

# GOSTELOW

## REPORT



DAVID BOWD  
SALT HOTELS

GENGHIS HADI  
PASSIONATE HOTEL LOVER

AMRUDA NAIR  
FOUNDING MD ARAIYA

REST OF THE BUSINESS

Gostelow Report by Almont Global.

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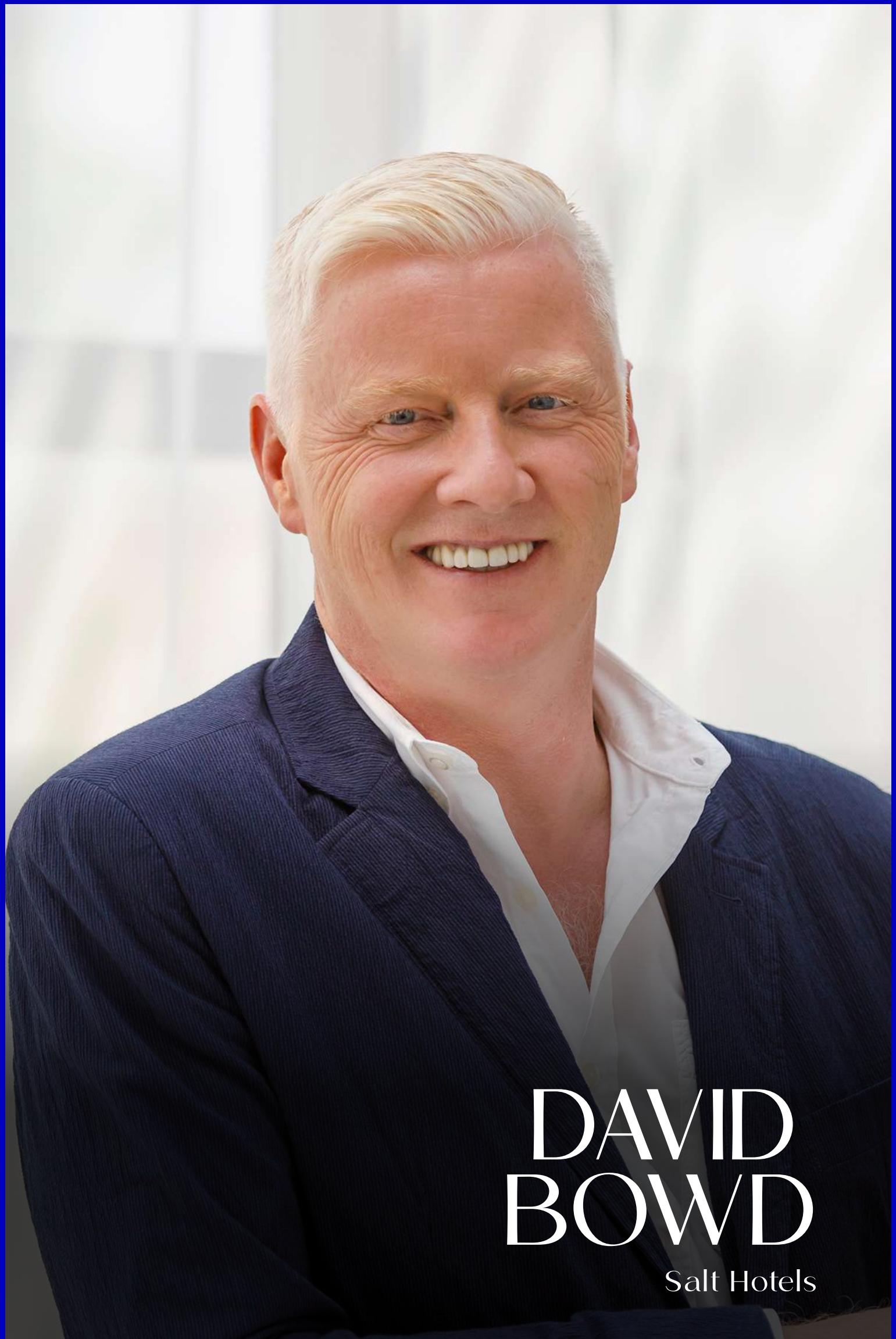


# SPOTLIGHT

Everyone talks about it but few truly understand luxury – and luxury anyway is in short supply, s s s says, if he could find more luxury, he would buy more luxury hotels).

Watch others move into hospitality investment. Take global gallerists Hauser & Wirth, whose first investment-with-beds was Braemar Fife Arms\*. After completely uplifting that, and working as Artfarm, they have built up a portfolio that includes Los Angeles Manuela, Somerset Roth Bar and Grill, London Audley Public House and Mount St Restaurant and Rooms – and now, led by ceo Ewan Venters, they have bought the arts-centric Groucho Club, which has 5,000 global members. (\*The influence of this pub-hotel is wide – its tartan interiors are said by designer Beth Sykes to have inspired her next Jigsaw fashion collection.)

Right now, events participants excitedly plan schedules further and further ahead but those events organisers sometimes seem reluctant to release details until the last moment. The worry is that participants will be diverted to disruptor events.



# DAVID BOWD

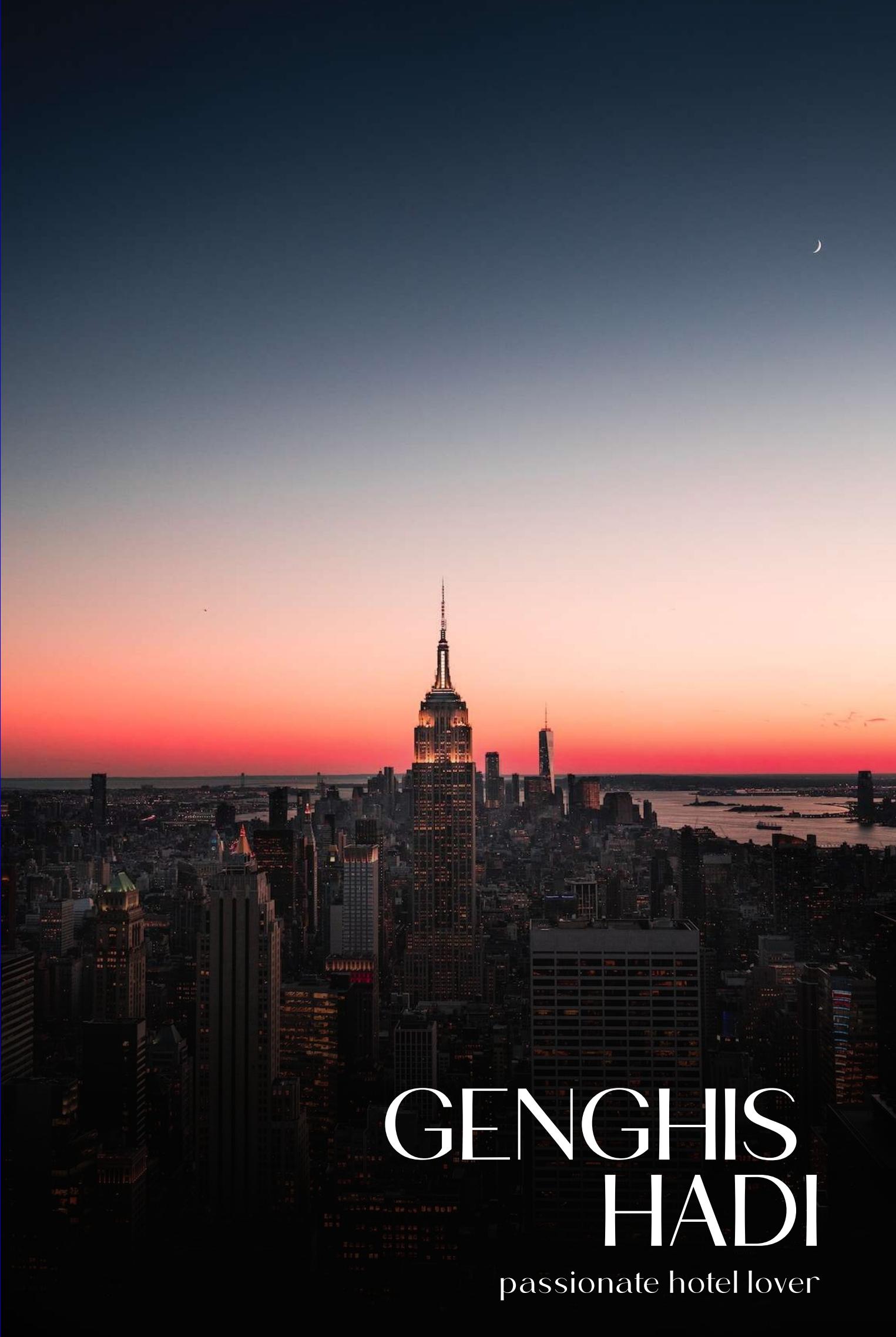
Salt Hotels

# DAVID BOWD

The ceo of this grown-up lifestyle brand has had an interesting career progression, from bellman at 15 up through brand-safe names, Meliá, Rank and then Thistle, and on to lifestyle with, in order, Morgans, Ian Schrager (as md) and, as coo, André Balazs. For the last 10 years he has been building his own brand, named for the Staffordshire UK village where he was born. Now, as boss, it is incredibly challenging and he loves it, though he cannot blame anyone else; the buck stops with him.

As a youngster he wanted to be a chef. Now he is chief, of 8 independent hotels sharing a central DNA, design-forward and really approachable. They are aimed at local communities. Under 2 hours' drive north of Manhattan, Hudson Valley NY Hutton Brickyards, for instance, is a 35-ha space dotted with remains, mediaeval style, of ruins of a brickyard started by William Hutton and a friend in 1865: there are now 31 modern cabins and a brand-new 12-bedroom mansion opened last week. The market, under is corporate retreats and weddings. Named for Aster chilensis, a native California ground-cover shrub, Hollywood's The Aster is actually a 1,000-members private club that comes with a 35-room hotel, opened 1st August (it awaits a gm).

David Bowd gushes with enthusiasm when asked about Salt's differentiation. Guests and staff feel this is a small company centred about a family, namely Bowd and his husband Kevin O'Shea. Guests are also retained by the warmth of the staff • Here is the key, says the ceo. Hire the attitude and train the skill. In 2016 he was told he would not find great staff for a property he was opening. He established the first pop-up Salt School, and is now doing 3-4 a year. Publicised via social media and word of mouth, the only requirement is to answer 'why do you want to join hospitality?' Then they come, up to 150 at a time, ages 16 through to 60-plus, free, for 8 consecutive Saturdays, 9-3. About 90% are finally hired, and some of the first graduates have already bounded up the management ladder • David Bowd rushes on. Minneapolis opens 2023 and oh, he would so love Edinburgh, one of his favourite cities.



