

Travnews

NATAS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
TRAVEL AGENTS SINGAPORE

Feb-Apr 2016 • ISSUE 39

Take me to
NATAS

† EXPLORING THE NATURAL
WONDERS OF CROATIA

† PAVING THE WAY FOR
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

† A CHAT WITH ALBERT SEE

**OFFICIAL
OPENING
4 MARCH
2016**



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SAY HELLO TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

NATAS welcomes the following companies as new members.

Incredible Odyssey Pte Ltd

The founders of Incredible Odyssey started their business in 1990 as a small trekking outfit at Manali in the Western Himalaya after tourist-guests repeatedly requested for more tours to India, Bhutan and Nepal. With 26 years of experience in organising trekking and mountaineering expeditions, rafting, pilgrimages, wildlife and other similar activities, the team provides detailed itinerary planning that ensures comfort and safety for guests, either individually, in small groups or in groups of up to 100 persons.

SS Tourism Marketing Pte Ltd

SS Tourism Marketing was incorporated on 5 April 2011. It serves as a marketing office for the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia.

Winston Travel & Tours

Winston Travel specialises in inbound tours. It has a fleet of five deluxe coaches providing island-wide private transportation services in Singapore.

MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH

The total number of NATAS members as of 1 February 2016: 429 members
Ordinary Members: 351 • Associate Members: 73 • Honorary Life Members: 5

Season's Greetings



It was an exciting morning on 24 December 2015 as nine staff from NATAS visited the office of its training arm subsidiary TMIS at the Lifelong Learning Institute in Paya Lebar for a joint Christmas celebration. The staff of TMIS and NATAS had a great time interacting with each other and savouring a sumptuous Christmas feast. NATAS President Mr Devinder Ohri and Deputy President Mr Chung Kek Yoong were also present to add to the Christmas spirit and to give away lucky draw prizes. Mr Ohri was particularly delighted at the familial atmosphere of the gathering and hopes to see more of such get-togethers in the future.



NATAS
Holidays
2016

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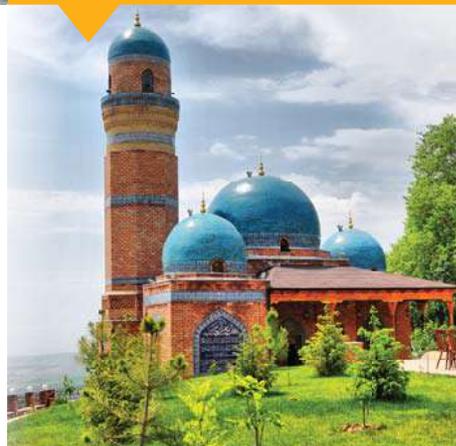
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allure of
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Editor/Advertising Sales Wilson Heng

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NATAS HOLIDAYS 2016

– Great Deals, Fabulous Performances!



To consumers, travel fairs are packed with attractive travel packages and good discounts. But the forty-eighth edition of the NATAS Travel Fair was much more than that!

Held at Singapore EXPO Hall 7 from 4 to 6 March 2016, the NATAS Travel Fair was planned by analysing evolving travel trends, said Mr Devinder Ohri, President of NATAS, in his opening address.

Unknown to many Singaporean travellers, NATAS’ accredited travel agents provide tailor-made itineraries to suit each individual’s needs. And this did not go unnoticed by visitors to the fair.

Savvy Singaporean travellers, always on the lookout for destinations off the beaten track, were intrigued by

and drawn to the booth taken up by the National Tourism Bureau of Kazakhstan, which saw more than 500 enquiries. Mr Nurlan Meirmanov, third secretary of the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan of Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, said this was an encouraging signal for tourism in his country.





In an opening address by His Excellency, Mr Miguel Angel Navarro Portera, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the Republic of Singapore, welcomed more Singaporeans to visit Spain. The Iberian nation attracted a record 68 million tourist arrivals in 2015, making it the third most-visited country in the world. His Excellency cited cultural, luxury, gastronomic and shopping tourism as the four factors that had contributed to Spain's successful tourism industry.

National Tourism Organisations from Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nepal, Shandong (China), Thailand and the USA were also at Hall 7 to provide information and advice to visitors.



To raise awareness of travel health, nurses from NATAS' strategic healthcare partner Tan Tock Seng Hospital were on site to provide advice on travel-related vaccinations and health matters to all visitors. Dr Teo Li Tserng also spoke on making self-drive holidays safer and more enjoyable.

