

Gostelow Report Live

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SPECIAL REPORT

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Looking after ILTM is a delight, says [Ian Wilson](#), SVP Hotel Ops for the amazing **Marina Bay Sands** – he heads everything except gaming, it seems. Think big. There are 2,561 rooms running at over 96% occupancy, average stay two nights, and because of the rooftop pool people arrive early, checkout as late as possible. He manages annual Grand Prix and tax-free events of up to 30,000 but he still thinks intimate (next year, buy access to Club 51 for superb quiet breakfasts with world-class fruits and Irish yoghurt). Ian Wilson is, like ILTM, heavily into robots – his own 'team' includes robots who fold 800 linen table napkins an hour, and, every day, 2,000 'roll-ups', napkins rolled around knife, fork and spoon.

Experiences today must be so personalised to know exactly what type of fruit and music someone prefers - **UltraTravel's** founder [Nick Perry](#) recalls polling top travellers over a decade ago and, for the first time, he heard the word 'experiences' again and again. But now, he says, everyone today should feel that everything revolves around them, every time • To feed this individualism, suppliers work together more and more. For the first time, marketing partners **Shangri-La** and **Taj** share a booth here (this is invaluable, says Taj VP Middle East, [Ranjit Philipose](#), learning fast about Chinese high net worth travel). And his new Shangri-La colleagues are finding out that, as of January 2018, Mumbai had about 41,200 millionaires with assets of over US\$1 million, and Delhi had 20,600 but according to *World Wealth Report* the total number for India will soar to 660,800 by the year 2026 • **Singapore Shangri-La**, which has a mammoth Presidential Suite with bullet-proof glass, is one of two front-runner venues for the on-off meeting of two world leaders supposed to take place on June 12th, and advance teams are already in town. Whatever happens, however, Singapore will be as busy as ever. Marina Bay sees the DBS regatta on the weekends of May 26-27 and June 2-3, and the annual Shangri-La Dialogue, a bijou 'Davos', is June 1-3, with India's PM [Narendra Modi](#) among the speakers.

Rosewood continues to be ultra-secretive about its Hong Kong property – MD [Marc Brugger](#) will only say it's opening 'next winter'. We do know that food will be under the control of French internationalist [Sandro Gamba](#), whose experience includes [Alain Ducasse](#), NoMi at **Park Hyatt Chicago** and **Ritz-Carlton Shanghai at Pudong** • At **Ritz-Carlton Millenia** here, many raved ecstatically about the moving sushi belt at Monday's party, which meant food came to you rather than you having, as so often at mass events, to join a long line, or a Rugby scrum, to get anything to eat. The belt, says Ritz-Carlton Millenia, Singapore, Chef [Massimo Pasquarelli](#), is often used in the hotel's indoor functions. But surely no-one else has dared host nearly a thousand on top of a swimming pool, covered in five hours' work by a plexiglass screen, one of many out-of-the-box ideas of GM [Peter Mainguy](#). If there's time, take a do-it-yourself audio tour of the hotel's 4,200-item art collection – cognoscenti, of course, always stay in rooms with access to the 32nd floor club lounge, with separate kitchen and chef.

Jing'An Shangri-La West Shanghai, GM [Marco Vazzoler](#), has a new chef, French-born [William Mahi](#) (who says when a kitchen's too relaxed, mistakes always happen – he was trained that a good kitchen should be a combination war zone and crisis room: his own favourite dishes include roast chicken and lots of roasted garlic, or a good four-cheese pizza • [Olivier Elzer](#), who's worked with a total of 24 Michelin stars in his short life, will run the kitchens of **St Regis Hong Kong**, opening in Wan Chai early 2019. [Derek Flint](#)'s GM, and interiors are [André Fu](#) • André Fu first hit the luxury hotel world with his timeless avocado palette for **Upper House, Hong Kong**, which is currently into shoes in a big way. This week, GM [Marcel Thomas](#) has been wearing, variously, [Jimmy Choo](#) and [Christian Louboutin](#). Coming up, sometime September-October this year, Swire will be bringing a 140-strong collection of 'old shoes' to Hong Kong, with designs from such greats as the late Zaha Hadid and St-Laurent, plus [Vivienne Westwood](#), also pairs actually worn by [Victoria Beckham](#) and, wait for it, the late Queen Mother • Fu is, well, busy. He did **Kerry Hotel Hong Kong**, which has a shared-workspace component, and he's also now doing **Capella's** Maldives property, only 40 minutes' boat ride from Male, which will make it much more attractive as a short-break destination. **Capella Shanghai**, opened September 2017, has [Pierre Gagnaire](#) as big-name chef but in general, says, Capella CEO [Nicholas Clayton](#) (sporting two stars on one lapel, to show the new company logo) he's looking for up-and coming talent – at the 100-key **Capella Bangkok**, opening riverside January 2019, he has brought in Argentine-born [Mauro Colagreco](#), from Mirazur, near Menton (his corporate F&B guy is [Adam Crocini](#), from Marina Bay Sands). In Sydney, Patina Land now owns the city's land registry, to be a 75-room Capella, and the education building, seen as a 200-room 4.5-star Patina.

