are accompanied by an excellent selection of local as well as mostly European wines and the possibility to use the private wine cellar. Pohostinec Monarch provides its guests with a quality experience in a refined yet relaxed atmosphere, located within a historic building in the centre of Prague.

STEAKS



■ Na Perstýně 15, Praha 1
+420 703 182 801
monarch@pohostinec.cz
monarch.cz

BRUSSELS

RESTAURANT LA QUINCAILLERIE

It is located in a former ironmonger's shop in the Rue du Page in Brussels, designed by a student of Victor Horta. The Horta museum is just around the corner. There's also the Place du Châtelain, a variety of nice restaurants, boutiques and speciality shops in the neighbourhood. In 1988, La Quincaillerie opened its doors. Many characteristic elements of the former shop were preserved. It gives that special character to the brasserie. The restaurant is located a stone's throw from Avenue Louise and is the ideal base for those wishing to enjoy authentic Belgian cuisine.

AUTHENTIC BELGIAN



■ Edelknaapstraat/Rue du Page 45, 1050 Brussels
+32 2 533 98 33
info@quincaillerie.be
quincaillerie.be

BERLIN

RESTAURANT EINSUNTERNULL

Michelin-starred Einsunternull is one of Berlin's top restaurants. The cosmopolitan venue in Germany's capital city has a variety of multicultural influences, both in its kitchen philosophy and overall concept. Together, chef de cuisine Silvio Pfeufer and sommelier Ivo Ebert have set out to answer the eternally unresolved question "What is Berlin?" on a culinary level. The gourmet seven-course menu can be enjoyed alongside an outstanding wine selection or with a homemade, refined non-alcoholic beverage accompaniment.

■ Hannoversche Straße 1, 10115 Berlin
+49 30 27 57 78 10
kontakt@einsunternull.com
einsunternull.com



FINE
DINING

MUNICH

LITTLE LONDON BAR & GRILL

Little London is a steakhouse in the heart of Munich, where guests feel at home while enjoying the best food, wine and drinks. Our steaks are grilled on a Montague grill at 928°C. You can choose from a variety of meats, all of which maintain an exceptional flavour as a result of the special preparation process. To accompany your meal, choose the perfect wine from our exclusively designed wine list, or allow the staff to advise you. The restaurant would love to welcome you.

■ Tal 31, 80331 Munich
+49 89 12 22 39 470
gr@little-london.de
little-london.de



BAR AND
GRILL

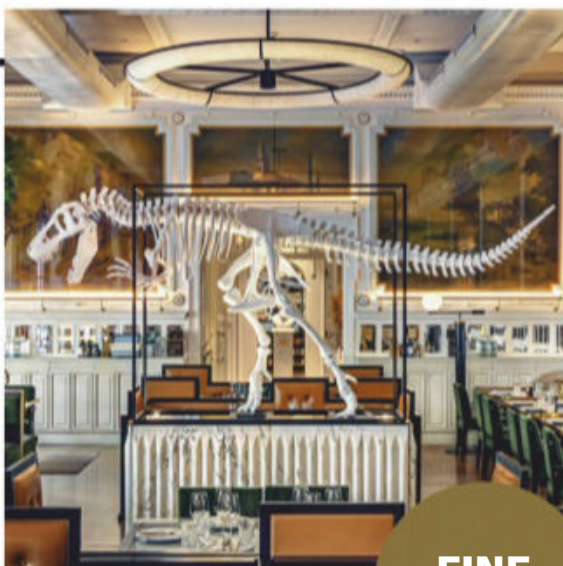
LISBON

JNCQUOI AVENIDA

JNcQUOI Avenida in the heart of Lisbon is the first-ever "Food meets Fashion" concept. JNcQUOI provides the most discerning consumer with a wide array of food, wine and luxury fashion brands as well as unique moments of pure art-de-vivre across three floors.

This true gastronomic tribute to the best Portuguese and international cuisines, prepared by chef Antonio Boia, is where local and tourists meet to enjoy the best of Lisbon.

■ Av. Liberdade 182-184, Lisbon
+351 219 369 900
bookatable@jncquoiavenida.com
jncquoi.com



FINE
DINING

HAMBURG

BOOTSHAUS GRILL & BAR

Bootshaus is an insider's tip for outstanding restaurant quality and passion. Just a stone's throw from the Elbphilharmonie concert hall in Hamburg's HafenCity. With a stunning view of the Elbe River, you can either have the best à la carte breakfast in town until noon or enjoy the best steaks and drinks for dinner. Bootshaus Bar & Grill is happy to welcome you.

