

# Gostelow Report Live

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**SPECIAL REPORT**

**Singapore, May 23, 2018**

Imagine a friends' decade – that's 10 persons, not years - just graduated from Universitas Bina Nusantara or another top Jakarta college, or wherever, wanting to celebrate. Take one of the private mansions, with chef and 25-metre pool, to chill-out at **Sunrise Kempinski Hotel Beijing Yangi Lake** (GM Brice Pean can lay on bespoke fashion from Beijing's best-known names, or concerts with the finest violinists or even, if timing is right, soccer workouts with Spurs' Bobby Zamora) • Indonesia's one of the so-called E7 nations, which also, in alphabetical order, consists of Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russia and Turkey. PwC's latest *Global Megatrends* survey, which predicts GDP of the G7 established economies will, within ten years, be \$69.3 trillion, that of E7 will reach a staggering \$138.2 trillion • On the China front, when in Spain travellers from Beijing to Harbin apparently not only invest in Loew, Puig, and Zara (whose upmarket sibling Uterqüe is opening stores in China later this year) but they snap up whole Serrano hams at **El Corte Inglés**, which takes Alipay mobile payments. As Synthesis Design's Alvin Huang said Monday, experience, which includes carrying hams in inflight hand-baggage, is the new luxury. All of this contributes not only to growth of luxury in Asia Pacific but also, back in Spain, to what Bain & Co expects to be a 10% annual growth in that Mediterranean country's luxury travel and tourism figures for at least the next few years.

Edible souvenirs bring Russian beluga, with vodka, to mind. **Ararat Park Hyatt Moscow** is a few minutes' walk from Red Square, and the famous GUM department store (tenth floor rooms have the best views, or take the two-bedroom Presidential Suite, #921) • **The Regent Beijing**, GM Nick Emery, has a seemingly-authentic imperial ambience to its 360 sqm Presidential Suite, #1856, which hosted Angela Merkel last year. Do make sure, wherever you stay that you have access to the 17th floor club lounge • IHG will soon be majority owner of the Regent brand, and **InterContinental's** Brand Director Tanya Lim is really elevating quality in hotels' Club lounges – breakfast buffets in such destinations as London, Budapest, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Sydney are especially outstanding, as are cocktail hours that offer enough gourmet eats to satisfy as dinner (in Bangkok, the airy 37th floor lounge, next to the outside pool terrace, has three red and three white and three sparkling wines, plus tastings of Thai beers).

Visitor numbers to Thailand January-March 2018 jumped 15% on the year. **Anantara Siam Bangkok**, GM Patrick Both, has cleverly synched in-room portable devices as hotspots, so take your own iPhone, or whatever, out and you have WiFi anywhere, nationwide. Get a me-centric brand-enhancing selfie at dawn Qi Chong or Tai Chi master-led private workout in nearby Lumpini Park, with picnic breakfast, tuk-tuk ride and then an hour-long inner-balance massage included. On Sundays, don't miss the sensational brunch buffets, offering foie gras through to oyster and sushi stations) • New Bangkok hotels, already growing on the city's skyline, include **Four Seasons**, set on the river; **Rosewood**, GM Thomas Fischer, and **Waldorf Astoria**, GM Simeon Olle, with acres of interior marble and a dedicated Champagne bar (by the way, Blackstone sold the last of its Hilton shares last Friday).

Naomi Mano, a renaissance professional whose interests range from rotary to violins, via tennis, is, via **Luxurique**, coordinating deeper cultural exchanges between Japan and the rest of the luxury world • Japan's trains are already renowned: now think of **Kyushu Railway Company's** Seven Stars, which offers two-day, and four-day, Kyushu round-trips (on the latter, sleep off, in a ryokan, on the second night – all other nights are on the train): you alight, for unique local experiences, and esteemed local chefs get on board for each meal, offering a variety of Japanese, plus French, Italian and fusion menus • **Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board** is pushing fine dining, say **Rosoblu**, for modern Italian – and when it comes to shopping, Westfield Century City, which finished its \$1 billion October 2017 renovation, now has 200 shops and restaurants, including Mario Batali's long-anticipated **Eataly**, Westfield Century City has everything the discerning shopper could hope for, including plush elevators, private lounges, the Private Suite and special shopping • Morgaine Gaye may forecast food will be texture, water-related, back to the land and disruptive but she completely overlooks the growing obsession with quality products prepared with love. Think of the draw of Alain Ducasse, Nobu Matsuhisa, Pierre Gagnaire (as at **Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong**) and, at so many places including **Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills**, Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