# GENGHIS HADI

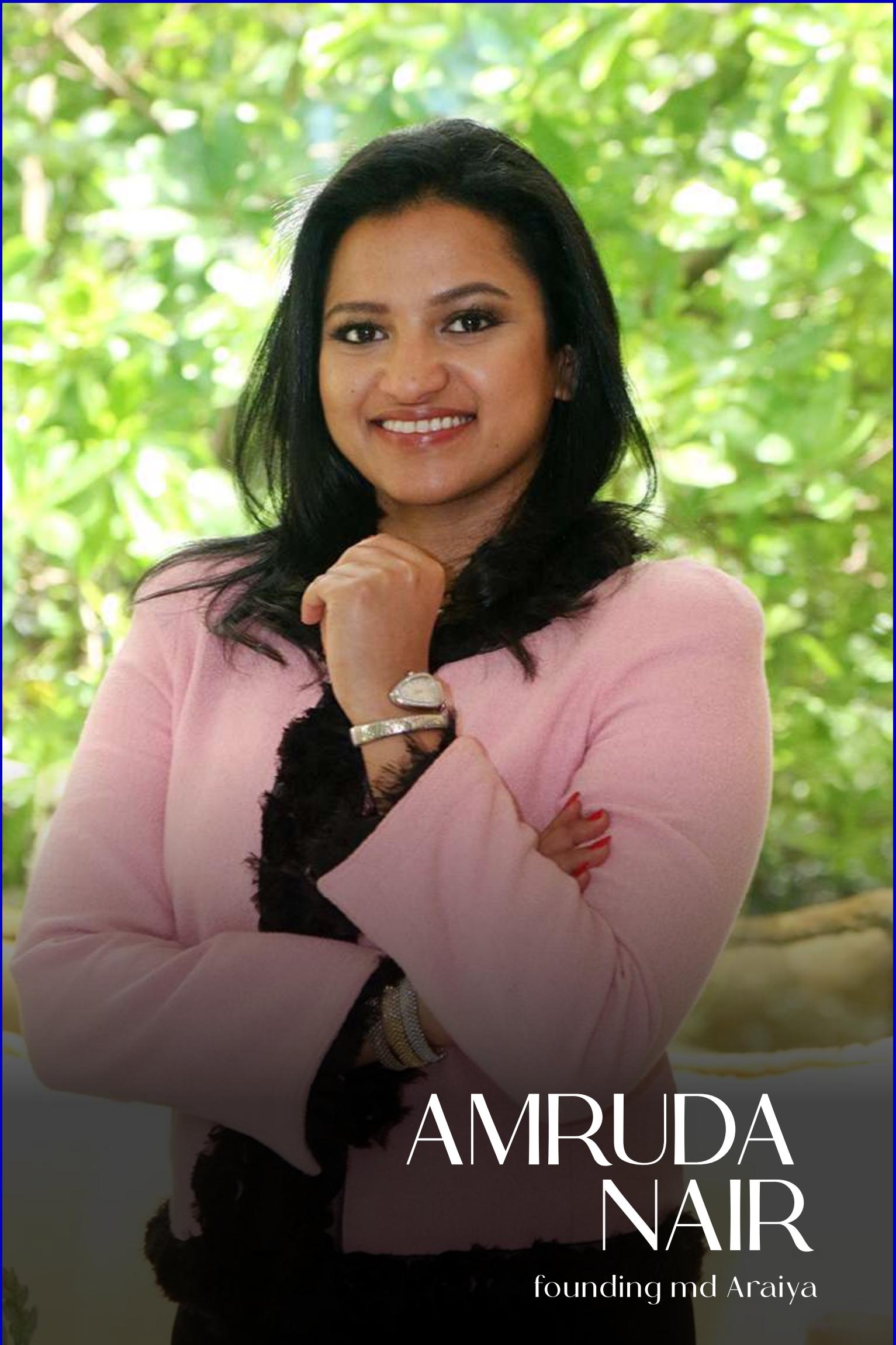
passionate hotel lover

# GENGHIS HADI

The managing principal of New York-based Nahla Capital pauses when asked if he would do another hotel and says he thinks he would, but he is cautious. As a key investor he would need to know that a myriad of concerns had, without exception, been satisfactorily addressed. For the immediate future, however, he is sticking to residences, in such positive economic destinations as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Austin TX. In 2020 he was part of a team that completed development of the Kelly Wearstler-designed 244-room Austin Proper, with 99 residences: in 2021 that project was sold on, smiles all round.

Nahla purchased the former Friars club in Beverly Hills in 2014. The site forms a triangle with The Peninsula and Waldorf Astoria, and now, working with long-time partner GPI Companies, it will become the 4- floor Rosewood Residences Beverly Hills. The 17 units, from 300sq m up, have interiors by the building's architect Thomas Juul-Hansen. Having done intensive due diligence on the location, Hadi will do the same on prospective owners, who he expects to be predominantly down-sizers who want to stay in the zip code, as well as affluent kids getting into the property market, and a realistic modicum of foreigners.

Still to be decided is what to do with the 1,200sq m ground floor – a signature restaurant, certainly, but that would not have worked in New York. And perhaps a private club, for Residence owners and well-heeled members? What is certain is that working with Rosewood will be a tremendous draw. This is a brand, says Hadi, that does not have to scream. It is timeless and it always has a local feel. It also masters service in the luxury hospitality arena that demands nuanced expertise. He feels, by the way, he has studied top-level hotels all his life. Brought up in UAE by his Pakistani parents, he had many Lebanese schoolfriends and spent time in Beirut in its heyday. Last week he was checking out Milan's big names. Once he cracks the service secret, watch him add hotels...



# AMRUDA NAIR

founding md Araiya

# AMRUDA NAIR

The highly ambitious granddaughter of the late Capt CP Krishnan Nair turned to ‘eternal blossom’, inspiring constant evolution, when she named Araiya Hotels & Resorts. She may only have one property open, in the Himalayas, but she has already taken her brand into Global Hotel Alliance GHA.

She originally wanted to be a journalist but after Cornell she joined JLLH Singapore as regional analyst. Next came helping a Qatari open a 611-room Makkah hotel. In 2018 she decided to do her own thing, and 18 months later she had rebranded and taken over a 31-room Norwood Heights property in Himachal Pradesh. At the same time, she was working with Mumbai-based brand consultants to produce Araiya Anthology, a clear-cut business plan that would show owners and developers the advantages of working with her. Araiya’s compact and technology-oriented costs are 40% lower speed. Araiya can also tap into long-time specialists in the considerable Nair network. than the biggies, she explains at lightning

Despite her own pace, she believes in taking time in choosing destinations. When she has settled on a location, everything then follows. Her template includes masses of guest experiences, reconnecting them with nature. Go trout-fishing in Himachal Pradesh and eat your catch at dinner. Araiya hotel food uses minimum food miles and its service is intentionally old fashioned, reminding diners how their own grandparents might have dined. By contrast, she also, as a result of contacts, has presence in Malta: food at Valetta’s Naan Bar, which she owns and runs, is her personal take on modern-India. Yes, she has big plans to expand her restaurant concept beyond Malta and throughout Southern Europe.

Amruda Nair is also conceptualising a 2nd hotel brand, Soul – urban and fun lifestyle. Araiya hotels have their own water-bottling facilities as part of their business plan and she would like general water-bottling plants, which would kickstart the Araiya name worldwide.