■ Am Kaiserkai 19, 20457 Hamburg
+49 40 33 47 37 44
reservierung@bootshaus-hafencity.de
bootshaus-hafencity.de

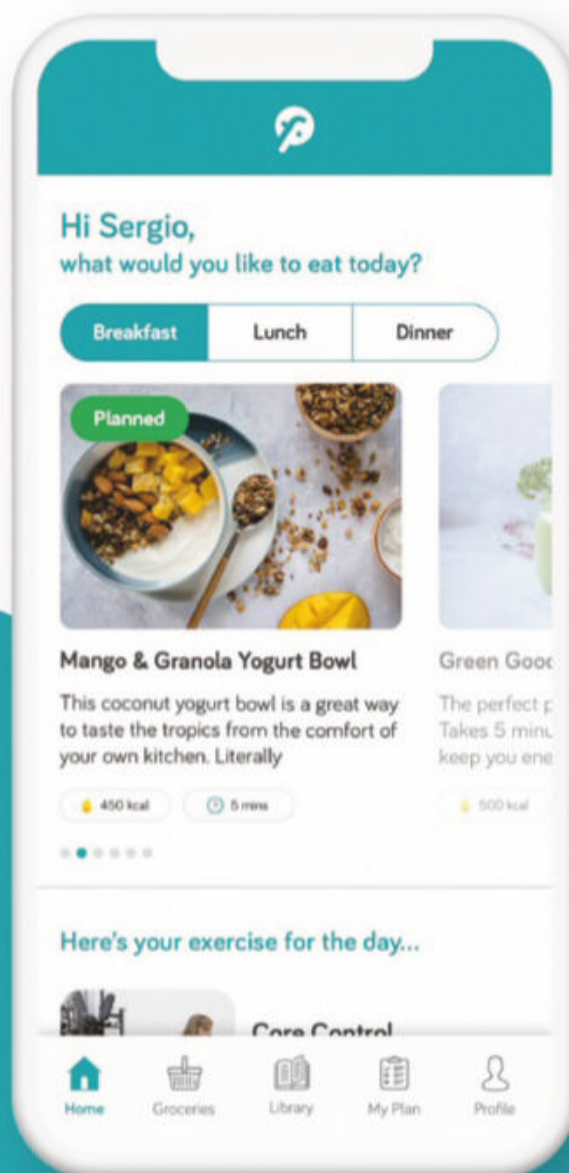


GRILL
AND BAR



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Delta Air Lines B767-400ER

economy class

LONDON-BOSTON

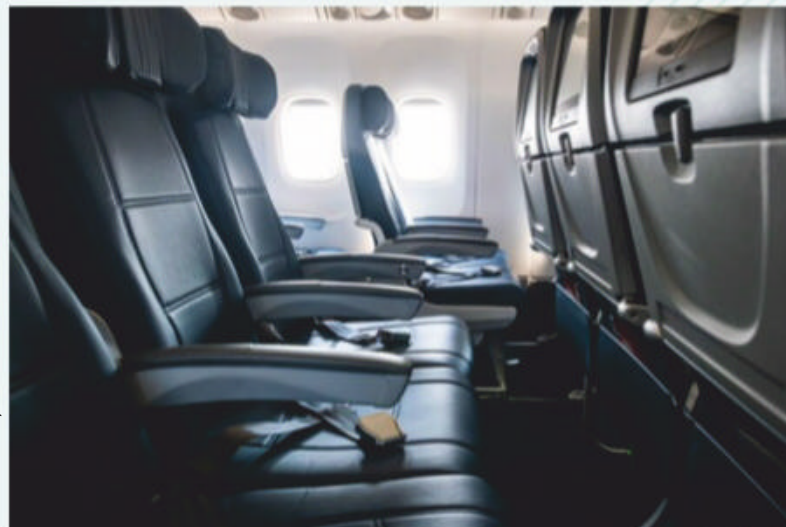
BACKGROUND Delta operates a daily nonstop service between London Heathrow T3 and Boston Logan, departing the UK in the morning and the US in the evening. In December the airline placed a refurbished B767-400ER on the route. There are four seat types: economy; Comfort Plus (economy with extra legroom); Premium Select (see opposite); and Delta One (reviewed at [businesstraveller.com/try-and-tested](https://www.businesstraveller.com/try-and-tested)).

CHECK-IN I stayed at the Aerotel London Heathrow at Terminal 3 the night before (see page 86). All the same, I was cutting it fine, arriving for my 0940 flight at 0820. I had checked in on the airline's app. There were about a dozen Delta self-service bag-drop desks and the area was quite busy, but I was travelling hand luggage only. The security queue took about 20 minutes, and Gate 21 was about a ten-minute walk.

BOARDING By the time I got to the gate my aircraft zone was boarding so I walked straight on and was in my seat by 0900. We were welcomed aboard and told that crew would be coming around with headphones and eye masks. The IFE screen has normal headphone jacks so you can use your own.

THE SEAT Economy runs from rows 34 to 57 in a 2-3-2 layout (A-B, C-D-E, F-G).

CHRIS RANK, RANK STUDIOS



The new blue leather seats looked clean and smart. They have 18.1 inches of width, 31 inches of pitch (an inch less than the former seats) and a four-inch recline. Comfort Plus (rows 30-33) gets you 34 inches of pitch. Each seat has a USB port, a universal plug point, a magazine pocket and a firm tray table. The IFE touchscreen looks quite small, at 10.1 inches, but is responsive.

I found the seat comfortable. The headrest has padded wings on either side

The food was tasty and on a par with what I've had in premium economy on other flights

that you can pull out to lean your head on, which helped me to take a nap.

BEST SEAT The washrooms are next to rows 39 and 57, so avoid those. I was in 42C, an aisle seat in the middle section, which was fine on a day flight. Row 41 is an exit row with lots of legroom.