Ducasse's gorgeous restaurant at **The Dorchester, London**, looks out over Park Lane. He's also at sibling **Hotel Plaza-Athenée, Paris** – breakfast, sitting in one of the restaurant's silver-mirrored banquettes, is arguably best in Europe. Under MD François Delahaye, this hotel is THE Paris centre for fashionistas - fifth floor Royal Suite has 450 sqm, four bedrooms, and stunning Eiffel Tower views. Happy 60th birthday, by the way, to the conciergerie elite, Les Clefs d'Or, started at Plaza-Athenée in 1958 • Nobu Matsuhisa is, winter-only, at St Moritz' iconic **Badrutt's Palace** - take lake-facing bedrooms, or the 287 sqm two-bedroom Hans Badrutt Suite, named for one-time owner Hans Badrutt 1876-1953 • Matsuhisa will be on **Crystal Serenity's** Stockholm to London Baltic Bliss Cruise, sailing June 19th, 2018 (debuting in 2020, expect the company's first polar-class expedition yacht, a 100-suite **Crystal Endeavour**) • There's Matsuhisa year-round at **Royal Monceau Raffles Paris**: this hotel, incidentally, certainly knows how to look after kids (is it a coincidence that GM Aaron Kaupp's daughter Chloe is coming up to her first birthday?). Toddlers are welcomed with miniature cars in which they can sit, and there are named feeding bibs, one for each day of the week, and much more • **Raffles Europejski Warsaw**, GM Thomas Guss, reopened May 15th, 2018 after a complete rebuild of the classic 1857 building: public areas include the all-day Europejski Grill, and a cigar lounge – take a corner turret room or the 293 sqm Raffles Suite.

**Belmond UK's** signature property is **Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons**, set in 27 acres of gorgeous Oxfordshire countryside (you still feel as if you are staying in the private house of Chef-Patron Raymond Blanc). In Ireland, Belmond suggests its Hibernian train – in another continent, there are now two Belmond trains in Peru, the established Cusco-Aguas Calientes **Hiram Bingham**, for Machu Picchu, and the stylish three-day **Andean Explorer** train, from Cusco to Arequipa with a full day at the floating villages of Lake

Titicaca en route (as well as being catered by **Belmond Monasterio** in Cusco, Explorer features gorgeous soft-tweed interiors by Inge Moore) • Jaya Ibrahim Design's done the new-look at Pacific Land's **Conrad Centennial Singapore**, GM Heinrich Grafe – bedrooms adapt to you, the guest, rather than vice versa (one 17th-time Aussie visitor says this IS his second home). Don't miss the 31st floor Club lounge, with chef-manned kitchen. The hotel's great for weddings, up to 170, in the new glass-walled mini-ballroom, next to the pool – and keep in it mind for pre- or post-cruise stays • Mark Greedy, founding CEO, **DestinationElite** conciergerie, says his 400,000 high-net-worth members veer, when cruising, to expedition-type, with maximum selfie opportunities (think the self-branding that **OgilvyRED's Lucy McCabe** stressed Monday). DestinationElite signed a partnership last week with Heart Media, which publishes 12 titles, including *LUXICO* and *LUXIFY*, throughout Asia.

**Sanchaya Resort**, on Indonesia's Bintan Island, has been owned by Singapore-based Russian Natalya Pavchinskaya since it opened 2013. GM is now Magnus Olovson and new Spa Manager, Ria Cantle, came from Aman (expect her to introduce deep tissue massages). Expect first-class customer service on the 40-minute high-speed ferry link from Singapore, and cognoscenti book the P49-designed four-bedroom Presidential Vanda Villa inspired by Singapore's heritage houses • The spectacular infinity-like lucky-eight shape of **Park Hyatt Bangkok**, GM Michael Golden, celebrating its first birthday (architect Amanda Levite, *Architectural Digest's* top female architect, 2018, is also acclaimed for her V&A extension in London): noteworthy, also, is the Penthouse eatertainment complex, soaring from the 34th floor up to the 37th floor open rooftop, and, immediately under the hotel, an Open House floor of superb culture and casual eating, and another floor of Thai grocery store plus street-food stalls, and dozens of Chanel-type boutiques • Stay at **Armani Milan** and you are right above an Armani store; **Heavens Portfolio** represents this and such other significant luxury properties as **Armani Dubai** (enjoy the Armani/Prive club), plus **Sangha by Octave** by Yangcheng Lake, Suzhou – 108 lakeside villas plus significant holistic wellness and community space for purposeful group living.

