

ASIAN HOTEL & CATERING TIMES

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**FORWARD
FROM FIFTY**
What the
future holds for
Singapore

**BALANCING
THE BREW**
Craft beers
bubbling in Asia

RECRUITMENT FOCUS
How to get the best,
and keep them

Hong Kong SAR	HK\$50
China	RMB50
Singapore	S\$15
Malaysia	RM30
Thailand	฿300
Rest of Asia	US\$10



Themed South Australian gastronomy

After the recent launch of Ocean Park's newest attraction, 'Adventures in Australia' – which included the arrival of eight koalas – the theme park is launching a series of Australia-themed food and beverage promotions. A collection of over 30 wines selected from nine wine regions in South Australia will be introduced to visitors, while two celebrity chefs – from Hong Kong and Australia – will be on hand to present the "ultimate South Australia dining experience".



Lindsey Ueberroth

Preferred Hotel Group rebrands to Preferred Hotels & Resorts

Industry sales, marketing and distribution services provider Preferred Hotel Group has announced a move from a multi-branded business model to one master brand, Preferred Hotels & Resorts. The rebranding, which is supported by a multi-million dollar investment in updated advertising, marketing and public relations campaigns, is "Driven by evolving consumer expectations and changing travel trends," says president and CEO Lindsey Ueberroth.



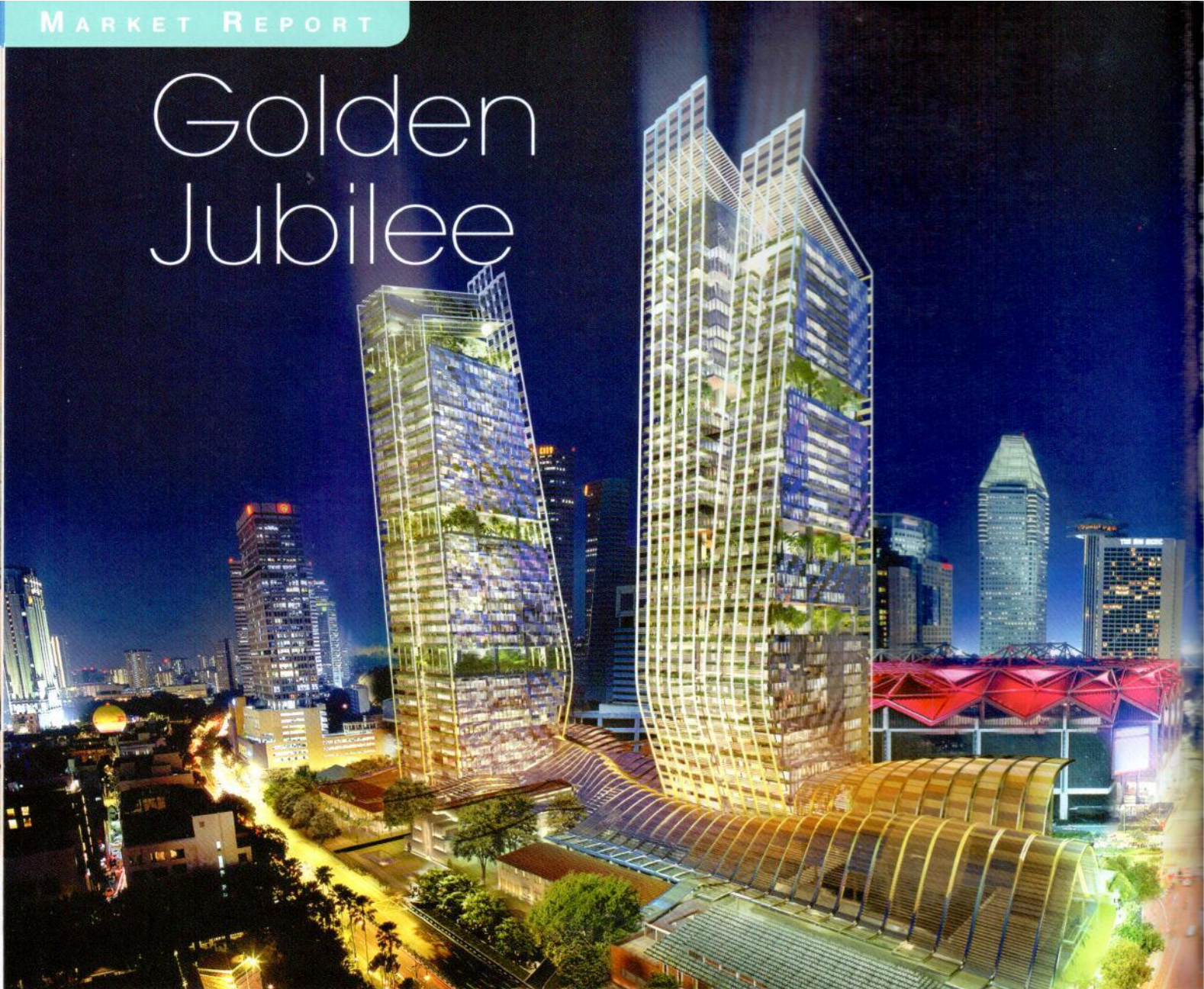
All numbers for Sheraton and for Starwood in Asia