THE FLIGHT We pushed back right on time at 0940 and took off at 0957. About 15 minutes later I was given a warm wet wipe and a bottle of water, followed by a menu with Delta's new long-haul economy

BEST FOR

A comfortable seat and quality meal service

FLIGHT DURATION

7 hours 30 minutes

CONFIGURATION

2-3-2

SEAT WIDTH

18.1 inches

SEAT PITCH

31 inches

SEAT RECLINE

4 inches

PRICE

Internet rates for a return economy class B767-400ER flight from London to Boston in April ranged between £534 and £1,947 depending on flexibility

meal service. The crew brought a welcome cocktail – a peach bellini with Mionetto sparkling wine and peach purée.

Food arrived at 1111. I had prosciutto and melon to start and gnocchi in basil cream sauce with tomatoes and pine nuts for my main, which were served together on a tray. Both were tasty and on a par with what I've had in premium economy on other flights. Dessert was salted caramel ice cream. The drinks menu featured Starbucks coffee, a couple of beers and spirits. Wine was a choice of chardonnay, Californian merlot or barbera. An hour before landing we were given folded pizza and a chocolate truffle mousse, then Toblerone chunks.

ARRIVAL We landed ahead of schedule at 1218 local time and I was off the aircraft by 1235. It only took about five minutes to get through the immigration queue.

VERDICT I'd struggle to fault this experience for a day flight in economy class. The seat was comfortable, the IFE worked well and I really enjoyed the meal service, both because of the quality of the food and the extra touches, such as the cocktail and menu. *Jenni Reid*



Delta Air Lines B767-400ER

premium economy

BOSTON-LONDON

CHECK-IN I took the Boston T train (blue line) to the airport stop, arriving at 1810 ahead of my 1952 flight on a Saturday night. From here, a free shuttle bus picks you up to take you to the airport itself. Delta uses Terminal A, and the drive took just over five minutes. The airport was very quiet.

BOARDING It was a ten-minute walk from security to Gate A19. Delta One and Diamond passengers boarded at 1905, and Premium Select at 1910. I was offered a glass of Prosecco and my coat was taken. A Tumi washbag was provided and included an eye mask, socks, toothbrush/paste, a face wipe and a Malin and Goetz lip balm. The cabin was just over half full.

THE SEAT There are four Premium Select rows (20 to 23) in a 2-2-2 configuration (A-B, C-D, E-F). The seat gives a generous 38 inches of legroom (versus 31 inches in economy) and 19 inches of width (18.1 in economy). Recline is decent, at seven inches (three more inches than in economy). The tray table folds out from the seat arm and is firm enough to work on. The 13.1-inch seatback IFE touchscreen moves so you can keep it at your preferred angle. The seat had a small water bottle holder, two USB points and two universal plug sockets. Over-ear noise-cancelling headphones were provided.



In a 2-2-2 configuration, the seat gives a generous 38 inches of legroom and decent recline

Ultimately, I don't find that the current style of most premium economy seats – including this one – allows you to sleep that much more easily than in economy. Extra legroom and recline may help some people, but I would prefer headrests that provide greater support – on this aircraft I found the economy headrest more comfortable.

BEST SEAT Go for 20A for heaps of legroom, aisle access plus a window. The attendants on my flight were very quiet and I couldn't hear any noise from the galley even though it was near my seat (21A).

THE FLIGHT We pushed back at 1950 and took off at 2005. Two attendants served the cabin. Once in the air we were given a hot flannel, a white tablecloth was laid out and we were offered drinks and nuts. I had a glass of Californian merlot. From the menu I chose the harissa prawns with apple, celery and rocket, and for my main braised beef short rib with mash, carrots and green beans. These were served together, with a salad, roll and chocolate mousse. All of

BEST FOR
More attentive service and extra room

FLIGHT DURATION
6 hours 30 minutes

CONFIGURATION
2-3-2

SEAT WIDTH
19 inches

SEAT PITCH
38 inches

SEAT RECLINE
7 inches

PRICE
Internet rates for a return premium economy B767-400ER flight from London to Boston in April ranged between £1,671 and £2,678 depending on flexibility

CONTACT
delta.com

the dishes were good, especially the main. My crew member was attentive, frequently checking whether people wanted top-ups.

My IFE screen was slow to respond, then froze. The remote didn't work either. The attendant reset the system to no avail, so I decided to sleep. The pillow provided was not particularly comfortable. The blanket was a good weight, although it had a plastic-like texture. I woke up 30 minutes before landing and had missed breakfast, but the attendant sped over and offered me a choice of onion quiche with bacon (tasty), or granola, with fresh fruit and a croissant.

ARRIVAL We landed early at T3 at 0655. Immigration took nearly an hour to clear.

VERDICT Whether it's worth paying the extra money for Premium Select depends on how much you value more attentive service in a smaller cabin, extra legroom, priority boarding and an amenity kit. The seat would not be much of a draw for me on a day flight, given the comfort of the new economy seats. I had a good flight, but the IFE would have been an issue during the day. *Jenni Reid*



Citizen M Boston North Station

BACKGROUND Dutch brand Citizen M first launched at Amsterdam Schiphol airport in 2008 and now has city-centre properties in the UK, Europe, Asia and the US. This year, it has Seattle, Geneva and Washington DC in the pipeline. Citizen M's stated aim is to offer "affordable luxury" in the world's biggest cities, capturing "what a millennial businessperson wants". The Boston hotel opened in August last year.