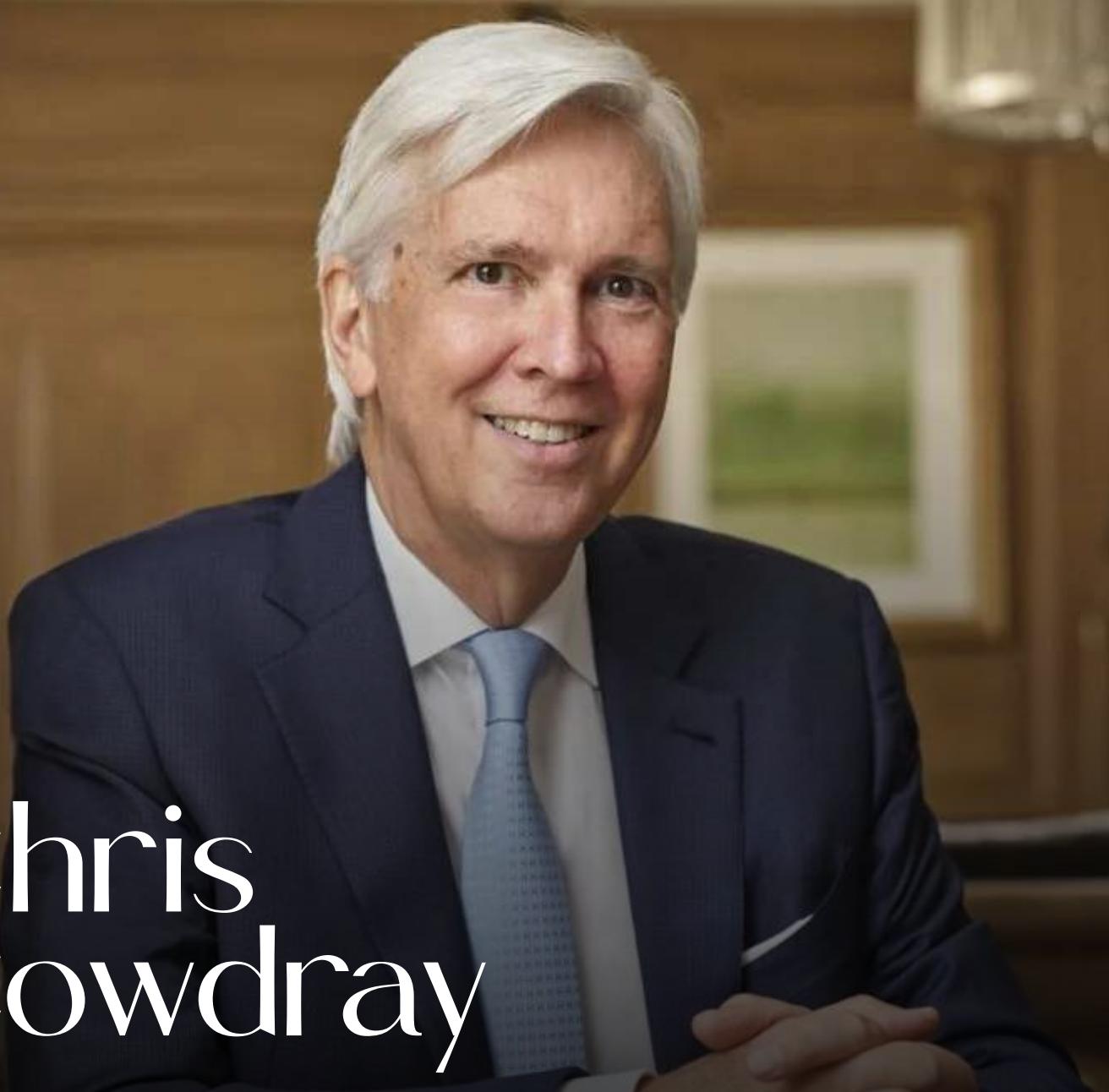


REST OF  
THE  
BUSINESS  
PEOPLE



# Puneet Chhatwal

is smiling. IHCL has delivered responsible profitable growth with best Q1 performance in the company's history. The company has reported a consolidated EBITDA of INR 405 crores, and a record Q1 consolidated EBITDA Margin of 31.3% and standalone EBITDA Margin of 36.5%. Now, with the figures right he can concentrate on other things. Taj is tweaking its Chambers private members clubs – will one be added in New York, at The Pierre? It is also going to upgrade its hotel guests' club lounges. San Francisco will replace its Taj Campton Place restaurant by a Bombay Brasserie (the hotel has a deal currently with nearby Neiman Marcus to send guests there for a tea-shop). And, helped by Taljinder Singh, Chhatwal is determined Taj Magical Moments experiences will be considerably elevated.

A professional portrait of Chris Cowdray, a middle-aged man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and blue patterned tie. He is smiling and has his hands clasped in front of him.

# Chris Cowdray

ceo Dorchester Collection, realised a year ago that the talent situation needed a radical approach. He and coo François Delahaye put their thinking caps on. What is called 'employee contribution' is the result. With the exception of gms, all employees, from the day they start work, share equally in 5% that is added to customers' bills. Employees get their share at the end of the following month (September 2022's employee contribution will be paid 31t October). Dorchester Collection pays VAT on the 5%. Employee contribution was initiated in US and UK on 1st January 2022, in France on 1st May and, delayed by difference tax rates for rooms and other spend, in Italy 1st September. Delahaye says the effect is dramatic: Paris Le Meurice quickly signed on 25 additional culinary team members.

A portrait photograph of Vlad Doronin, a middle-aged man with short, dark hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. He is standing outdoors, leaning against a large, textured brown wall, with a blurred green hedge visible in the background.

# Vlad Doronin

has secured \$900m investment from Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund PIF and Cain International, led by ceo Jonathan Goldstein (Cain is a partner, with Beny Alagem, in what will now be Los Angeles 1 Beverly Hills, branded residences, a private club and hotel, all Aman-managed). Separately, Doronin settled a lawsuit with an Aspen CO newspaper after an article was initially filed due to ongoing factual errors and defamatory statements – he has land in Aspen. New York Aman has much more character, and empathy, than some sceptics report. It is, indeed, as promised, a typical Gathy design (think Maldives One&Only Reethi Rah) transferred to the all-taupes double-height ceiling New York's 1921- vintage Crown Building: 83 keys, residences, Italian and Japanese restaurants, year-round outdoor terraces, significant pool-spa-fitness and a club, sign-on \$200,000. Aman takes retail a whole step further with its own range of leather goods, designed inhouse – one example is an Italy-made 45x39cm tote, Aman-signature exterior, water-repellent interior, calfskin trim and handles, \$2,047 in hotels or sold online.



# Hermann Elger

ceo Forbes Travel Guide FTG, expands global training support. A Riyadh office is being established to train local trainers – see Marbella, below. The Cognac Centre for Excellence, led by director Francisco Almeida, has already, in the 6 months of operation, established a reputation in culinary, mixology and general service enhancement. The immersive experience inspires and elevates by showcasing how excellence drives business success, says Elger. FTG is owned by Atlanta-based healthcare entrepreneur Jeff Arnold. He also owns The Cognac Centre for Excellence, which is in one wing of the 16-room Virtuoso- member Le Logis (minimum stay 2 nights, with nightly themed dinners).



# Nick Falcone

a Miami-based entrepreneur with Polish, Russian and Sicilian roots, once wanted to own, rather than play for, the Miami Dolphins. After graduating in 2010 from Florida State in economics, with minors in business and sociology, however, he and his brothers David and Matthew set up NDM Hospitality Services. Now their multi-faceted operation includes rental-home resorts, ops and food franchises – and the Rentyl ('rental') platform, devised for NDM's 58 Rentyl Resorts and such others as Nassau Atlantis, total 30,000 rooms. The platform can help and advise developers, who may sell at least some of the 'units' (homes, villas, even standard rooms, all of which can be put into the rental pool): NDM can also manage. It owns 2 all-inclusive resorts, and a Spire loyalty programme that hopes to launch a club is scheduled by year-end. NDM has partnerships with key companies, Margaritaville, Marriott Homes & Villas, and Walt Disney Travel Company – and Jack Nicklaus who, it is believed, may want his name on a resort.

A scenic view of the Arenal Volcano in Costa Rica. The volcano's dark, rugged peak rises prominently against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, lush tropical vegetation, including palm trees and various flowers, is visible. A paved path leads towards the base of the volcano. The overall scene is a blend of natural beauty and human-made infrastructure.

# Leo Ghitis

Colombia-born Florida-based investor, co-founded Nayara Resorts with architect Angelo Zaragovia, heads properties predominantly in Costa Rica and Easter Island – latest news is that adult-only Nayara Springs Tented Camp, 2.5hrs from San Jose, adds 8 more Luxury Frontiers tents to give a total of 37 ‘rooms’ (there is also a new eastern-Med restaurant with an Israeli chef, Yanir Elnasi). Ghitis wants the world to know, however, about his successful 7-year rewilding, with the help of Brisbane-based KPMG digital agrifood specialist Dr Matthew Flynn, of a 20-ha rainforest in Costa Rica’s Arenal National Park.



# Alison Gilmore

portfolio director ILTM, has a knack for attracting fascinating speakers for events' opening Forums. Keynote at Singapore Ritz-Carlton Millenia Monday 5th September, 6pm - to launch ILTM Asia Pacific, 5-8 September - will be Su-Yen Wong, a one-time Singaporean music student, who says that now, 3 decades on, she is finally comfortable being described as a multi-hyphenate who straddles multiple worlds. ILTM Asia Pacific's theme is The Future of Work x Luxury Travel. What does luxury travel have to do with the new world of work? The forum will also reveal new research for the region on Decoding the Luxury Travel Consumer's Mindset.



# Pankaj Khimji

managing partner Muscat Chedi, is tasked by HH Sheikh Haitham bin Tariq to head incoming investment for Oman's Ministry of Commerce & Industry. Top of his list are food production, mining, and tourism, so expect, at top diplomatic level, even more support for interested luxury-level development. (Khimji is also first-ever Middle Eastern board member of cricket's governing global body, ICC, but it is difficult to see how the 2 roles overlap.)

A portrait of Philippe Zuber, a man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a grey suit and blue shirt. He is looking slightly to the left.

# Philippe Zuber

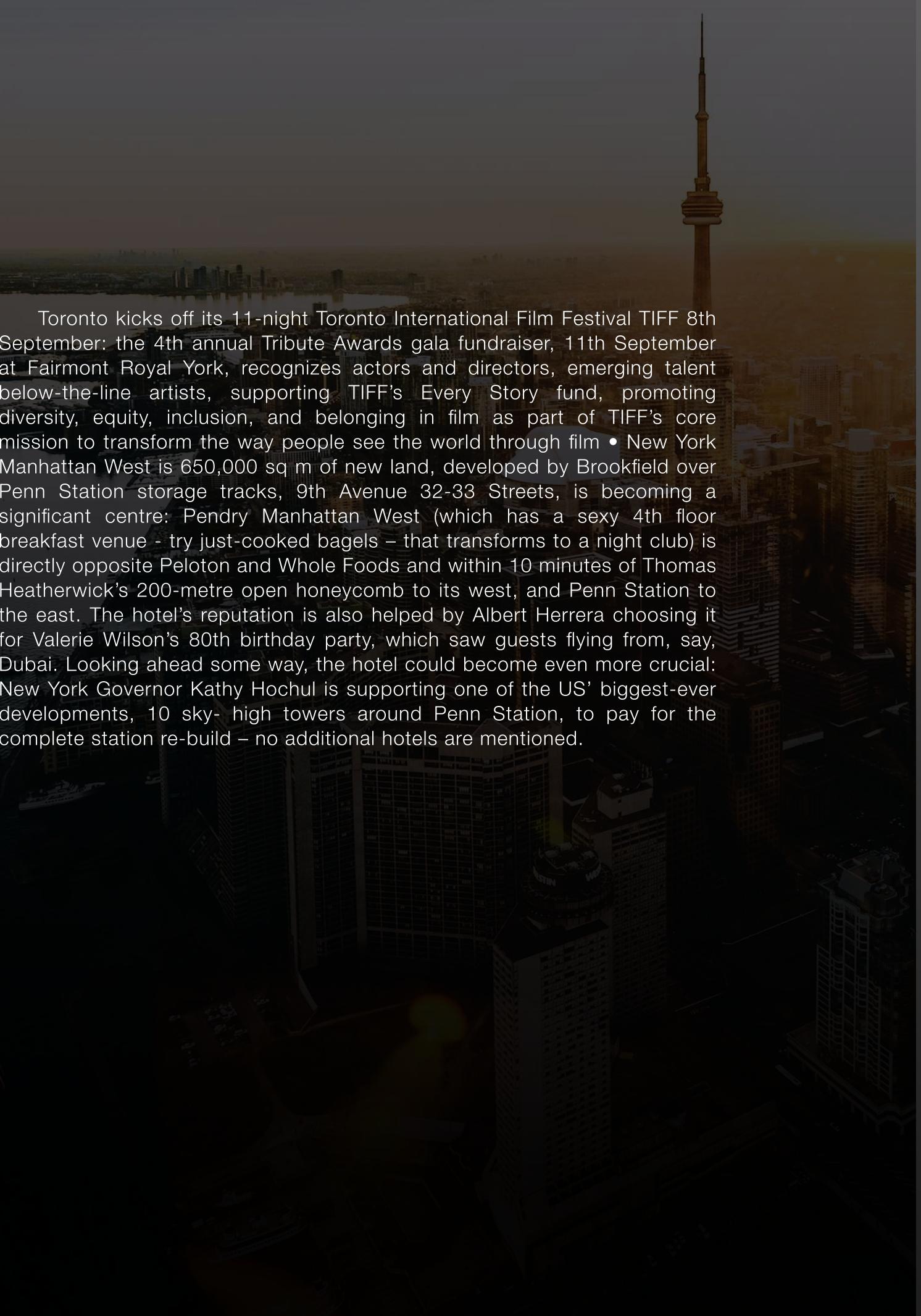
ceo Kerzner, is strengthening his Dubai-based empire. Cco is Brett Armitage and vp ops is Mattheos Georgiou (was 'Ak', now 'Matt'). Jan Tibaldi oversees the opening of Dubai's urban One&Only One Za'Abeel. Zuber personally conceived Kerzner's forthcoming SIRO wellness brand. Standing for Strength, Inclusive, Reflection, Originality, SIRO is a partnership with AC Milan, and the club is expected to close shortly on a €1.2bn sale by current owner, Elliott Management. Buyers are RedBird private equity, and baseball giants the New York Yankees, mainly owned by the Steinbrenner family\* with other minor investors who include LeBron James and rapper Drake. Will this thus catapult SIRO into the US? (\*Yankees chairman Hal Steinbrenner, 52 and personally worth \$4bn, runs 3 Florida hotels owned by the multi-faceted family)

