

ISSUE 239

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WEEKLY INSIGHTS

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER



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ONYX Hospitality Group announces aggressive Malaysia expansion plan

Thailand-based ONYX Hospitality Group has reinforced its expansion plan, with a strategic focus on its home territory of Thailand and neighbouring destination, Malaysia. The leading Asian hospitality group is on track to operate 54 properties by 2025. ONYX currently operates 44 properties, with an additional 10 properties in development.

As ONYX strives towards its goal of becoming Asia's leading hospitality provider, a number of exciting signings and openings across the portfolio are planned for next year and beyond.

Malaysia set to be first country to operate all three ONYX brands, outside of Thailand ONYX currently operates Amari Johor Bahru and OZO Georgetown Penang, as well as the newly opened Amari SPICE Penang and Amari Kuala Lumpur. The strategic expansion in Malaysia is set to continue with OZO Medini Iskandar (Q4 2022), Shama Medini Iskandar (Q1 2023). This will bring the total number of properties in Malaysia to six in 2023. [READ MORE](#)



KL listed as a top destination for food in 2023 by Lonely Planet

Kuala Lumpur is one of the best destinations to head to if you're looking for a gastronomy travel experience in 2023 ... says popular international travel guide Lonely Planet.

The publisher has just released its "Best In Travel 2023" list, an extensive annual collection that travellers and tourism industry players all around the world look forward to reading. Malaysia, or specifically the capital city of KL, was added in its "Eat" category, featuring five other places with gastronomy offerings that are worth checking out.

The other destinations are Lima in Peru, Umbria in Italy, Fukuoka in Japan, Montevideo in Uruguay and the country of South Africa.

For KL, Lonely Planet writes: "Don't sleep on the food scene in Kuala Lumpur. This Asian metropolis is one for the senses including your palate. Food stall-lined streets, markets with delicious snacks, and lively nightlife scene put this Malaysian capital city on our list for places to eat." [READ MORE](#)



Tourism Malaysia and Indonesian eCommerce platform Blibli partner for tourism recovery

Tourism Malaysia has tied up with Indonesian eCommerce platform Blibli to unveil a Malaysia tourism promotion to aid in the recovery of the tourism sector. The partnership aims to help entrepreneurs and the local community.

Quoting deputy director general (planning) Iskandar Mirza Mohd Yusof, Bernama reported that the collaboration "allows tourism products to be directly promoted to potential tourists".

Tourism Malaysia will also unveil a promotional programme for Malaysia together with Malaysia Airlines on Thursday, Bernama added. From January to July this year, Malaysia saw 435,156 visitor arrivals from Indonesia, an 8,678.6% growth from last year. A+M has reached out to Tourism Malaysia and Blibli for additional information on the partnership. [READ MORE](#)



Sabah to set up Convention Bureau to tap into tourism-based business events

The State Government is setting up a Sabah Convention Bureau (SCB) which is expected to be operational early next year, said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor.

“SCB is a much-needed facility to tap into tourism-based business events to further make Sabah a preferred destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE).

“This will be a boost for tourism in Sabah,” he said at the official opening of Hyatt Centric, here, Monday. His speech was delivered by Deputy Chief Minister and Industrial Development Minister Datuk Seri Dr Joachim Gunsalam.

The Chief Minister said with all recovery efforts in place, Sabah has managed to register 1.2 million domestic and international visitor arrivals from January to September this year, with an estimated tourism receipt of RM2.1 billion. [READ MORE](#)



AirAsia group resumes old routes

AirAsia X (AAX), the mid-range airline subsidiary of the AirAsia Aviation Group, will be the first Malaysian carrier to reconnect Kuala Lumpur with Busan when it resumes non-stop flights there beginning early next year

Following the inauguration of service to Seoul in April this year, the thrice weekly flights will be AAX's second service to South Korea.

In a statement, AAX said it had also signed a memorandum with the Busan Tourism Organisation (BTO) to create coordinated sales and marketing campaigns, to leverage collective support from travel agents, improve flight connectivity and advance the economies of both nations through tourism.

AAX is expected to see the flight frequency to Busan return to daily services by the end of the year as it starts with thrice weekly services, and hopes the relaunched Busan route will provide a significant boost to strengthen business and tourism ties between Malaysia and South Korea. [READ MORE](#)



Saudi firm partners with Trump on Oman golf project

A Saudi real estate firm has partnered with the Trump Organisation on a US\$4 billion golf and real estate development project in neighbouring Oman, according to a stock market filing published Sunday.

The deal involving the Dar Al Arkan Global Company, a subsidiary of Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development Company, comes amid heightened tensions between the Saudi government and the administration of US President Joe Biden, who has a less cosy relationship with Saudi leaders than former president Donald Trump did.

The project includes "Trump residential villas, a hotel, and a golf course", according to the filing, adding that it will be "developed over 10 years on an area of 3.5 million square meters."

It "is being developed with the support of the Omani Company for Development and Tourism (Omran), the executive arm of the Sultanate of Oman for tourism development," the filing said. [READ MORE](#)



Expedia reveals 2023 travel trends

Expedia Group, which includes popular travel sites Expedia, Hotels.com and Vrbo, has revealed some unexpected travel trends for 2023, which the company is categorizing as the "no-normal," instead of the "new normal" of travel.

"We're seeing a surge in trips to culture capitals, a new wave of interest in wellness retreats and a spike in demand for outdoor destinations beyond just beaches and mountains — not a new normal but people branching out to unexpected trends in what we're calling the 'no normal,'" a statement from Jon Gieselman, president of Expedia Brands reads.

The "No-Normal" study was conducted from Sept. 22 to Oct. 14, through an online survey of 24,000 adults, from 17 countries, who are planning domestic or international travel in the next 36 months.

"Travel in 2023 will be about saying 'no' to normal, breaking routines and searching for experiences without compromises," Expedia Group's findings reads. "Whether it's flying to those once-in-a-lifetime events or hosting group celebrations at a holiday home, travellers are no longer adapting to the next new normal, but creating their own status quo altogether".

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*Global data from
Expedia.com reveals
the cultural capitals to
see in 2023:*

1. Edinburgh, Scotland
2. Lisbon, Portugal
3. Tokyo, Japan
4. Dublin, Ireland
5. New York, USA
6. Sydney, Australia
7. Dubai, UAE
8. Montreal, Canada
9. Munich, Germany
10. Bangkok, Thailand