WHERE IS IT? On top of North Station, also home to TD Garden, where basketball and ice hockey games are played. From the airport, you can take a shuttle bus and the T train, or a ten-minute Uber. It's an excellent location for business or leisure, with easy access to Cambridge and other districts on the train, and Boston Common within walking distance. The hotel begins on the fourth floor, so it's well soundproofed from the bustle below.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The hotel entrance is to the left of the station. The ground-floor welcome area features bold prints and quirky ornaments. The fourth-floor lobby makes a great first impression thanks to a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows that lets the light flood in, a warming gas fire and an eclectic yet stylish mish-mash of furniture. Check-in is via self-service screens and took me less than 30 seconds. There were two or three members of staff in this area throughout my three-day stay, who all greeted me when I walked through.



Referred to as the Lounge, this large, open-plan area designed by Dutch firm Concrete has a range of seating, shared desks with plug points, a bar, and dining tables. Next to it is a large outdoor terrace.

ROOMS All of the property's 272 rooms are the same size, at 15.7 sqm, but you can pay extra for one on a higher floor with a better view. This starts from £7, although when I made a last-minute booking it was quoted at £18. It was worth it for the stunning sunrise I enjoyed from my bed on the 14th floor one jetlagged morning.

The room is compact, but white walls, attractive décor and the large window made it feel spacious

The rooms have six hangers, a sink with a large mirror, and a small fridge with two bottles of water. The toilet and shower are behind opaque glass walls within the main room, with a curtain between them. Shampoo/shower gel is provided in full-sized bottles. Under the wall-to-wall kingsize bed is a safe, with sliding drawers providing storage. Next to the bed was a small desk with plug sockets, USB points and an adapter. As well as bedside switches for the lights and blackout blinds, there was a tablet for controlling the room settings, including the temperature, lighting (various jazzy mood options are available), music and TV – you can choose from a good selection of recent films, with two free streams available per day.

The room is compact, but white walls, attractive décor and the large window



made it feel spacious. I found it comfortable and it had everything I needed. There is an ironing room on each floor.

FOOD AND DRINK There is a 24-hour menu in the Lounge, with dishes including Italian beef ragu (US\$18) and chicken tikka masala (US\$16). The bar was well stocked and each evening the area was busy. The breakfast buffet (£15 at the time of booking) is simple but tasted great, with options including smoked salmon, cold meats, cheeses, potato pancakes, bacon and fruit.

MEETINGS Off the Lounge are six small meeting spaces.

LEISURE There is a gym on the fifth floor.

VERDICT A superb location, very comfortable rooms and welcoming staff. The hotel wears its cool credentials on its sleeve, but non-millennials should not be put off. *Jenni Reid*

BEST FOR

A stylish hotel in central Boston

DON'T MISS

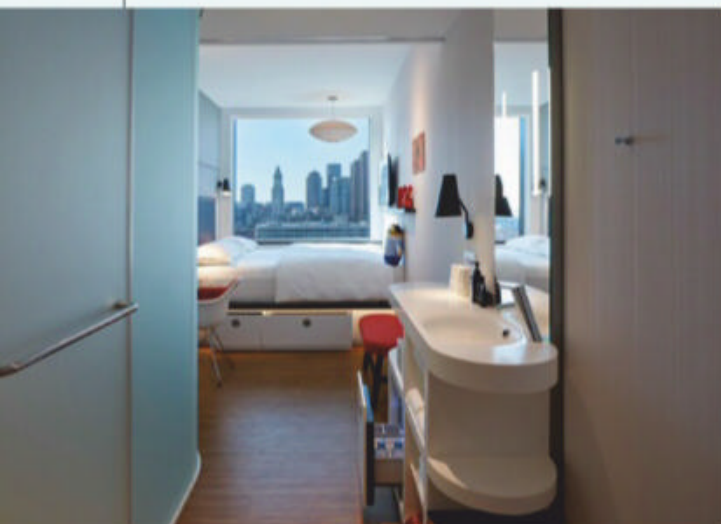
Nabbing a room with a view

PRICE

Internet rates for a flexible midweek stay in April started from US\$275

CONTACT

70 Causeway Street; tel +1 617 861 4360; citizenm.com





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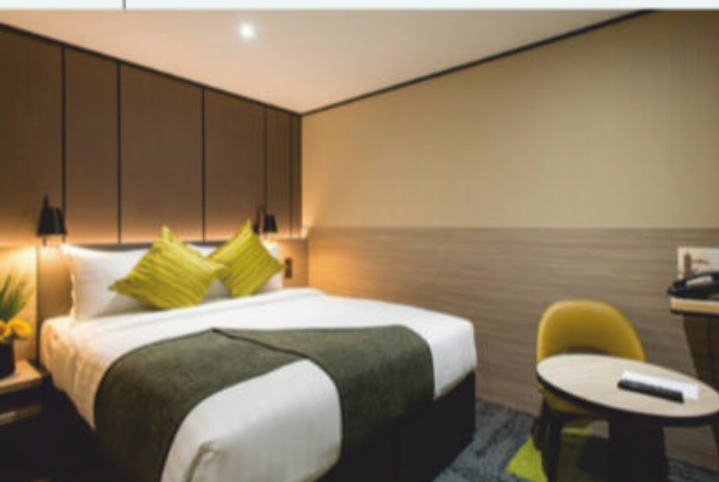


Aerotel London Heathrow



BACKGROUND Aerotel is an airport hotel brand run by Hong Kong-based Plaza Premium Group, best known for its lounges. The first Aerotel debuted at Singapore Changi in 2016 and there are now properties in ten countries, with more in the pipeline. After some delay, the 82-room Heathrow location opened at Terminal 3 in October last year. Bookings are by the hour, with a starting price of £50 for six hours. Nine-hour, 12-hour and overnight packages are available, and the maximum stay is 24 hours.