# REST OF THE BUSINESS

places

# Toronto



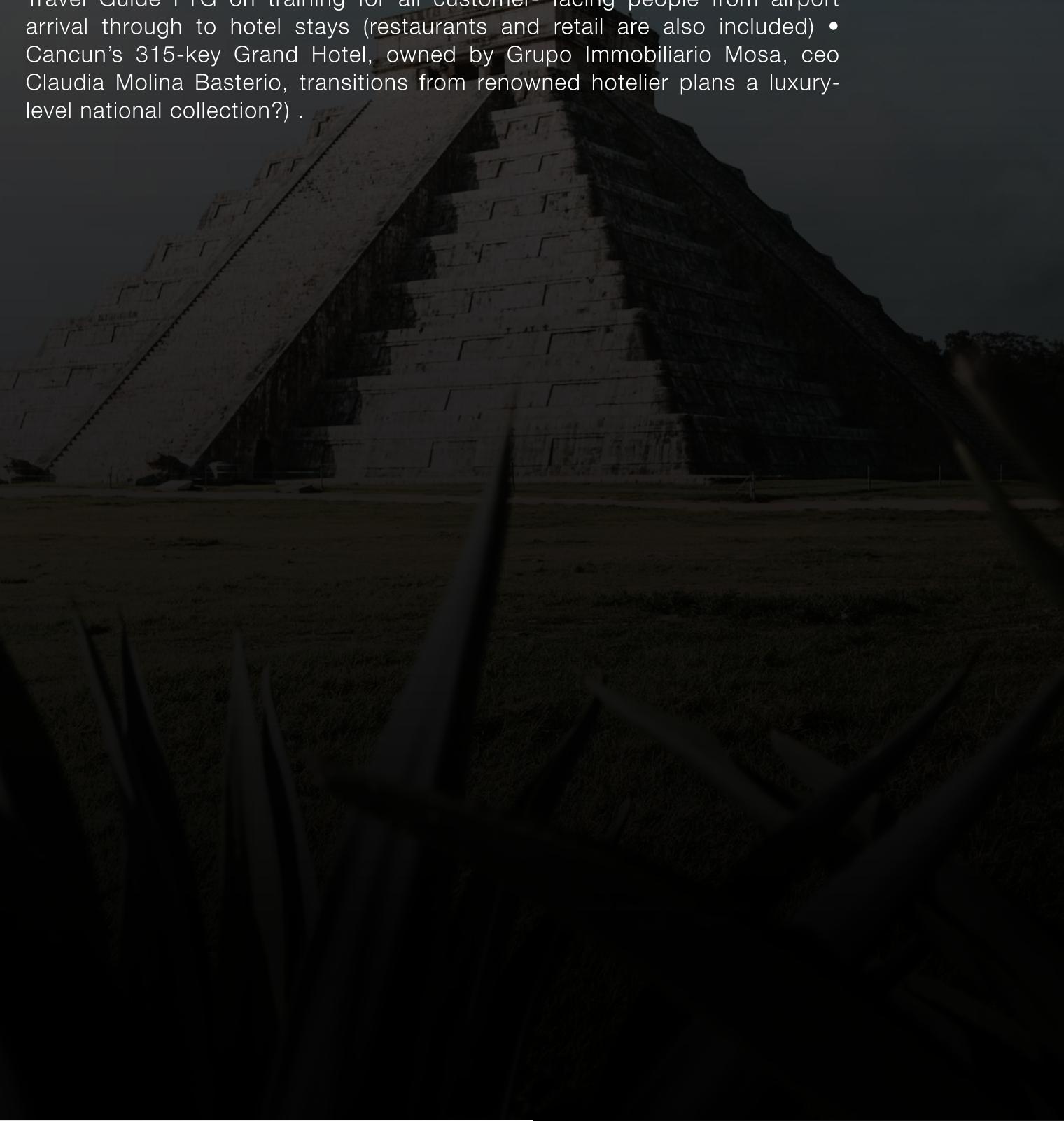


Toronto kicks off its 11-night Toronto International Film Festival TIFF 8th September: the 4th annual Tribute Awards gala fundraiser, 11th September at Fairmont Royal York, recognizes actors and directors, emerging talent below-the-line artists, supporting TIFF's Every Story fund, promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in film as part of TIFF's core mission to transform the way people see the world through film • New York Manhattan West is 650,000 sq m of new land, developed by Brookfield over Penn Station storage tracks, 9th Avenue 32-33 Streets, is becoming a significant centre: Pendry Manhattan West (which has a sexy 4th floor breakfast venue - try just-cooked bagels – that transforms to a night club) is directly opposite Peloton and Whole Foods and within 10 minutes of Thomas Heatherwick's 200-metre open honeycomb to its west, and Penn Station to the east. The hotel's reputation is also helped by Albert Herrera choosing it for Valerie Wilson's 80th birthday party, which saw guests flying from, say, Dubai. Looking ahead some way, the hotel could become even more crucial: New York Governor Kathy Hochul is supporting one of the US' biggest-ever developments, 10 sky- high towers around Penn Station, to pay for the complete station re-build – no additional hotels are mentioned.

# Mexico

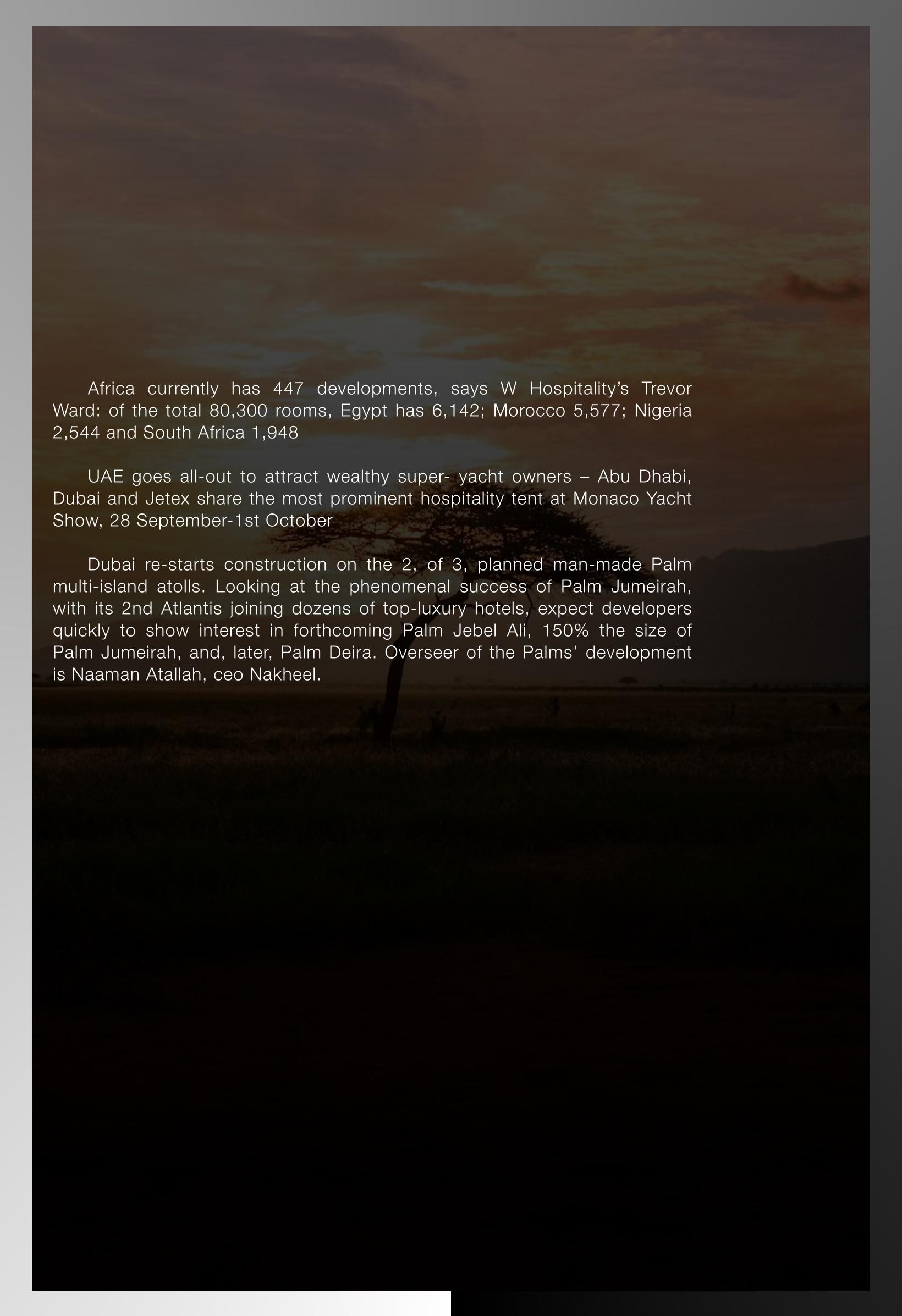


Mexico is really hot. Los Cabos, the destination, is working with Forbes Travel Guide FTG on training for all customer-facing people from airport arrival through to hotel stays (restaurants and retail are also included) • Cancun's 315-key Grand Hotel, owned by Grupo Inmobiliario Mosa, ceo Claudia Molina Basterio, transitions from renowned hotelier plans a luxury-level national collection?) .