Korea's stylish young fashionistas love **Conrad Seoul Hotel**, GM [Mark Meaney](#) – you see them, perhaps in gold miniskirts and mountain-high stilettos, taking selfies in the airy lobby or on its five-floor-high spiral staircase (perhaps these beauties have emerged from the four-floor designer mall beneath the hotel, where you can also see movies nonstop from 7am to 3am). Best bedrooms look over the adjacent Han River, and give access to the 37th floor club lounge, which has virtual golf: for more exercise, bike part of the 30-mile riverside route, or, for free, use the 24/7 gym alongside a few of 558 outside members who pay a \$50,000 refundable deposit, plus \$3,000 a year • **U by Uniwold** is deliberately targeting younger river cruisers – ships' walls feature such Instagram subjects as [Britney Spears](#), trade breakfast for brunch, at communal tables, enjoy mixology and yoga classes, and pyjama parties • **RSSC's Seven Seas Mariner** plans a 67-night Down Under & Far East Grandeur tour, leaving Sydney January 20th, 2019 and taking in Australia's East Coast before cruising the Timor Sea and visiting such ports-of-call as Bali, Penang, Phuket, Ho Chi Minh City and Hong Kong • [Hansjorg Meier](#), now COO and Managing Partner **Legian Hotel Management (LHM)**, says Bali's 46-key **The Legian Sire, Lombok**, is scheduled for early December • Hong Kong's **The Murray** hotel, orchestrated by MD [Duncan Palmer](#), has just opened its 23rd floor suites: ranging from 100 to 225 sqm, they all come with access to the Lane Crawford Platinum Lounge - ideal for personal make up and styling if you book ahead (The Murray's recently-promoted Brand Director is [Anton Kilayko](#)).

Time for Europe. Singapore-based Kishore Buxani announced yesterday entry into Scotland, with the purchase of Glasgow's 117-room GoGlasgow Urban Hotel • In Edinburgh, The Balmoral's 200 sqm new premium suite has been designed by Sir Rocco Forte's extremely talented sister Olga Polizzi – if you want more space, the suite can have another two bedrooms added. GM Richard Cooke suggests, by the way, signing your clients up for Scone & Crombie Land tours, led by Ted Innes Ker, who can include a tour of his family home, Floors Castle, home of his brother, the Duke of Roxburghe (dine in the Duke's Fishing Hut, on the banks of the River Tweed): he also suggests Scone & Crombie Sea, to sail in a luxury boat in and around historic islands and coastline of the Firth of Forth, with a seafood barbeque lunch in a rustic log cabin looking across to the Bass Rock and May Island • Tiberio Palace, Capri, offers, under GM Francesca Tozzi, what it calls Kàsher, combining Italian and Kosher cuisine.