WHERE IS IT? Landside in the arrivals hall at Terminal 3. If coming by Tube, the walk is a little under ten minutes – follow the signs to Arrivals and keep an eye out for the right turn halfway. In the main hall, look for yellow signs directing you to Aerotel – it's next to the Emirates chauffeur service.



WHAT'S IT LIKE? Once you've spotted the reception over in the corner, it really stands out and looks quite welcoming, especially given the uninspiring setting. Up close it looks even better, with tasteful artwork and light fixtures, a grey and taupe colour scheme and some plants. The member of staff who greeted me at reception was friendly, although didn't really explain the layout of the hotel or the facilities, even after prompting.

Rooms are well-designed and equipped and the location is as convenient as it gets if you are flying out of Terminal 3

ROOMS There are two floors of rooms, which are a mixture of 10 sqm singles, 14 sqm doubles and 21 sqm family rooms. I was pleasantly surprised by my ground-floor single room – sure, it was windowless and the bed took up most of the space, but it was softly lit, everything looked clean and new, and the bathroom was bright and well-stocked with amenities. I only had a small suitcase so there was plenty of room for me for one night. Double rooms have more floor space and a small table to work at, while family rooms have two beds and include a sofa.

There were three hangers for my coat and clothes for the morning, a stand for my suitcase and a couple of shelves for smaller items. The room also had a TV, free and fast wifi, tea and coffee and some milk. There were USB points, plug sockets and light switches by the bed. The bathroom was fitted to a high standard and had a hairdryer,

a toothbrush and paste, plenty of towels, and amenities by Urban Skincare Company. In short, it had pretty much everything I could imagine you'd want for a short stay.

Soundproofing was good and it was easy to control the temperature. The bed was comfortable, with crisp white sheets. I did notice a green light around the fire alarm on the roof that created a faint glow during the night. It didn't bother me, but if you're a sensitive sleeper it might be intrusive.

FOOD AND DRINK I had arrived at 7pm and at about 9pm I ventured to the 24-hour Library Lounge, which also serves as a café. The reasonably priced à la carte menu included soup for £5, vegan Thai green curry or vegetable lasagne for £8, and chicken tikka masala or beef bourguignon for £10. There were also sandwiches, soft and alcoholic drinks and a free coffee machine. Service for hot meals ends at 10pm. A hot and cold breakfast buffet (£10) is served from 6am, although the pastries and hot plates were a little sad. I'd go for the all-day cooked breakfast plate for the same price, or the à la carte veggie breakfast (£8), bircher muesli or porridge (both £4). It would be a good place to work when it's quiet, and a departure screen showed flight updates. A TV was playing silently in one corner.

MEETINGS/LEISURE No facilities.

VERDICT This addition to Heathrow airport's hotel stock was worth the wait. Rooms are comfortable, well-designed and equipped, and there are decent food and drink options. The location is as convenient as it gets if you are flying out of Terminal 3. *Jenni Reid*

BEST FOR

Comfortable rooms and effortless access to Heathrow T3

DON'T MISS

Your flight

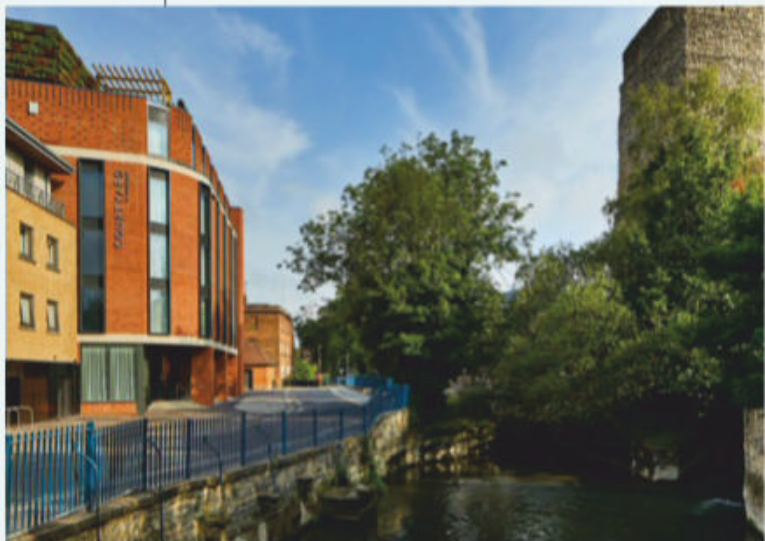
PRICE

Internet rates for an overnight midweek stay in April started from £143 for a double room