# Africa





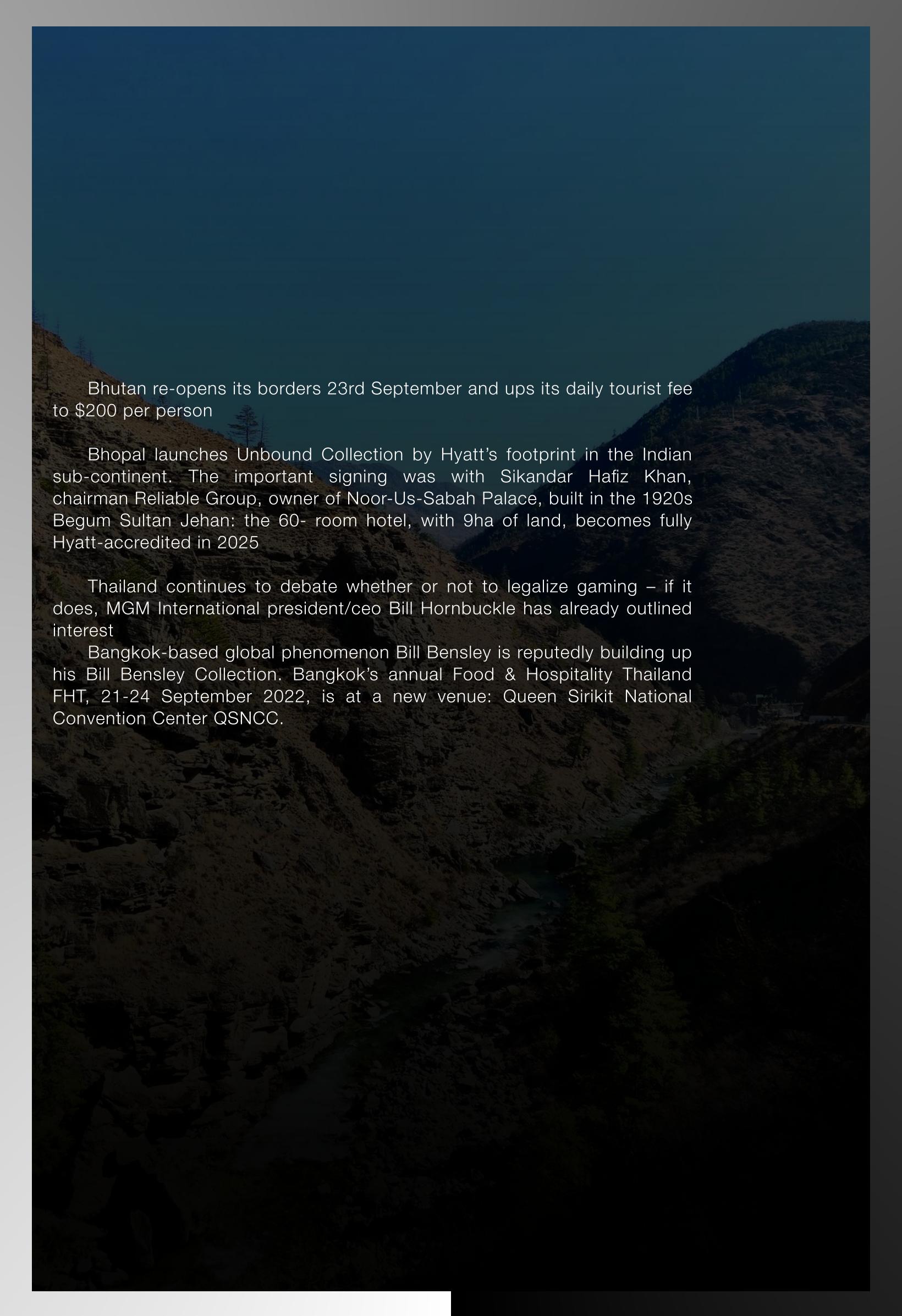
Africa currently has 447 developments, says W Hospitality's Trevor Ward: of the total 80,300 rooms, Egypt has 6,142; Morocco 5,577; Nigeria 2,544 and South Africa 1,948

UAE goes all-out to attract wealthy super-yacht owners – Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Jetex share the most prominent hospitality tent at Monaco Yacht Show, 28 September-1st October

Dubai re-starts construction on the 2, of 3, planned man-made Palm multi-island atolls. Looking at the phenomenal success of Palm Jumeirah, with its 2nd Atlantis joining dozens of top-luxury hotels, expect developers quickly to show interest in forthcoming Palm Jebel Ali, 150% the size of Palm Jumeirah, and, later, Palm Deira. Overseer of the Palms' development is Naaman Atallah, ceo Nakheel.

# Bhutan





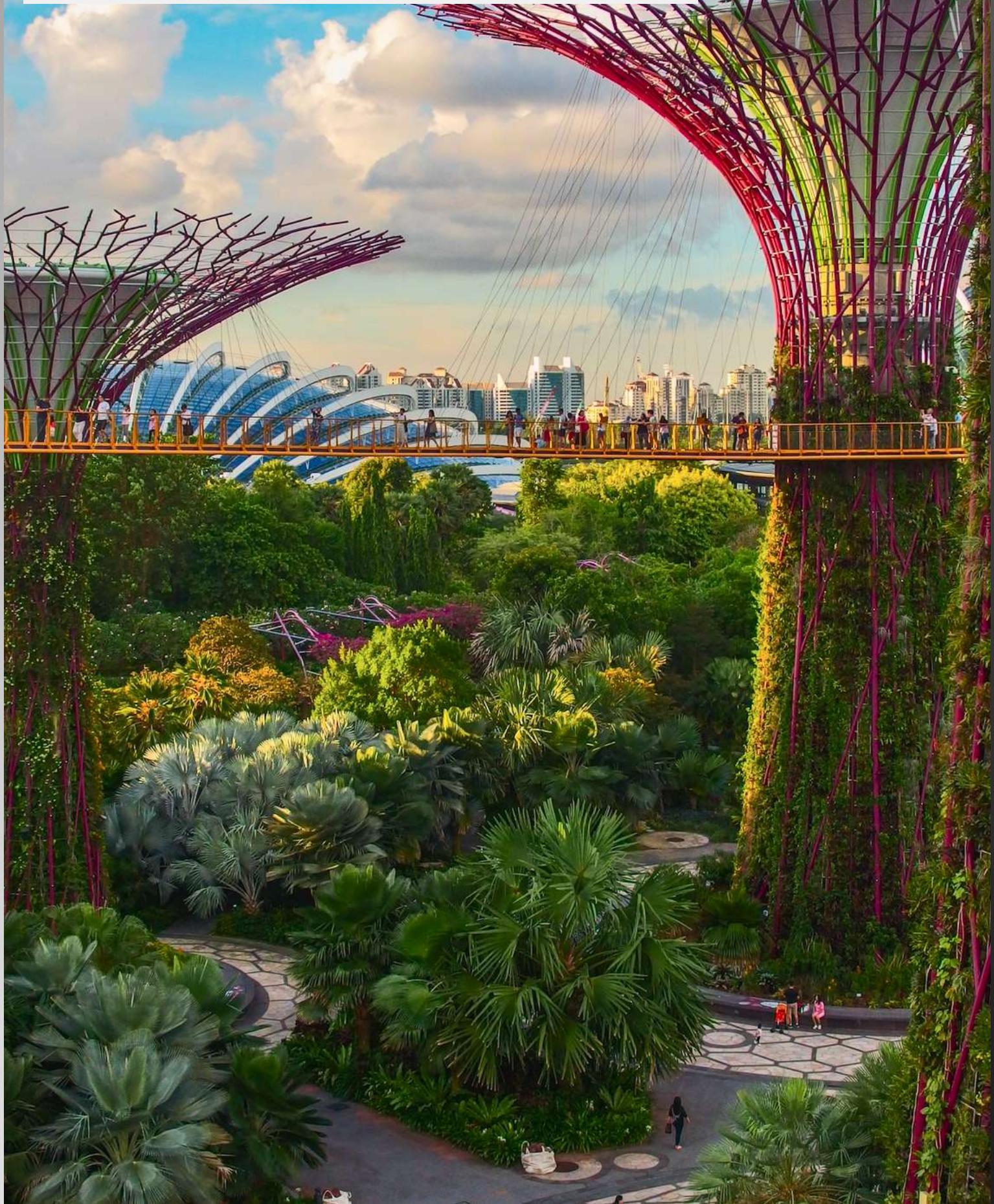
Bhutan re-opens its borders 23rd September and ups its daily tourist fee to \$200 per person