Celebrity photographer Lance Leong shared his experience on capturing magnificent travel photographs, while China's calligraphy literati Master Zhu Xingguo wowed visitors with his steel pen calligraphy skills. Visitors were also treated to hourly cultural performances from Indonesia, Spain and Nepal.





Over at the “Taste the World” Food & Wines Trail, visitors savoured international cuisines such as Turkish kebab, Italian pasta, Sichuan’s Dan Dan noodle, Tea Valley’s special food menus, Japanese Samurice and European wines.



But the highlight of the fair was the announcement of the NATAS Grand Draw winner – Ms Zhuo YueXiang. This lucky lady spent \$8,416 on her MasterCard for a Star Cruises holiday to win a pair of Singapore Airlines Business Class tickets worth \$19,800 to Dusseldorf.



In the words of a blogger: “I overheard some journalists from the mainstream media saying that this event has ‘class’”. That’s NATAS! Here’s to planning a better fair in August 2016!

Exploring the allure of Uzbekistan



Twenty-one months after launching a service from Tashkent to Singapore by Uzbekistan Airways, the Association of Private Tourism Agencies of Uzbekistan (APTA) organised another roadshow for Singapore travel agents.

Held at Hilton Singapore on 22 January 2016, more than 60 NATAS-accredited travel agents turned up in full force to network with 18 inbound and outbound travel agencies from Uzbekistan. Local travel agents attended a presentation on Uzbekistan's tourist attractions being tucking into a sumptuous buffet.



Enhancing travel health with the TTSH MOU

With the aim of promoting safer and healthier travel, NATAS inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) on 2 February 2016 at the TTSH Boardroom. Representing TTSH was Associate Professor Lim Poh Lian, Head of Travellers' Health & Vaccination Clinic, while NATAS was represented by Mr Steven Lek.

Through this MOU, TTSH and NATAS hope to educate the travel community on essential travel health matters and help travellers better prepare for their trips. In keeping with this goal, nurses from the Travellers' Health & Vaccination Clinic were present at the recent NATAS Travel Fair to provide advice on travel-related vaccinations and health matters to all visitors.

人物专访

许炳辉开辟包机新航线争市场

本刊特约：余经仁

进入21世纪，互联网兴起，廉价航空崛起，旅游业行尊许炳辉接受本刊专访时，畅谈如何在这个网络大时代里奋起直追，在市场争一席之地。



Interview with Albert See, Managing Director/CEO of ASA Holidays on his business model.



中欧航空旅游联盟有限公司总裁兼董事总经理许炳辉在接受访问时侃侃而谈，声若洪钟、精神奕奕，一点也看不出是年届八十的耆年之人。

他说：“人一定要工作，而且要热爱工作，不要言老，不然很快就会‘报销’。”

所以，今年虽已经78岁，许炳辉不曾言倦，还勇猛投入职场冲刺。受访当天，他刚从中国南宁回来，当晚又要出门北上吉隆坡开会。

在分享养生之道后，话题马上进入当今的市况，许炳辉同意，互联网颠覆了传统的行业，出境旅游是其中之一，好一些以传统方式经营的同行，正面临前所未有的困境。

不过，在旅游业驰骋半世纪的许炳辉，显然毫无惧色。

他说：“我们积极开拓包机新航线，它们的景点独特新鲜、航程便捷，深受顾客欢迎。”

过去两年，中欧航旅开辟的包机航线不下20条，包括了从中国南宁、桂林、贵阳、三亚、泉州，日本九州、冲绳，韩国釜山、济州，台湾台中，泰国清迈、清莱，柬埔寨西哈努克港市，不丹帕罗，应用的航空公司，从胜安、虎航、不丹航空到捷星，应有尽有。

许炳辉表示，有了这样的包机，公司可以在成本控制下，推出各种价廉物美的旅游配套，不论团体行、自由行，都能满足顾客的需求与预算。

所以，这些年来，许炳辉坦言，他还感受不到廉航所带来的压力，客源依旧、营业额稳定。

“除非还有其他旅行社推出相同的战略，并且超越我们，不然，三五年内，我们相信还是仍然站稳市场。”

许炳辉目前也看中俄罗斯的市场，准备学习普京总统的强悍姿态出征，新航线预料在下半年推出，景点包括黑海、海参崴等地。

看来，许炳辉是老当益壮，越战越勇了！

许炳辉个人背景

- 上世纪60年代合创文娱游览公司，那个时代就主办集团蜜月旅行、世界博览会旅游。
- 70年代成立中美旅游，开始开拓包机包船市场。
- 90年代成立大通旅游，之后又再重返中美旅游。
- 本世纪初，成立中欧航旅。
- 值得一提的是，许炳辉成立的旅行社，都在本地领先市场，是数一数二的大型旅行社。