CONTACT

Tel +44 (0)20 8745 9805; myaerotel.com

Courtyard by Marriott Oxford City Centre



BACKGROUND The hotel opened in August last year on the site of the old Cooper Callas (a bathroom and kitchen distributor) building. Surprisingly, there are only a few international hotel brands in the city, although IHG's Voco has just opened, and there is a Mercure. Another Courtyard by Marriott is located in Abingdon, a few miles outside Oxford.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The new red-brick building is modern and slightly stark on the inside, although it's softened by a lounge section with comfy seating next to the lobby. There are a couple of computers here with free printing for the likes of boarding passes, plus a small area called the Market that sells food and alcohol, since there isn't 24-hour room service. I dropped off my luggage and went to park my car (there are no spaces at the hotel so staff will direct you to the nearby Westgate or Worcester Street car parks). When I returned, my bags had been taken up to my room, and a Mandarin-speaking member of staff was explaining the area's sights to a couple checking in.

WHERE IS IT? Very central, just across the small Castle Hill Stream from Oxford Castle, and part of a redevelopment of the Paradise Street area. The Oxford Castle Quarter is home to a Malmaison property and some restaurants and pubs. The hotel

is a five-minute walk from Oxford rail station, and buses run regularly to both Heathrow and Gatwick.

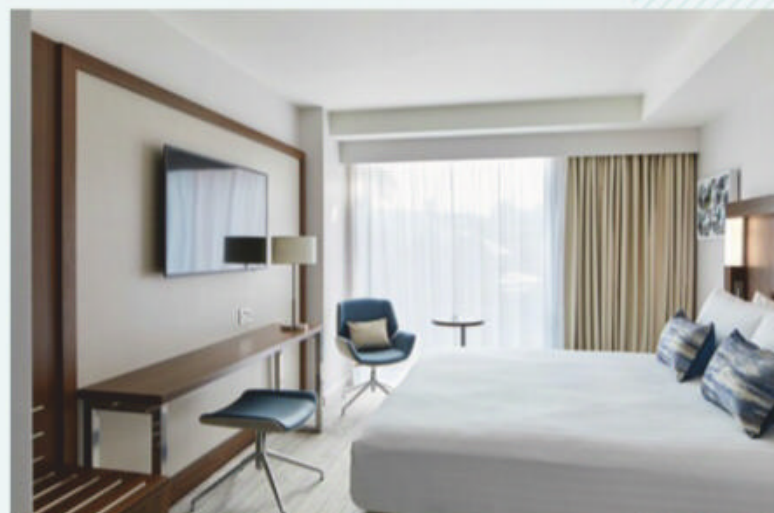
ROOMS There are 140 bedrooms on floors one to five, set around a central courtyard. A further 11 rooms are due to open this month in a connected neighbouring building. Categories range from the 18 sqm King Courtyard room to the 20 sqm Superior. All rooms are very modern with huge 49-inch TVs that you can use to stream your own content, fridges with free bottled water, tea and coffee facilities, ironing boards, safes and desks. They have powerful showers (no baths), although the frosted glass door and partition into the bathroom doesn't offer much privacy.

The Castle-view rooms really do provide a view of the castle – it was dark when I arrived and when I opened the curtains the following morning, the structure was so close I had to look up to see the top of the tower. Others overlook the stream, which is more of a canal, at the back of the central courtyard. All rooms are pretty quiet, partly because of the modern build and

The hotel is a five-minute walk from Oxford rail station and buses run regularly to both Heathrow and Gatwick

soundproofing, and partly because there isn't much traffic or footfall in the area.

FOOD AND DRINK The bar and restaurant, called Kitchen and Bar, is a large area in the centre of the hotel. It has a slight canteen-like feel although is attractively decorated. The friendly staff



worked hard to keep everyone happy during a very busy breakfast period; not easy when there was a shortage of tables at times. In the evening there is a limited but tasty menu – I accepted the recommendation of a vegetarian curry, which was lovely. There is also a rooftop bar with some fabulous views, although there is no service up there so drinks have to be ordered and brought up (or you could buy them from the restaurant and take them up yourself).

MEETINGS There is a small room for 12 people just off the lobby. The Kitchen and Bar is also used as an informal working space by guests. The rooftop bar can host gatherings for 50 guests.

LEISURE There is no gym.

VERDICT A great addition to the Oxford hotel scene and perfectly located so you get peace and quiet only a few minutes' walk from the city centre. *Tom Otley*

BEST FOR

The peaceful yet central location

DON'T MISS

A rooftop drink in summer

PRICE

Internet rates for a flexible midweek stay in April started from £175 for a King room

CONTACT

15 Paradise Street; tel +44 (0)1865 306900; marriott.co.uk

For better or worse, countries around the world are seeing a greater number of visitors thanks to cheaper and easier travel. While tourism is certainly lucrative, it can also have a detrimental impact on both the environment and the lives of locals. Various countries have introduced a “tourist tax” to manage crowds, and improve infrastructure and public services. Here is a list of countries that have implemented a levy to combat over-tourism. Fees are collected through hotel room rates and airline fares. Airbnb has signed agreements with governments in select locations to collect and remit local taxes on behalf of hosts – the taxes will be displayed automatically when you pay for a booking.