The Sheraton brand's expansion across Asia-Pacific is to continue, driven by accelerating demand in China, with more than one-third of the new hotels it opens in 2015 targeting primary and secondary cities, as well as resort markets. This year, Sheraton will open its third hotel in Beijing, its fifth in Shanghai and debut in five new markets, including Bengbu, Chuzhou, Zhanjiang and Harbin with 33 hotels slated to open over the next four years.



For Starwood, 30 new hotels opened – including a first in Samoa (pictured) – with 71 new signings across Asia-Pacific in 2014. Once again growth is led by China, India and South East Asia.

Golden Jubilee



An estimated 19 new hotels with about 2,000 rooms opened in Singapore last year, bringing the total to roughly 60,000 rooms. Another 3,000 to 3,500 rooms will be added this year.

Most of the new hotels are mid-tier properties. There will be about 65,000 rooms in Singapore by 2018.

"Despite the continuing uncertainty of the macro global economy, currency fluctuations and rising regional competition for Singapore from up and coming destinations like the Philippines and Vietnam, the city's tourism industry has shown signs of maturity – with longer stays and higher tourism spend – and is on track to remain robust in the year ahead," says Anthony Ross, executive vice-president Asia-Pacific, Middle East & Africa at Preferred Hotels & Resorts.

If Singapore is celebrating its Golden Jubilee in 2015, Preferred Hotels & Resorts is celebrating a milestone of its own.

The group is rebranding from a multi-branded business model, which was known as Preferred Hotel Group, to a master brand with five distinct collections – Legend, LVX, Lifestyle, Connect and Preferred Residences – for its more than 650 'curated' independent hotels worldwide.

"This represents the company's commitment to a new consumer-focused strategy that allows us to keep ahead of evolving travel

trends, and is designed to drive strategic growth and improve market share for our member hotels," Ross says.

Singapore has long been one of the group's strongholds in the region with a diverse portfolio of member hotels.

A member of the LVX collection, the newly opened One Farrer Hotel & Spa is located in the city's Little India district, adjacent to the Farrer Park Hospital. It offers an integrated hospitality and medical experience – a first for Asia-Pacific, Ross says.