“我们积极开拓包机新航线，它们的景点独特新鲜、航程便捷，深受顾客欢迎。”



Checking in at

Hotel Boss

By Vincent Ho

Hotel Boss is a new hotel brand in Singapore, having made its debut in the fourth quarter of 2015. Managed by V Hotel Management Singapore and strategically located between two tourist attractions – Kampong Glam and Little India – the 19-storey, three-star hotel features 1,500 modern guest rooms with 11 room types. Room rates range from a Standard Double at \$100 (current promotional rate, all taxes included) to a Family Room with a balcony at \$276.

As I walked into the spacious and well-designed hotel lobby, I was impressed by the chandeliers. The front-desk staff were friendly and many spoke Bahasa Indonesia in addition to English,



Mandarin and Malay. Checking in was a fairly straightforward process, and I proceeded to my room with a sense of security, noting that the lifts and rooms required card access and that security cameras were installed at the lift lobby and along the room corridors.

The Superior Double Room measured about 14 sqm with the bed right in the middle, providing ample space to walk around the sides and corners. Like all other rooms, it was equipped with complimentary Wi-Fi access, a 40-inch LED TV with cable channels, USB-charging port, electronic safe, mini fridge, coffee- and tea-making facilities and bottles of mineral water. A dental kit and a set of toiletries were also nicely displayed in the toilet.

Exploring the hotel further, I made my way to the Sky Terrace on the fourth floor, where guests can work out or relax at the gym and swimming pool. I was also able to do my laundry at the laundromat on Level 11 for just \$5 per wash.

For breakfast, non-Muslim guests can look forward to a sumptuous buffet at the first level, while Muslim guests enjoy a halal breakfast buffet on the fourth level. Although the hotel is somewhat lacking in fine dining options, I noticed a number of local street food eateries such as Bak Kut Teh, chicken rice, Nanyang Bakery, Jollibean and Sushi Deli located around the hotel. There is also a 24-hour convenience store within the hotel premises.

As night fell, the surrounding area took on another persona, offering visitors a vibrant array of nightlife and entertainment choices. These are all located within walking distance, with Lavender MRT Station just 300 metres from the hotel.

NATAS regularly organises the inspection of new hotels for its travel agent members. More than 50 members attended the Hotel Boss inspection on 20 February 2016 and were treated to a high tea reception.



Croatia

a Mediterranean fantasy

With its picture-perfect coastal towns, glittering waters and perfect beaches, Croatia is every traveller's dream destination. And hidden behind its ancient walled towns is a host of travel experiences waiting to be discovered.

Zagreb, Croatia's capital and largest city, boasts charming "old city" architecture with cobbled streets reminiscent of Vienna, Budapest, Prague, and other Central European cities. However, many tourists often overlook this charming city as it features neither the sea nor sun-kissed beaches. Yet Zagreb does have many fine sights, plenty of restaurants, cafés and bars, a huge selection of

accommodation, and the most number of museums per square foot of any city in the world!

Arriving into Zagreb by train, the statue of King Tomislav – Croatia's first king – welcomed me as I stepped out of the train station, proudly standing beyond the city's street peddlers, florists and taxi drivers. I was rewarded with one of

Zagreb's most beautiful views outside the station as I took in the statue of King Tomislav, the spires of the Zagrebačka Katedrala (Zagreb Cathedral), and the green slopes of Mount Medvednica in the distance.



When sightseeing in Zagreb, it's a good idea to head to Trg bana Josipa Jelačića (Ban Jelačić Square) – dedicated to Croatian military hero Josip Jelačić, who defeated the Hungarians in an uprising in 1848. As the city's main square, it





the pedestrianised square's plethora of cafés. During the day, the middle of Ban Jelačić Square also plays host to a farmer's market, where fresh agricultural produce from around the region is sold. I couldn't help but buy some blueberries, raspberries and blackberries, and they turned out to be absolutely delicious!



A short walk north led me to the Zagreb Cathedral, a Roman Catholic institution that is the most monumental sacral building south-east of the Alps. One can't miss the twin spires of the cathedral as they are probably the most prominent pieces of architecture in the Zagreb skyline. Dedicated to the Assumption of Mary and to the kings Saint Stephen and Saint Ladislaus, the cathedral is typically Gothic, as is its sacristy, which is of great architectural value.