EUROPE

AUSTRIA

Salzburg and Vienna levy 3.02 per cent on accommodation costs per night. Children under 15 years old are exempt.

BELGIUM

Varies by region – Brussels, Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp charge €2-€3 per person per night. Under-18s are exempt.

CROATIA

Over-18s are charged 8kn to 10kn (approx £1 to £1.20) per person per night during peak season.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague charges £0.51 per person per night.

FRANCE

The *taxe de séjour* is charged per person per night and ranges from €0.20 to €4 depending on accommodation. Under-18s are exempt. A stay in Paris incurs an additional tax of 25 per cent.

GERMANY

The *kulturförderabgabe* (culture tax) or *bettensteuer* (bed tax) costs up to €5 per person per

night depending on the location and accommodation. Berlin charges 5 per cent of the accommodation cost per night.

GREECE

Athens charges from €0.50 to €4 per room per night depending on the standard of accommodation.

HUNGARY

The tourist tax is €1 to €2 per person per night. In Budapest a 4 per cent nightly tax is added to the price of a room.

ITALY

Varies by city. Rome charges between €4 and €7 and Florence €3 to €5 per person per night. From July this year, Venice will introduce a tax of €3 during the low season and €10 in high season. There are plans to charge day visitors up to €10 per day.

LITHUANIA

In Vilnius tourists are charged €1 per person per night.

MALTA

Under the Eco Contribution Act, a fee of €0.50 per person per night is levied, capped at €5.

MONTENEGRO

Varies by region, but typically costs €1 per person per day.

THE NETHERLANDS

The *toeristenbelasting* (transient occupancy tax) is charged per person per night but varies across the 400 municipalities. As of January, Amsterdam increased its overnight levy to €3 per person per night, in addition to the 7 per cent tax on the room price per night, making it the highest tourist tax in Europe.

PORTUGAL

Lisbon and Porto charge €2 per person (over 13 years old) per night up to a maximum of seven consecutive nights.

ROMANIA

The *taxa hoteliera locala* (local hotel tax) is priced at 1 per cent on nightly accommodation fees.

SLOVAKIA

The tourist tax, or city tax, is up to €1.65 per person per night.

SLOVENIA

Varies by region. Ljubljana charges €3.13 per person per day.

SPAIN

The Catalonia region charges €0.45 to €2.25 per person per day; the Balearic Islands up to €4 per person per day.

SWITZERLAND

Varies by region, but typically costs SFr 2.50 (£1.98) per person per night.

FURTHER AFIELD

BARBADOS

Fees of £1.90-£7.60 are added per room per night according to accommodation standard. A £53 “airline travel and tourism development fee” also applies when leaving the island.

JAPAN

The *sayonara* (farewell) tax is ¥1,000 (£7.06) per person and is paid upon departure through the international air or cruise fare.

MALAYSIA

A flat rate of RM10 (£1.93) per person per night. On leaving the country by air, departure tax ranges from RM8 to RM150 (£1.49-£27.93), and depends on the destination and travel class.

MEXICO

A departure tax of 1,150 pesos (£50) per person when leaving the country by air, often incorporated into airline fares.

NEW ZEALAND

The International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) costs NZ\$35 (£19) and is automatically added to the visitor visa fee.

COMING SOON

BALI – Considering a US\$10 (£7.60) levy on visitors.

TURKEY – From next month tourists will have to pay up to 18 lira (£2.30) per day depending on the hotel star classification.

UK – Edinburgh plans to charge £2 per person per night from some time this year. **BT**

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“All Business Class”

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From the archive 1995

We look back at Easyjet's early days as the carrier considers a carbon-friendly future



WORDS JENNI REID

"CUT-PRICE FLYING US-style has arrived on the Anglo-Scottish routes," we announced in our December 1995 issue. A new airline had launched three-times daily flights from London Luton to Edinburgh and Glasgow using two leased B737-200s, with fares between £29 and £59 one-way, substantially lower than those being offered by British Airways and British Midlands from Heathrow.

A quarter of a century later, it's difficult to imagine the UK aviation landscape without that airline's distinctive orange

livery. Easyjet was founded by Stelios Haji-loannou, a Greek-Cypriot entrepreneur from a ship-owning family, then aged 28. As Alex McWhirter wrote, it was unlike any airline the UK had seen. It was ticketless, save for a sheet of A4 paper listing flight details, and planned to avoid costly CRS systems and ticket agents by selling direct to the public. Bookings were made by phone (the number was splashed across the side of its aircraft) and were nonrefundable.

"Our target market is anyone who pays out of his or her own



FAR LEFT: Easyjet's Jane Boulton, pictured in 2000, starred in *Airline*, ITV's reality show about the carrier

pocket, and this would include the small businessperson," Haji-loannou said.

Nothing was to be given for free on board. When we reported on Easyjet's 20th anniversary in 2015, we wondered if BA and Iberia joining the European Low Fares Airline Association (now Airlines for Europe) would lead them to adopt more of an Easyjet-style service in the future. Both introduced "buy on board" on short-haul flights the following year.

Easyjet now has a fleet of 318 Airbus A320 family aircraft. The carrier flies to 18 domestic airports and 124 international destinations from the UK, chiefly across mainland Europe but also including Morocco, Israel and Iceland. Passenger numbers for the year ending September 2019 had risen by 8.6 per cent year-on-year to 96.1 million, with a profit before tax of £427 million.