Vienna says it's the most liveable city in the world, a claim substantiated by the *Mercer Quality of Life Survey* – and EU Liveability and Monocle have also put it second and third respectively (over 50% of the Austrian capital's area is green space). Try the two-bedroom Schönbrunn Suite at the Austria Trend Hotels' **Schönbrunn Palace** hotel, the former Imperial Summer Palace that's now UNESCO-listed. The 1863-vintage **Hotel Imperial Vienna**, a Luxury Collection Hotel, is immediately adjacent to Musikverein concert hall: hotel GM Mario Habicher, a Vienna boy, can arrange to have a piece of music specially composed for you, and recorded on a CD by players from the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. **Palais Coburg** has, wait for it, six wine cellars which together hold a total of 60,000 bottles dating back to 1727 – not surprisingly *Wine Spectator* has twice deemed this the world's best list (yes, take a tour, and a tasting). Plan ahead, to coincide with one of the hundred-odd Vienna balls that take place, one per night, during winter months – most difficult to access are the Philharmonic Ball, January 24th, 2019; the Ball of Coffeehouse Owners, February 22nd, 2019, and the oh-so-famous Vienna Opera Ball, February 28th, 2019. All hotels offer special-access packages, and they can arrange learn-quick waltz lessons. • However good the hotel, bellmen treat wheelie bags as if they are dance partners, which is especially tough on the handles if your bag has two, rather than four wheels. Cologne happens to be worldwide headquarters of Rimowa, now owned by LVMH, and guests of **Excelsior Hotel Ernst**, GM Henning Matthiesen, have complimentary mending service (your bag is picked up by a uniformed technician and returned, a couple of hours later, good as new). The hotel's owned by Charles Roulet, whose family built it in 1863, and recent enhancements include two Excelsior Suites with stunning views of the cathedral, a few yards away • The 49-room **Hotel Belles Rives, Cap d'Antibes**, France is one of the few luxury hospitality products worldwide that claims eternal publicity as a result of a legendary book, *Tender in the Night*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald, published 1934. The book opens with 'On the pleasant shore of the French Riviera, about half way between Marseilles and the Italian border, stands a large, proud, rose-colored hotel. Differential palms cool its polished façade, and before it stretches a dazzling beach...'. As hotel GM Stephane Vuillame, says, yes, the hotel – owned by Marianne Estène-Chauvin, granddaughter of the 1929 founder – has a beach, and a superb Zelda Suite with Hermès wallpapers, and a Valmont spa opens this June. Its annual literature award is, not surprisingly, The Fitzgerald Prize.

And Africa. Monday's food futurist speaker Dr Morgaine Gaye is a supporter of back-to-nature eating. In Cape Town, Joanne Selby, GM of **Sun International's Table Bay**, offers guest-foraging to discover native Cape plants that subsequently appear on your plate – also, learn winemaking with Rikus Neethling, in nearby Stellenbosch, and try the 329-room hotel's own-label Méthode Cap Classique, a Chardonnay and Pinot blend created by Graeme Beck (there's also a bespoke Darling Brewery craft beer, Wild Legend Weiss, ideal for pairing with fish, shellfish, cheeses and fruit). Pairing dinners, by the way, uniquely include the hotel's own KAPP fragrance, entirely composed of Cape botanicals • Sibling **Palace of the Lost City**, at Sun City, goes for activity – family Bushwalks in Letsatsing Game Park, aerial rope courses above The Valley.

And now for the US. New York's **Baccarat**, GM Herman Elger, offers the ultimate personalisation – a library has 250 white leather-bound books, numbered but empty pages, so you can write something (even a proposal to a loved one) which you can find, on repeat visits. Overall over-the-top style that miraculously avoids bling: there's an 18-metre pool with cabanas and your minibar glasses are, naturally, Baccarat • Get a free Champagne goblet when you join the selfie masses paying \$25 for a single-person bottle of Brut or Rosé Moët from the first-ever Champagne vending machine, next to some of 1,516 mock gold-bullion bars forming a lobby wall on the 23rd floor of **Mandarin Oriental Las Vegas** (it becomes Waldorf Astoria end August) – you have location (The Strip's City Center), significant wellness, Pierre Gagnaire dining and Sunday is jazz night in MObar • There's also a Moët vending machine, 7am through to 2am thanks to California laws, at **Pendry San Diego** (GM Michael O'Donohue), 12 minutes' drive from the airport, two blocks walk to the ocean: other USPs are a serious 24/7 gym next to the third-floor outside pool and cabanas, and six restaurants all really popular with locals – do not miss Provisional Restaurant's stunning breakfast buffet.