**Conrad Maldives Rangali Island's** amazing new MURAKA ('coral') villa opens by end of 2018: the two-floor structure, which will sleep nine, has, on the upper floor and above-water, both master and twin-bed sleeping areas, living and butler's and security quarters, with another bedroom in the lower-level submerged – there's also a private infinity pool, and sunrise-facing relaxation deck. Thought up by Crown Company's Director Ahmed Saleem, this somewhat-unusual villa's being realized by New Zealander Mike Murphy of M.J. Murphy aquarium engineering (hotel GM is Stefano Ruzza) • **Fairmont Maldives Sirru Fen Fushi** (opening GM Denis Dupart) offers 120 pool villas, 24/7 butlers, and the region's first underwater sculpture garden, by *National Geographic* honoree Jason deCaires Taylor • **Jumeirah Vittaveli Maldives**, GM Amit Majumder, has just opened the country's first ice-skating rink – and its 3,500 sqm Royal Residences comes with two pools and a private restaurant • **Baglioni Resort, Maldives**, opening in November (GM Andrea Saderi) says it's the first Italian property in the islands, on Dhaalu Atoll. Expect the 6-room beauty to have such dolce vita touches as Frette linens, INSIUM wellness, and 'Ferrari' at aperitivo time – no, this does not mean being driven in a Ferrari 335S Scaglietti across the sand to get a chilled glass of Ca'del Bosco, one of the two best Proseccos, owned by Valentino proprietor Gaetano Marzotto, but, rather, when you have walked to the venue you are offered Ferrari Trentodoc Bollicine (Maximum Brut, Maximum Rosé and Ferrari Perlé) to go with Valtellina bresaola and Parma ham.

Under GM Heiko Kuenstle, **The Lowell New York** is designed by Obama favourite, Los Angeles legend Michael Smith - Majorelle, run by the Big Apple's most famous md' Charles Masson, has feels-outdoor terrace dining, and, upstairs, the Pembroke Room's afternoon tea is fashionistas' favourite. New sitting rooms for residents make this 74-room hotel feel like home (though few homes have working fires, as 33 suites do – choose your own wood type) • City-centre **Grand Hotel Minerva, Florence** (GM Filippo Burroni) finished its renovation February 2018. It has 97 rooms and suites run up to 120 sqm, big enough for families of six - enjoy the rooftop terrace, with heated pool, and have romantic Sky Lounge dinners up there • Everyone loves Italy, which is a great delight to Augusto Orsini, Owner and GM of 73-room **Argentario Golf Resort & Spa**, 90 miles from Rome: new this year at the Design Hotels property is a three-bedroom villa, Locker Cottage, with a private spa, and a second hotel restaurant is planned • **Tiberio Palace, Capri**, is into ingredients-based cuisine at Ristorante Terrazza Tiberio – it also welcomes Jewish guests with what it calls Kàsher, combining Italian and Kosher cuisine. Owned by Gestion Alberghiere and under GM Francesca Tozzi, the hotel also has eight newly-done rooms, including the 250 sqm Bellevue Suite, with plunge pool, fitness area and especially-breathtaking Mediterranean views

Yesterday, Michelle Woodley, President of **Preferred** – 50 years young – shared updates. This year, there were 36 new hotel members in the first quarter alone. Last year, Preferred gained 103 additional members, which included entry into Beirut (Le Bristol), Hamburg (east Hamburg), Kuala Lumpur (One World Hotel) and Oslo (The Thief): overall, 2017 saw USD\$1.35 billion revenue in reservations - a 22% increase over 2016: the I Prefer mobile App allows travellers to manage their itineraries and offers three percent off best available rate. Woodley says, incidentally, that to meet growing consumer demand (it has over 2.5 million I Prefer members) it plans to grow its 70-strong Residences portfolio to over a hundred by the end of the year: this brand extension will be supported, by late 2018, by a relaunched PreferredHotels.com • **Finca Cortesin, Casares** (GM Rene Zimmer) is Preferred's 2018 hotel of the year. 40 minutes inland from Malaga airport, rise to the 500-acre hillside estate, with Cabell Robinson golf, and, back down at the coast and reached by regular complimentary shuttle, a Monte-Carlo-style private beach club, with cabanas around an Olympic pool that complements the indoor- and outdoor-pools at the main hotel.

The spa at all-inclusive, adult-only **Kudadoo Island, Maldives**, has a Himalayan salt room (the 15-villa resort's solar-powered) • The fitness craze in the whole of Asia Pacific is shown by the fact over 5,000 turned up last Saturday for the Bikini Body Guide (BBG) boot camp at **Marina Bay Sands** hosted by Australia's Greek-heritage personal trainer, Kayla Itsines, 27 (she's worth US\$63 million, thanks to the 9.6 million worldwide who pay US\$20 a month for her Sweat app). Perhaps, after all the eating-and-drinking at the myriad of 'free-evening' cocktails last night and again tonight, a bit of BBG would not be amiss.

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