Sava River, blowing a hole into a platter of fowl that was to be served to the warlords. The Turks fled, and Zagreb was not attacked. Since this ace shot was fired at noon, the mid-day auditory onslaught of cannon fire continues to this very day.

With so many museums in Zagreb, I decided to pop by the Ethnographic Museum, which curates 80,000 representative items from Croatia's Pannonian, Dinaric and Adriatic zones. One can only gaze in awe as the folk dresses of Croatia's regions come alive along through the intricately crafted accessories and handicrafts.



As dusk falls in Zagreb, finish the day in one of the city's many bars or clubs. Sample delicious Croatian pastries, and don't forget to taste the famous Zagrebačka kremšnita — a vanilla and custard cream cake dessert with chocolate icing on top!



represents its commercial heart and is a common meeting place for the people of Zagreb. It is also located within walking distance from most of the city's major attractions. Beautiful buildings on all sides display a variety of architectural styles from Biedermaier to Art Nouveau, and one can (and should!) savour the experience of ordering a coffee and watching the world go by in one of



As the sun shines strongly over the Zagreb Cathedral, the loud boom of cannon fire can be heard. But fear not, it's simply an indication that it's noon. The Grič cannon at the Lotrščak Tower fires a shot in the middle of the day in memory of a single event from Zagreb's past. According to legend, the cannon fired a shot at noon right at a marauding Turkish encampment located across the



Story and Image Credits: Wilson Heng

CHANGI AIRPORT

hits record 55.4 million passengers for 2015!

Eight new airlines and 10 new city links in a year.



Image Credits: Kok Chwee SIM

Singapore Changi Airport is the world's sixth busiest airport in terms of international traffic. With over 100 airlines providing connectivity to 320 cities worldwide, the airport handles about 6,800 flights every week, or about one every 90 seconds. And in 2015, Singapore Changi Airport marked another great year as it welcomed a record 55.4 million passengers, up 2.5 per cent from the previous year. As testament of its stalwart reputation, the award-winning airport also received its 500th Best Airport award in November 2015.

Jakarta was top of Changi Airport's list of busiest routes with 3.79 million passenger movements, followed by Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and Manila. Bangkok was Changi Airport's second fastest-growing route among destinations, with at least half a million passengers handled in 2015. Colombo, Guangzhou, Mumbai and Tokyo rounded up the top five.

In terms of strong traffic growth for Changi Airport, the top three country markets were Thailand (+12.5%), Vietnam (+7.2%) and China (+7.0%).

During the year, eight new airlines commenced services to Changi Airport. The return of Air New Zealand boosted capacity on the Singapore-Auckland route, while the addition of Batik Air, Thai Lion Air and Myanmar National Airlines strengthened the airport's connectivity within South-East Asia. Oman Air also launched a daily service from its capital city of Muscat, a new city link for Changi Airport.

Besides airlines, Changi Airport welcomed the addition of 10 new destinations, four of which are within China (Changchun, Quanzhou, Sanya and Yinchuan), strengthening its position as South East Asia's most connected airport to China. The airport now has a total of 32 city links to the country, totalling approximately 4.9 million passenger movements.

Other than the Chinese cities and Muscat, Changi Airport also welcomed new services to Cairns in Australia, Lucknow in India, Luang Prabang in Laos, Pattaya (U-Tapao) in Thailand and Cincinnati in the USA, a new freighter link.

In addition, Changi Airport's outlook will be bolstered by positive developments in 2016, such as the addition of new city links and airlines. These include Singapore Airlines' new services to Dusseldorf from 21 July, Canberra and Wellington from 20 September, as well as the arrival of Fiji Airways' new direct service from Nadi on 6 April. Heralding a good start, China's West Air launched a Chongqing-Singapore service on 4 February whilst Air Mauritius launched a Port Louis-Singapore service on 15 March.

With all these exciting new developments, the World's Best Airport looks set for another great year ahead!

Making the move towards sustainable tourism

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing and changing industries. According to United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals in 2015 hit a record 1,184 million, up 4.4 per cent over the previous year. According to UNWTO, this figure could rise to 1.6 billion by 2020.

This marks the sixth consecutive year of above-average growth of four per cent since the post-crisis year of 2010. But while demand was strong overall, individual destinations saw mixed results that were due to unusually strong exchange rate fluctuations, lower oil and commodity prices, and natural and man-made crises such as terrorism in many parts of the world.