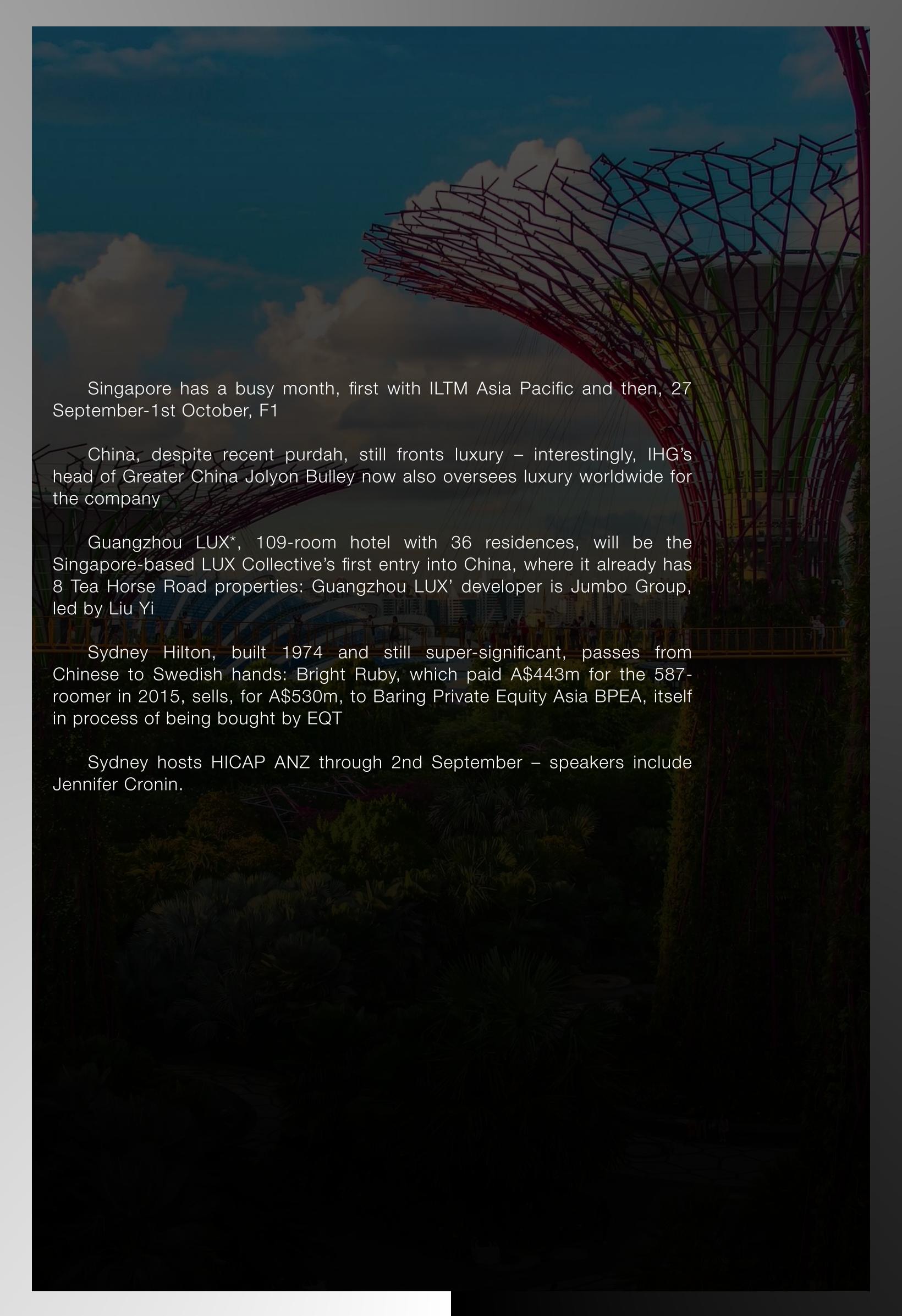
Bhopal launches Unbound Collection by Hyatt's footprint in the Indian sub-continent. The important signing was with Sikandar Hafiz Khan, chairman Reliable Group, owner of Noor-Us-Sabah Palace, built in the 1920s Begum Sultan Jehan: the 60- room hotel, with 9ha of land, becomes fully Hyatt-accredited in 2025

Thailand continues to debate whether or not to legalize gaming – if it does, MGM International president/ceo Bill Hornbuckle has already outlined interest

Bangkok-based global phenomenon Bill Bensley is reputedly building up his Bill Bensley Collection. Bangkok's annual Food & Hospitality Thailand FHT, 21-24 September 2022, is at a new venue: Queen Sirikit National Convention Center QSNCC.

# Singapore





Singapore has a busy month, first with ILTM Asia Pacific and then, 27 September-1st October, F1

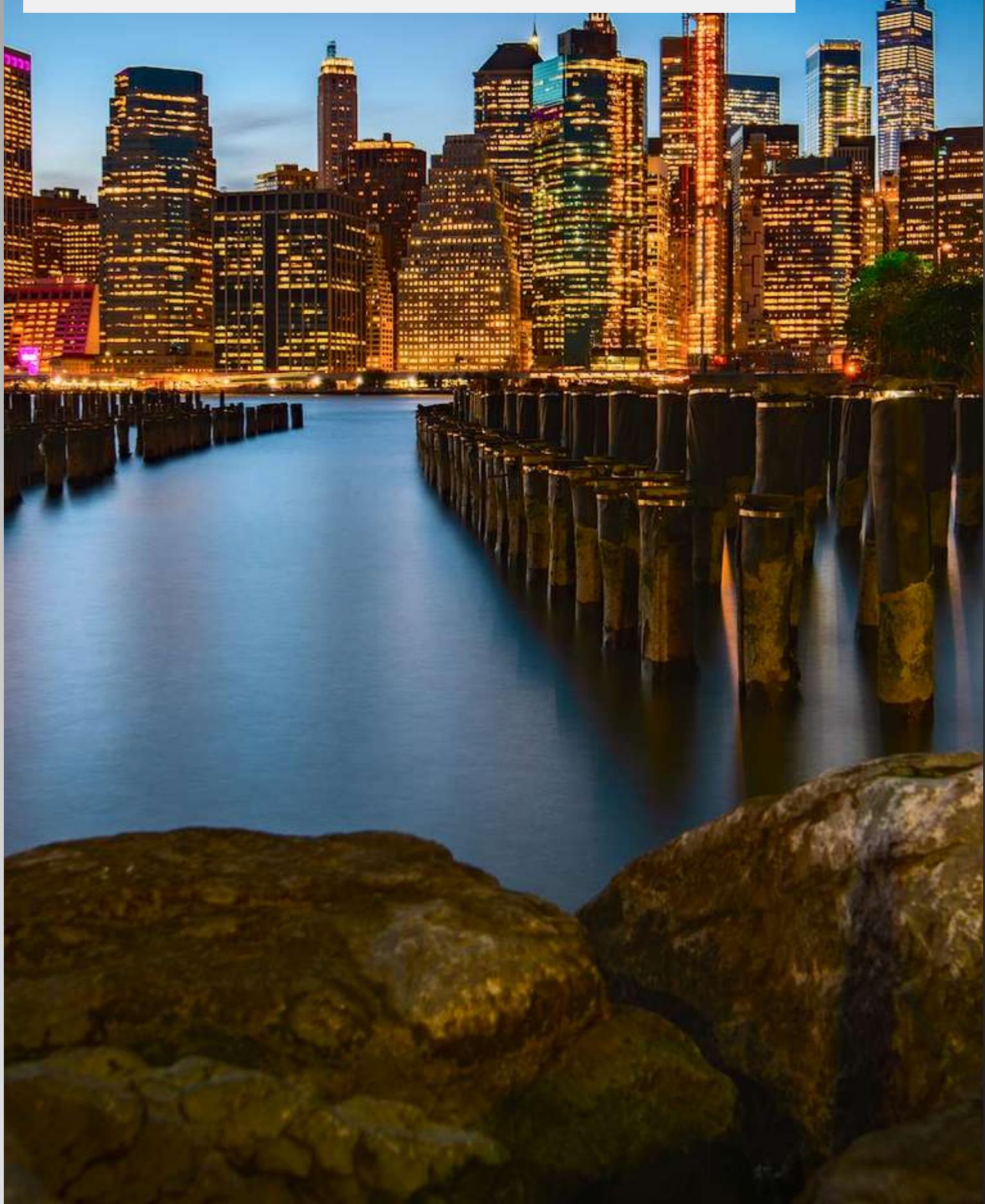
China, despite recent purdah, still fronts luxury – interestingly, IHG's head of Greater China Jolyon Bulley now also oversees luxury worldwide for the company

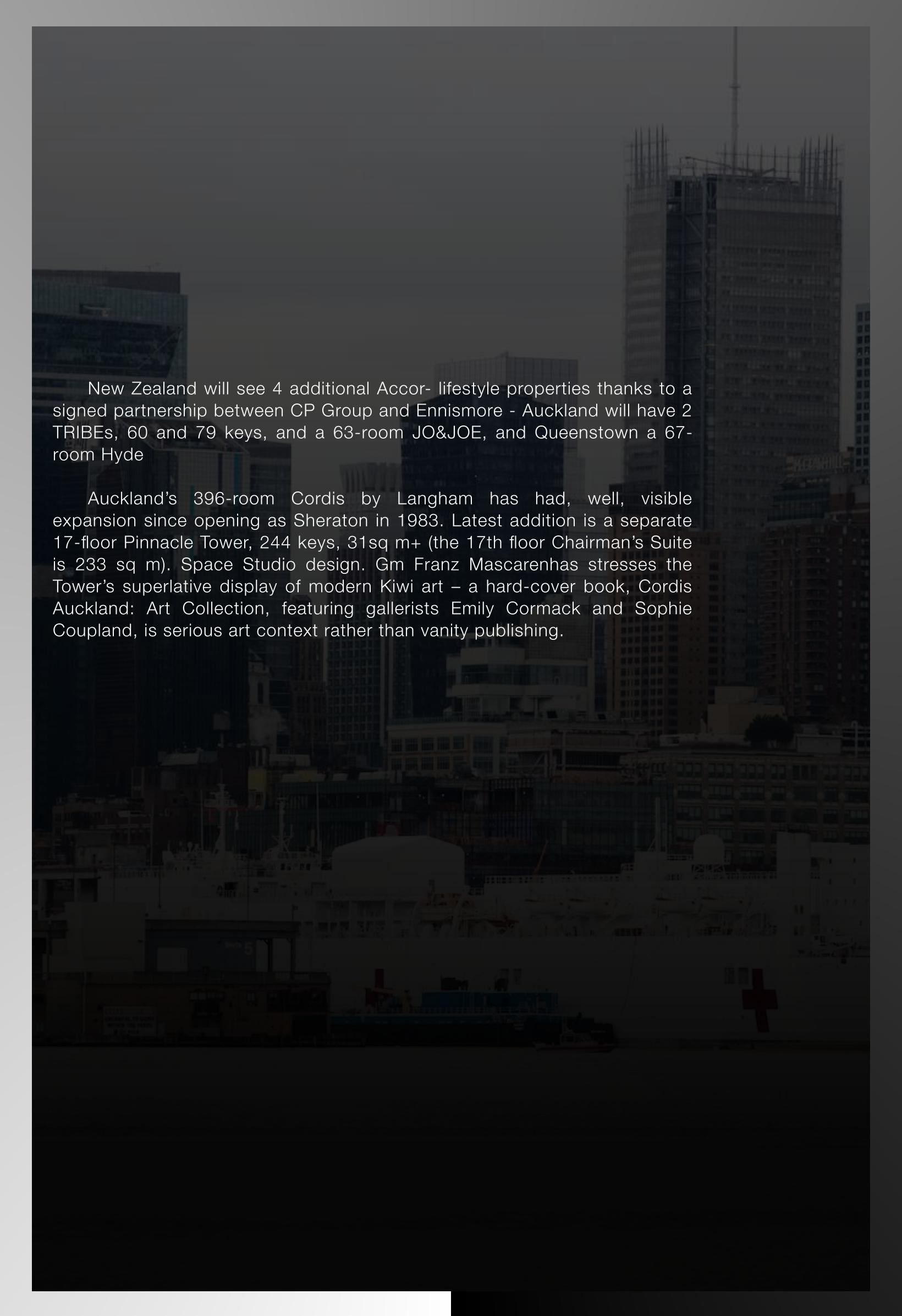
Guangzhou LUX\*, 109-room hotel with 36 residences, will be the Singapore-based LUX Collective's first entry into China, where it already has 8 Tea Horse Road properties: Guangzhou LUX' developer is Jumbo Group, led by Liu Yi

Sydney Hilton, built 1974 and still super-significant, passes from Chinese to Swedish hands: Bright Ruby, which paid A\$443m for the 587-roomer in 2015, sells, for A\$530m, to Baring Private Equity Asia BPEA, itself in process of being bought by EQT

Sydney hosts HICAP ANZ through 2nd September – speakers include Jennifer Cronin.