Exclusive ladies' floor

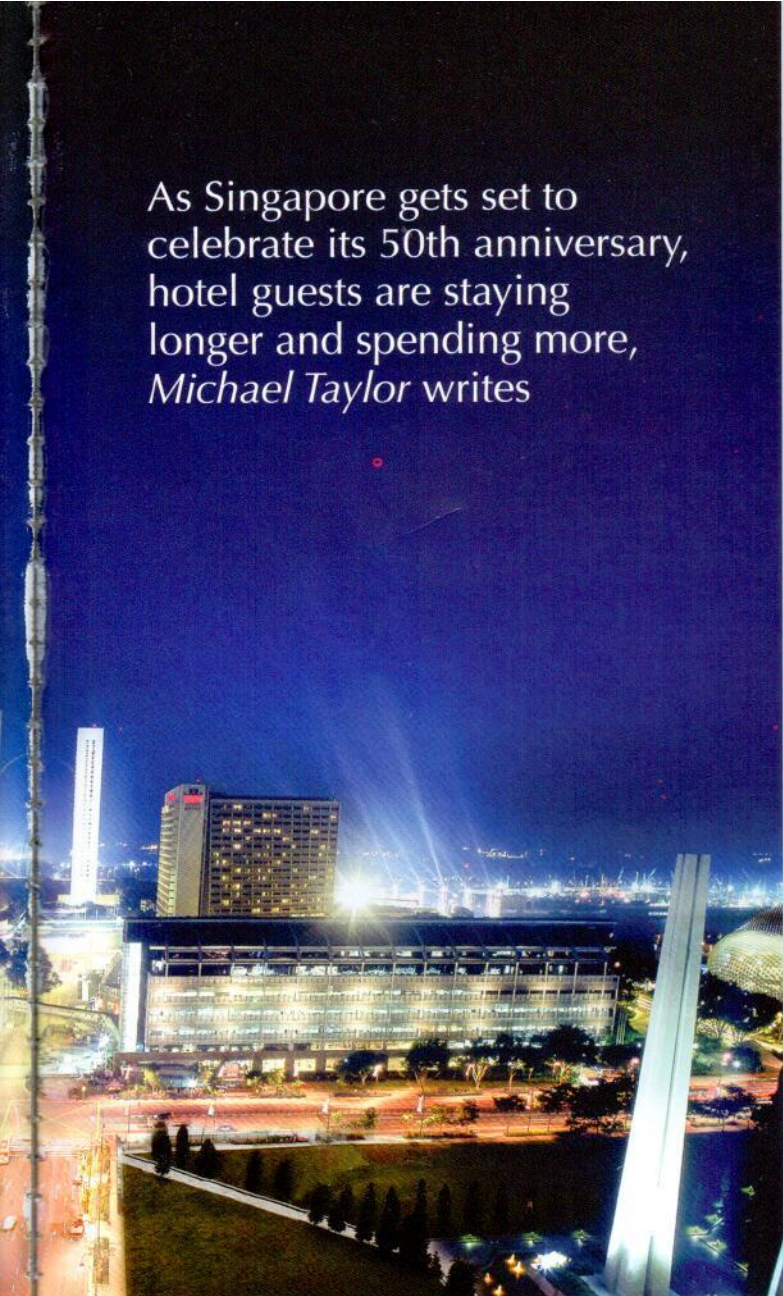
Another Preferred Hotels & Resorts property, The South Beach is scheduled to open later this year. With 654 rooms, it will offer 43 'social spaces', which will include an all-day dining restaurant, three bars and two sky gardens.

The hotel will also feature three exclusive ladies' floors, which span across two hotel blocks. They will offer additional security and amenities catering specifically to women's needs.

The design concept of the hotel marries environmental sustainability with heritage and modernity.

"The spaces encourage and embrace creativity," Jan Büttgen, general manager says. "This cohesive theme of creativity is further demonstrated through our individualised uniform designs, as well as intelligent innovative hybrid technology that will be introduced

As Singapore gets set to celebrate its 50th anniversary, hotel guests are staying longer and spending more, *Michael Taylor* writes



throughout the hotel and in each guest room.”

Environmental concerns played a key role in the hotel’s design.

“A microclimatic wave-like canopy covers the open spaces, linking the conservation buildings with the two towers,” Büttgen says.

Acting as an environmental filter, and designed to conserve energy using solar thermal panels and a waste/heat recovery system, the canopy provides a shield from the sun and directs wind flow into the ground-floor spaces.

Harsh realities

In addition to a glut of new rooms, a labour shortage and productivity issues are among the key challenges facing the city’s hospitality sector.

But its growing popularity as a leisure travel destination bode well for the industry’s future.

“The currency value also plays a significant factor in the choice of destination for both leisure and business travel,” says Patrick Fiat, general manager at Royal Plaza on Scotts.

“Therefore, the value of the Singapore dollar against Singapore’s strongest feeder markets such as Indonesia, Australia and other Asia markets will have a direct impact on the overall tourism industry here.”

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For Anthony Ross exec VP APAC & Middle East & Africa Preferred Hotels & Resorts, longer stays and a higher spend are on the cards in Singapore

Despite these considerations, *The New York Times* and *CNN Travel* have voted Singapore as one of the top picks of 2015 and *Lonely Planet* has ranked Singapore the top country destination for 2015, Fiat notes.

With their large populations and close proximity, both China and Indonesia represent key markets, as does Australia. Other up and coming markets include Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

“Royal Plaza on Scotts closed last year with an occupancy rate of 89% and ARR of SG\$290,” Fiat says.

“We are expecting ARR to increase 3% to 4% this year and occupancy to be similar to that of last year’s.”