Over these three action-packed days, and extended evenings, rumours abound as always, throughout ILTM. Will a prominent Hong Kong luxury brand-hotel revert to owner-management in 2020? • Will Moscow's venerable Peking Hotel, built 1949, be bought by the China Government and be flagged as the leading new-look Chinese brand? • What will one of Russia's most prolific hotel owners, Vladimir Doronin, now admittedly based in Switzerland, do next? He was, along with architect Kerry Hill and Aman's COO Roland Fasel, in China April 18th for the grand opening of Aman's long-awaited **Amanyangyun**, which has incorporated 1,700 camphor trees long submerged under Jianxi Province's Liao Fang reservoir. The hotel, run by GM Benoit Amado, is 40 minutes from Shanghai • **Middle House Shanghai**, Swire Hotels' fourth 'House', opened in April (GM Michael Faulkner, designer Piero Lissoni, 114-seat Café Gray with Gray Kunz). There's a 33-metre indoor pool, a 24-hour gym with HYPOXI room, a one-stop-shop Lab MIXUN spa facility – and the hotel's 14th floor Penthouse is a significant 660 sqm, with two bedrooms, and an expansive terrace.

Finally, back to Asia Pacific. **Urban Resorts'** Beijing beauty, **The PuLi**, has a new GM, Thomas Vaucouleur de Ville d'Avray: choose a Jing'An park-view bedroom but spend waking hours in the lobby, which evokes Old Shanghai, from shiny black floor tiles stretching to eternity to a hundred-foot long bar that acts variously as check-in, business centre and beverage dispenser • d'Avray's predecessor, Jan Tibaldi, has, meanwhile, checked-in as GM of **One&Only Reethi Rah, Maldives** (gosh Kerzner knows how to do style – SVP Sales & Marketing Brett Armitage threw one of the week's most stylish cocktails on Tuesday, in the Louis Vuitton 'flower' that is an appendage to Marina Bay Sands) • The 171-room **Waldorf Astoria Bangkok**, GM Simeon Olle, opens by September 2018: interiors are André Fu, though AvroKO has done eatertainment, which includes steaks-and-seafood Bull & Bear and a 57th floor rooftop Champagne Bar (there's a 17th floor outdoor pool, with a giant fishtail coming out of it, and the gym is 24/7) • The **Datai Langkawi** (GM Arnaud Girodon) re-opens this July after a \$60 million renovation: those involved during the ten-month hibernation include Kerry Hill, Paris designer Didier Lefort/DL2A, and, for identity and branding, London-based Sarah Miller and Partners. Other key names include Bastien Gonzalez, mani-pedi offerings, and resident naturalist Irshad Mobarak, who will lead the Nature Centre (Langkawi's butterfly paradise, with over 535 species, plus 260 different birds). Premium of the 121-total keys is the 378 sqm Datai Suite.

As always, hotels who send GMs to ILTM get most attention from buyers – and media. **Leading's** SVP Philip Ho hosted a memorable Pollen lunch and participating hotels that most benefitted were **Datai Langkawi**, **Legian Lombok** (GM Florian Leven), **La Réserve Paris** (GM and company CEO Jean-Luc Naret) and **Le Sirenuse Positano**, represented by Giulia Sersale, cousin of high profile Antonio Sersale • Tonight's closing party starts at 8pm at **LAVO MBS** – don't miss it, it's on the 57th floor rooftop of Marina Bay Sands. LAVO's one of the latest global venues of the Tao Group, run by 40-ish school pals Jason Strauss and Noah Tepperberg in such a successful way that Madison Square Garden Company, who already own the New York Knicks basketball team, recently paid the pair US\$181 million for 62.5% of their company • And now, see some of you at **ILTM North America**, Riviera Maya, September 24-27, 2018; **ILTM China**, Shanghai, October 31st-November 2nd, 2018; **ILTM Cannes**, December 3-6, 2018. And, of course, see all of you back here in Singapore, May 27-30, 2019. **PS. Big congratulations** to Alison Gilmore and the 20-strong ILTM team, and to Spotlight Communications coordinators, led by Nina Gardiner and Lucy Clifton.

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