# New Zealand





New Zealand will see 4 additional Accor- lifestyle properties thanks to a signed partnership between CP Group and Ennismore - Auckland will have 2 TRIBEs, 60 and 79 keys, and a 63-room JO&JOE, and Queenstown a 67-room Hyde

Auckland's 396-room Cordis by Langham has had, well, visible expansion since opening as Sheraton in 1983. Latest addition is a separate 17-floor Pinnacle Tower, 244 keys, 31sq m+ (the 17th floor Chairman's Suite is 233 sq m). Space Studio design. Gm Franz Mascarenhas stresses the Tower's superlative display of modern Kiwi art – a hard-cover book, Cordis Auckland: Art Collection, featuring gallerists Emily Cormack and Sophie Coupland, is serious art context rather than vanity publishing.

# OTHER OPERATIONS

# Staying there

## Marketing, communications and experiences:

Sense of arrival - Malta Xara Palace Hotel, originally a 17th century palace, a bell automatically jingles on the 80-year old front door, and, inside, the historic reception desk was bought from an old church by owner Justin Zammit Tabona. Hotels do seem to acquire even more personality when owners share treasures in their properties; Amsterdam De L'Europe has replaced its lobby's former Rembrandt copies by original Dutch Old Masters belonging to the Heineken family, and in Dallas The Joule, Preferred, is owned by eponymous oil tycoon Tim Headington who is conveniently also a passionate art collector. Night turndown at Edinburgh Balmoral, Rocco Forte, includes herb-infused Scottish gin, the label signed by gm Richard Cook. 90% of hotels' cyber-security hacks are caused by humans – does talent know never, ever, to print from guests' memory-sticks? Expect hotels in one Swiss canton to announce a mammoth cyber- security partnership shortly.

London Langham's multinational Artesian bar team, who have a professionally-equipped lab for scientific concoctions, lay on a jolly good gin tasting – irst, a G&T for drinking – pour the tonic down the inside of the glass to avoid too much contact with the ice, then grind pepper over – and next a tutored tasting of 3 London styles, Beefeater, Haymans Old Tom and, the most expensive, Hendricks, plus Monkey 37. Istanbul Six Senses Kocataş Mansions promotes its wedding facilities, including a Bridal Turkish Hammam experience with friends and family, local delicacies and detox flavours, Turkish music and dancing. Ben Trodd svp sales/marketing Four Seasons, explained at the Peter Bates-Jack Ezon Thought Leadership Roundtable – see P.S, below - that Four Seasons is working on an integrated B2B marketing and sales programme that includes metrics for travel advisors. It is also focusing on new customer acquisition and engagement. Tellingly, he also stressed how increasingly important it is to be generous once consumers are in-house. Network with the industry - Dubai Kempinski The Palm hosts drinks, HSMAI and friends, 3rd Thursday every month, 6.30-8 pm. Gstaad Palace gains impressive marketing from a mailing to the 62,000 A Small World ASW members from ASW ceo Jan Lescher – see next Report. ASW's mailing included 'Gstaad will look beautiful with the first snow' and 'The cold mountain air will cure your hangover in no time!'

# Wellness

And

ESG

Watch automatic massage beds and chairs become more prevalent in hotel spas – they certainly save labour. At Paris Ritz, Ritz Spa re-opened 22nd August. Led by hotel brand director Natalie Bader Messian, the area has been softened, with rooms' ceilings decorated with hundreds of porcelain flowers. Biologique Récherché treatments are named for Ritz ladies, say Iris, a Korean relaxation for author Colette, and Rose, scrub and massage, for Ingrid Bergmann. Australian David Mallett does hair, Serge Lutens is make-up and Manucurist is for nails. The wall-set boutique is also designed for sometime-popups.

Michael Newcombe is vp wellness Four Seasons.

Shanghai Fairmont Peace Hotel's new Vitality Zero Carbon afternoon Tea, in the historic Cathay Room uses all local ingredients, and comes with a recyclable tote bag and a digital art token NFT created in partnership with a local environmental protection organization – and, by completing the China Certified Emission Reduction of 14 tons with the Jiangxi Fenglin Forest Carbon Sink Project, has offset greenhouse gas emissions generated by 1,000 afternoon teas. Amsterdam Conservatorium works with the community in many ways – it has a superb arcade of the kind of boutiques the immediate-vicinity residents actually want, and it encourages members of its Workshop fitness centre to bring in their own personal trainers.

# Talent

London Mandrake started, from day one, to allow employees to wear own-clothes, anything black, boosted with individual allowances, a shared dressing-up box of accessories to be borrowed on shift, and a company-wide allowance for tattoos from the in-hotel artist. Work for Munich-based Ruby Leisure Hotels, however, and anyone gets, after 6 months, a tattoo or ear-piercing up to €500, and a travel allowance even if they cycle. Ex-Design Hotels, Schorghuber and Boston Consulting, Ruby founding ceo Michael Struck has also instituted a 35-hour week, and employee profit-sharing.

Paris Bulgari md Sylvain Ercoli assembled a dream-team of 250 prior to the 76-key hotel's January 2021 opening: he saw all candidates, asked them individually what days and hours they would like to work - his role now, he says, is to play with the squad and help everyone feel beautiful (one woman looked temporarily downtrodden so he sent her to the spa, the entire crew had a raise after 8 months, and this year's summer party on the Seine was declared 'tres bien')

London Mandarin Oriental Mayfair needs 250 team members (50 keys) before its scheduled April 2023 opening – and the after-Brexit is not helping: gm Susanne Hatje is relying on the power of the brand, and the newness, to initiate interest, after which come questions on pay and benefits, flexibility, work-life balance (say work 4 days and 4 days off) and food and locker rooms).

One challenge throughout Europe, says a top Paris-based consultant, is that many line-staff titles are degrading and must be elevated, with more pay, and there needs to be increased emphasis on cross-training.

Even Mainland China has challenges, as those in other provinces need Hu Kou permits to travel to, say, Beijing or Shanghai.

# Global food drink entertainment



# Los Angeles

Los Angeles Beverly Hills, Dorchester Collection, has re-opened its Bar Nineteen, now tweaked by gm John Scanlon with 54 black and white photos by Andy Warhol, who always carried a camera – the Polo Lounge and Patio remain as packed-out as ever, with, every week, an average of 650 choosing, mostly at lunch, the chicken-cheese-everything blended salad named for 1940s polo captain Neil McCarthy. Chicago Peninsula continues the tradition that classic can go off-piste, with style – Yabu Pushelberg-designed Z Bar, 5th floor terrace, inside, with cloud-shaped ceiling windows, and year-round out, with firepits, instead of a portrait of honouree Maria Zec there is a mural of one of her pugs (the signature Z Cocktail is Koval dry gin, Japanese cucumber, mint, and Pernod Ricard's Italicus Rosolio Di Bergamotto, created by Giuseppe Gallo in 2015 and produced by Torino Distillati – its aquamarine bottle represents the Amalfi Coast).

# New York

Marriott Marquis is partnering with Danny Meyer's Union Square Hospitality Group and Union Square Events on catering, and on 3 updated restaurants, including the brand-standard M Club, like a chic New York City-style living room. Washington DC Willard InterCon has an all- LVMH paired Champagne evening 14th September – a highlight is butter-poached Maine lobster with La Grande Dame Charleston SC Charleston Place's club lounge is a real networking venue, with skilled mixologist manager. Miami W South Beach The Restaurant 's 200-seatRWSB is run by the localKNR Hospitality Group – the menu is could-be expected, say Wagyu carpaccio, and Spaghetti cacio e pepe, but it also has some surprises, say Aztec medicine (aged Rum, with pineapple, cilantro, lime). São Paulo Rosewood's 6 outlets include Starck-designed Blaise, wood-cabin feel, Matisse-like menus strong on Brazilian meat and Brazilian, white, orange and rosé wines, though there is French (Perrier Jouët) – place settings are left-handed, as tribute to Swiss-born poet Frédéric Sauser, 1887-1961, known as Blaise Cendrars, who, fighting with the French Foreign Legion in WWI, lost his right arm in Champagne in 2015.

# London

London Bulgari, which now has a patrolling gelati cart, adds gelato afternoon tea – scones come with necessary strawberry jam and choice of clotted cream or clotted cream ice- cream. London Claridge's, under the leadership of gm Paul Jackson and Maybourne's co-ceos Gianluca Muzzi and Marc Socker, shakes up its f&b ops: Estonian Dimitri Magi, ex-Noma, is culinary director; executive chef Richard Galli comes from London The Goring. London Nobu Portman Square's Joao Alegria, being promoted by the FT and Laurent-Perrier Rosé, suggests beef short rib and barbecue sauce. Ascot Coworth Park, Dorchester Collection opens Woven by Adam Smith, Martin Hulbert design.