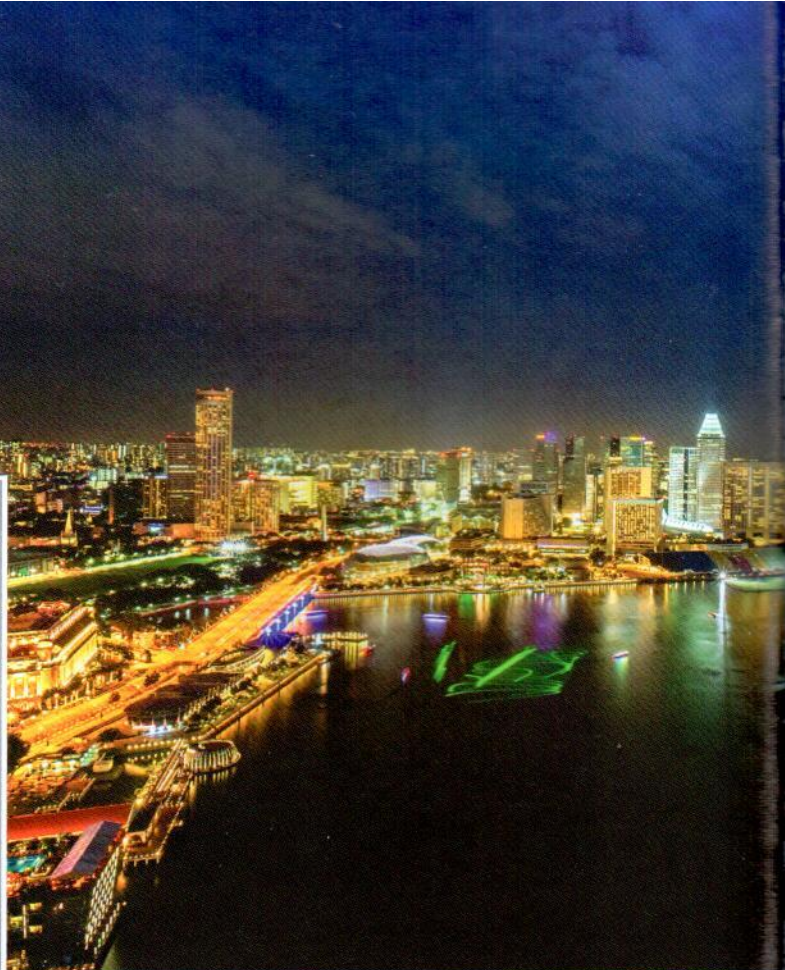
In October 2016, Dusit International will enter the Singapore market with a 208-room hotel. There will be four dining and



Patrick Fiat, GM Royal Plaza on Scotts, thinks currency is key



Rustum Vickers, director of development Dusit International, is excited for the brand's future in The Lion City



Despite the continuing uncertainty of the global economy, currency fluctuations and rising regional competition Singapore's tourism industry is on track to remain robust in the year ahead

Anthony Ross, EVP Asia-Pacific, Middle East & Africa Preferred Hotels & Resorts



Facade Royal Plaza on Scotts



Jan Büttgen GM The South Beach embracing creativity

entertainment outlets as well as space for meetings and events. Recreational facilities will include swimming pools, a gym and a five-star spa.

The property's principle investor is Laguna Hotel Holdings, the owner of the Laguna National Golf & Country Club, with Dusit partly financing the project.

"Singapore is one of the world's key gateway locations and thus of great strategic significance to a growing international brand such as Dusit, creating greater brand awareness and recognition," says Rustum Vickers, director of development, Dusit International.

"Furthermore, the Singapore hotel market is one of the best performing and least volatile, with high barriers to entry due to land scarcity and pricing, making it a sound and opportune time to invest."

Dusit hopes to add at least one more property in the Lion City.

"Securing the right project that fits is challenging, but we see great potential for a dusitD2 in a downtown location," Vickers says. **AHCT**



A nation mourns

Lee Kuan Yew, the statesman who transformed Singapore from a small port city into a wealthy global hub, died last month, at the age of 91.

The man dubbed the 'founding father' was the city-state's prime minister for 31 years from 1959 after Singapore gained full independence from British rule (Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965) until 1990 when he stepped down.

But he remained a dominant personality and driving force in the Lion City.

Popularly known as LKY, Mr Lee was widely respected as the architect of Singapore's prosperity.

Though his iron grip on power was often criticised it is roundly accepted that his formula worked and under his direction and pragmatic ethos Singapore is today an international business centre, financial hub, and tourist destination admired for its efficiency and low level of corruption.

Tributes from global leaders poured in with US President Barack Obama calling Mr Lee "a giant in history" and the Chinese foreign ministry acknowledging him as "a uniquely influential statesman in Asia."

A week of mourning was followed by a state funeral.

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