For low-cost and regional carriers, life is not always so easy. In 1995 we also reported that no-frills Air Belfast was undercutting competitor fares between Stansted and Belfast International by up to 50 per cent. It had folded by the millennium. More recently, Iceland's Wow Air, Denmark's Primera Air, Cypriot carrier Cobalt Air, and the UK's Flybmi and Monarch have collapsed.

Easyjet faces stiff competition from the likes of Ryanair and Wizz Air, as well as factors outside its control – economic uncertainty, the impact of Brexit and oil prices. It is now future-gazing, investing in a start-up developing electric aircraft and promising to carbon-offset all of its flights. Although some members of the "Easy family", such as Easymusic, Easycruise and Easyinternetcafé, have fallen away, it seems that in aviation, at least, the future's orange. **BT**

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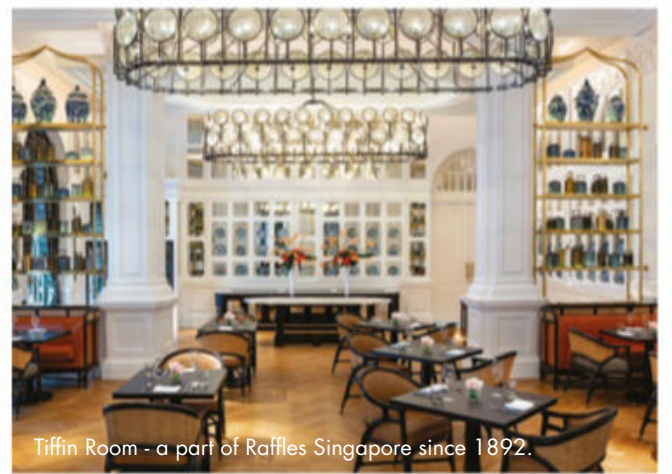
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Raffles signature Afternoon Tea at the Grand Lobby



Tiffin Room - a part of Raffles Singapore since 1892.



La Dame de Pic, Raffles Singapore

WORLD CLASS DINING CONCEPTS

Raffles Singapore has a long history of serving up some of the city's finest culinary delights, including being the first hotel in Singapore to hire French chefs in 1899.

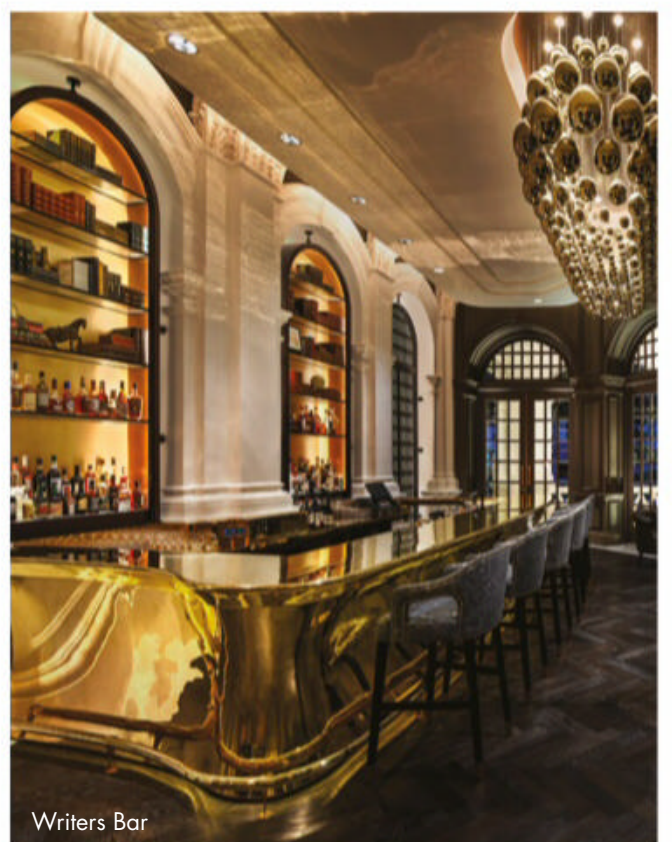


BBR by Alain Ducasse

Fast-forward almost 120 years, and the Grand Dame is once again at the forefront of a culinary renaissance.

The hotel's latest dining experiences combine its much-loved culinary traditions with contemporary dining concepts by renowned celebrity chefs. These include Alain Ducasse's first Mediterranean sharing and grill concept, BBR by Alain Ducasse, and MasterChef China's Jereme Leung with the hotel's first Chinese restaurant in more than a decade, yì by Jereme Leung. Meanwhile, Anne-Sophie Pic, one of the world's top female chefs and winner of three Michelin stars has made her debut in Asia with La Dame de Pic, Raffles Singapore.

Signature dining experiences that are synonymous with the hotel have also returned. These include the world-famous Singapore Sling at Long Bar, exceptional North Indian cuisine at Tiffin Room and the classic Raffles Afternoon Tea at the hotel's legendary Grand Lobby. The historic Long Bar has been fully restored and has reopened at its original location in the Raffles Arcade. In keeping with tradition, guests will be able to enjoy peanuts from a gunny sack and throw their shells on the floor as part of the Singapore Sling experience.



Writers Bar

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