# Brussels

Steigenberger's one-star La Canne en Ville at The Wiltcher's is run by Kevin Lejeune, Gault & Millau's Young Chef of 2022

Paris Bulgari's beautifully-landscaped outside terrace and cleverly lit garden offers set, or à la carte Niko Romito menus – say 2-serving sharing antipasti followed by best-selling milk-fed veal milanese, sous-vide and plump rather than the usual flattened (md Sylvain Ercoli would pair with Régine Sumeire's Rosé Ch Barbeyrolles 2021 Pétales de Rose, and; Dme Trapet Père et Fils Gevrey-Chambertin 2019.

# Tbilisi

The House Hotel Old Tbilisi, managed by Kerten Hospitality, benefits from Kerten's f&b coordinator, Jaume Puigdengolas, from Barcelona – the hotel has a 72-seat Blue Fox, named for a Georgian cartoon, and the menu includes Khachapuri filled bread, like Russian pirozhki, and mini Pizzettas utilising Georgia's tomatoes. Dubai appears to becoming addicted by something called a croffle, a bastardised croissant that got into bed with a waffle. Already at least 3 hotels serve these, in Risen breakfast-brunch venues – New English is croffle filled with eggs and bacon, French Connection holds berries, crème anglaise: Risen conceptor is Aussie Mark Patten who used to cook real food at Hong Kong InterCon Dubai Caesars Palace opens Dirty Duck, with disrupter Alvin Leung featuring X-Treme Chinese cuisine. Dubai SLS opens a 74th floor Smoke & Mirrors speakeasy, already in another Ennismore, Doha Mondrian

# Tokyo

Tokyo EDITION adds English chef Tom Aikens.

# WHO ELSE

Ian Wilson heads hospitality – the equivalent of ceo – for NEOM's The Line

Jan Tibaldi, as cluster gm, opens Kerzner's Dubai One Za'abeel – One&Only, SIRO, Residences, 11 Restaurants

Ignacio Rodriguez opens Penn- Florida Companies' 158-room Boca Raton Mandarin Oriental, with 100 residences

Tamer Farouk opens 348-room Bahrain Hilton

Carmen Sasse opens 133-room Aalen MAXX

Simon Dewar opens 11-lodge Bethel NY The Chatwal Lodge

Adam Zilber opens Yabu Pushelberg-designed 196-room Los Cabos Park Hyatt, with 36 residences, a Zuma restaurant and the 8th of its golf holes under water at high tide

Tarun Seth opens 442-room Delhi Grand Hyatt Gurgaon, announced early 2013

Zek Xiao opens 276- room Nanchong Hyatt Place Gaoping

Christian Wildhaben, on 24th September, re- opens 1906-vintage Luzern Palace as 136- room Mandarin Oriental

Senih Geray reflags 263-room Washington DC Trump International Old Post Office as Waldorf Astoria.

# OTHER MD/GMS

David Wilkie Los Angeles Four Seasons Beverly Hills

Andreas Porias Maldives One&Only Reethi Rah

Walid Nabil Cairo Steigenberger Pyramids

Mehdi Othmani Hurghada Steigenberger Al Dau Beach Hotel

Sandra Waterman Bangkok Rosewood

Nusrat Mirza Palm Desert CA JW Marriott Desert Springs

Christian Langlade Turks & Caicos Pine Cay

Franck Chantoiseau Turks & Caicos Rock House, Grace Bay

Randy Romero Chicago Sable at Navy Pier, Curio

Tyler Hutton Chicago Aloft Mag Mile

Pierre Kranzle Monterrey Hilton

Masanori Hosoya Ubud Mandape Ritz-Carlton Reserve

Jack Breisacher San Juan Fairmont El San Juan

Jan Henningsen Berlin Hotel Berlin

Karina Ansos Berlin Adlon Kempinski –

Michael Sorgenfrey takes a break.

# P.S.

The essence of events: Peter Bates and Jack Ezon hosted one of their all-too-rare round tables 2nd August. Keynote speaker Chandler Mount, ceo Washington DC-based Affluent Consumer Research, shared findings on UHNWIs in the USA. As of the beginning of August, 79% of respondents were feeling exuberant, and 52% felt better than 3 months before. 70% thought they would be even better off a year ahead. 52% of luxury travellers increased travel budgets in 2022 over 2019. At luxury level there is more commitment than a year ago to using a travel advisor - and they tend to opt for one specific advisor rather than shopping. But, it must be pointed out, lack of confidence in travel is holding some back when it comes to international trips. Sustainability and local community support are important factors of decision making – and the main reason HNWIs are disloyal to any brand is if they feel underappreciated.

Accor's annual Thought Leadership meeting this year saw invited advisors and team members from many lands gather 13th August at the prolonged-opening Los Angeles Fairmont Century Plaza. Markus Keller, chief sales and distribution officer, said the ongoing Accor re-organisation will, when complete, show that the company is determined to be a serious player in luxury and lifestyle, with significant already-announced appoints to head Raffles and Orient-Express, Stephen Alden; Fairmont, Mark Willis; Sofitel, MGallery and Emblems, Maud Bailly; and Ennismore lifestyle (which now also includes Hoxton), Gaurav Bashan and Sharan Pasricha.

Accor is powered by emotion, and luxury-lifestyle already constitutes 33% of total business of the 40-plus brands. Consumers are scrambling to travel, Keller said. They want to feel truly cared for. Hotels, as well as offering the changes today's new-travellers want, must remember to help their guests rediscover or discover their true self. In this world of emotion, everything should be changed one heartbeat at a time. One essential evolution is progression on the ESG front and Accor is still evaluating which certification should be followed as of 2023.

After luxury brand guru Daniel Langer's presentation – see next Report, Stephen Alden took the stage. He has the best job in the world, he admitted. Both Raffles and Orient-Express inspire dreams, and these must be used to inspire the next generation of hoteliers. Raffles, a luxury brand with hospitality at its core, fuses illustrious heritage with contemporary hotel-craft, in rhythm with guests' contemporary lives. Helped by Interbrand, Raffles stresses today's creativity, community responsibility. Arrive as a guest, leave as a friend, return as family. With a pipeline of 13, Raffles will double in size by 2025 (Alden takes only about 10% of proposed locations). Expect biggest growth in the Middle East. Resorts will up from current-4 to 13 by 2025. Watch substantial expansion of residences – Bali has recently been announced. Alden is creating a Raffles Society to court culture aficionados: he anticipates commissioning art and landscape design, making ballrooms multi-use, re-imagining butlers, on wellness enhancements, Doha is about to announce a significant partnership. Orient-Express is still in the future. The Bartola-owned Orient Express La Dolce Vita train in Italy will now be joined by a France train, hopefully running in time for the Paris Olympics (Accor-financed, the carriages were found, thanks to Google Earth, in Bellarusse). Orient-Express hotels opening in Rome and Venice may well be joined by other Italy properties – and Stephen Alden finished by slipping in those magical destinations, Aswan and Luxor.

The Accor event was exactly when lasting legend John Williams, 78, passed away, in Vancouver. It was he who, with the help first of Bill Fatt and then Chris Cahill, formed the 'Fairmont feel', so vital to owners, staff and consumers. He would have smiled proudly, but somewhat wryly, at what Century Plaza is now, with Fairmont. Live every day was his signature message.

# P.S.

And then we come to Virtuoso Travel Week VTW, Las Vegas 13-19 August 2022. It was like a gigantic aurora borealis – awe-inspiring, not to be missed, and life is different thereafter. Over 4,000 were, for several days, completely wrapped up in getting to appointments in time (another 600 tuned in, virtually, for some events). Since it took just under 20 minutes to hike between furthest extremities of the 3 resorts, Aria, Vdara and anchor-property Bellagio, this was good for calories but tough for decent impromptu conversations.

As always, there were dedicated sessions, on sustainability et al, prior to the opening forum. As is his wont, chairman-ceo Matthew Upchurch inspired the group, amply seated in Bellagio's Grand Ballroom. Travel is human connection, he said. Virtuoso's 20,000 advisors in 50 countries generate an estimated \$27.5 bn in travel sales every year. Today, 78% are feeling optimistic, with more family groups, sometimes including 5 generations. There is also noticeable growth in travellers moving from do-it-yourself planning-booking to investing in advisors. In the USA, future sales are 47% above 2019 levels and 2023 looks record-breakingly good (in the rest of the world high net-worth travel is not expected to reach 2019 levels until beginning of 2024). He enthused about Virtuoso's partner, Virgin Galactic, and he and svp marketing Helen McCabe- Young shared such initiatives as a definitely new-look publication, Virtuoso The Magazine. There is a partnership with Hospitable Me on the inclusion front. Create-your-own Wanderlist is evolving to a luxury travel social connector, all ages – publish Wanderlists publicly, share with a wider audience. There were then 2 memorable and highly professional presentations, first by Fahd Hamidaddin, ceo Saudi Tourism Authority, followed by sartorialist polar explorer and expedition leader Alison Levine, an experienced motivator who worked up to a climax of conquering Everest- at her second time.

Then followed 4 days of 8-minute, and 10-minute, speed dating, sellers, hotels and the like, seated, and buyers, travel advisors, buzzing from table to table as fast as their little legs would carry them. Monday saw the important Under One Sky lunch, sponsored by United. Virtuoso's sustainability initiatives, led by Jessica Hall Upchurch, already include carbon-offsetting staff travel and in 2023 certification for ESG logos will go on properties' listings on the main Virtuoso site. Under One Sky's partners include Ted Turner Reserves, The Brando, Tourism Australia, and White Desert which, working with other Antarctic operators, has agreed a collaborative pledge, which, it is now hoped, will expand from South Pole to the North Pole • Hotels and other sellers hosted lunches daily, and back-to-back evening cocktails and dinners – 2 intimate dinners honoured Valerie Wilson's 80th birthday (one coincided with a VTW welcome cocktail by MGM). The only other main evening event was a 4,000-strong mélange, inside and out, hosted by Resorts World.

The final Gala epitomised Virtuoso style. It was a brilliant event, with superb Bellagio service. Some of the awards winners were:

Best hotel – Gleneagles (Conor O'Leary says he hopes this phenomenal accolade will raise the brand's reputation even further and attract first-time visitors to Scotland)

Best new hotel – Paris Le Cheval Blanc (Christian Boyen says while very much appreciating this sign of confidence, he knows now everyone must continue to improve)

Best gm – Valentina De Santis, Lake Como Grand Hotel Tremezzo & Passalacqua (she sees this incredible recognition of family and love as further and even stronger motivation).

Next Virtuoso Travel Week VTW is 12-18 August 2023.



# MARY GOSTELOW

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