The robust performance of the tourism sector contributes to economic growth and job creation in many countries. Unfortunately, all tourism activities, regardless of motivation – holidays, business, conferences or adventures – can also cause their share of problems such as social dislocation, overcrowding, economic dependence, loss of cultural heritage and ecological degradation. It is therefore critical for countries to promote policies that foster the continued growth of tourism, including travel facilitation, human resource development and sustainability.

Understanding the impact of tourism on societies and the environment has led many enlightened travellers to go on more responsible holidays. These

include various forms of alternative or sustainable tourism such as ecotourism, cultural tourism and religious tourism.

A sustainable approach to tourism ensures that the arrival of tourists does not impact either the socio-cultural fabric or the natural environment of the host communities. On the contrary, local communities and their natural environment should benefit both economically and culturally from tourism. Sustainability implies that tourism resources and tourist attractions should be utilised in such a manner that does not compromise their subsequent use by future generations.

In a recent public talk organised by the Institute on Asian Consumer Insight, Professor Durairaj Maheswaran from Stern School of Business, New York University touched on how businesses and policymakers can productively employ different strategies to develop sustainable tourism. This helps them achieve the right balance between creating economic value for companies and providing enjoyable experiences for tourists. Professor Maheswaran also discussed the global challenges that the tourism industry continues to face.



Professor Durairaj Maheswaran

Neighbouring Thailand, which attracted 29.8 million tourists in 2015, has embarked on a community-based tourism initiative in which the government helps disperse income to all local communities nationwide as well as build a better quality of life for the local people. This initiative aims to strengthen communities and promote the preservation of Thai culture and traditions, and would require cooperation from all those involved, especially the private sector.

With the understanding that well-designed and well-managed tourism can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development, job creation and trade, the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development in a bid to promote sustainable tourism.

Together, we can build a more sustainable tourism industry.



Environmental

Social-Cultural

Economic

According to World Youth, Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation, a Dutch not for profit organisation, 20% of all international travellers are now young people. They are more interconnected, travel further, stay longer and spend more than other tourists. In 2014, these 227 million travellers generated nearly US\$250 billion in sales. Trend? Upwards!

Enhancing customer service and improving sales through training

The Tourism Management Institute of Singapore (TMIS), the training arm of NATAS, conducts many courses leading to WSQ (Workforce Skills Qualifications) Certificates or Diplomas, a nationally recognised certification from the Singapore Workforce Development Agency.

As staff training and development represents the cornerstone of many successful corporations, NATAS' travel agent members are encouraged to send their employees for such courses. Training programmes like these enable employees to broaden their perspectives on various areas in relation to their job. Ultimately, well-trained employees enhance customer service and improve the organisation's sales figures.

In recognising these valuable courses, NATAS' accredited travel agent, UOB Travel Planners, collaborated with TMIS to send eight of its employees to attend the WSQ Sell Products and Services programme from 15 to 23 February 2016.

The WSQ Sell Products and Services programme aims to equip trainees with the knowledge and skills to segment their customers, determine consumers' wants and needs, and apply effective selling techniques to facilitate sales.

Over five days of customised training, the eight trainees had the opportunity to not only interact with their fellow co-workers, but also to absorb and exchange ideas and knowledge with their trainers. More importantly, the training helped to strengthen their selling skills and knowledge, which are necessary for them to compete in a highly competitive market environment.



Upon completion of the programme, post-training interviews were conducted with several UOB Travel employees. Here are what some of the trainees said:

It's definitely very relevant to what we are doing on a daily basis – serving our customers. What's more, we can instantly apply the skills and techniques we have learnt when we meet our customers.

Going through the training has helped refresh my memory, which has sort of “slackened” over the years, and boosted my confidence one level up.

The training helps to develop self-esteem and enhance confidence. Furthermore, we have learnt valuable experience from one another and better ways of handling customers.

The trainer is very experienced! She has not only provided us with many real-life scenarios and case studies for discussion and debate, but also given us lots of useful tips such as keywords to use during the sales process.

Trainer Ms Noren Suseno commented that the Sell Products and Services training for UOB Travel Planners benefitted the employees. She mentioned that the combination of theory and role play helped them to practise the various techniques covered in the course, and that the training sessions also gave them the opportunity to address concerns that they might have overlooked.

Mr Steven Ler, Executive Director of UOB Travel Planners, shared with Travnews that “one objective of the company is to develop staff with proper skills and confidence to enable them to communicate and engage with customers effectively”.

So what are you waiting for? Check with TMIS on the available courses and send your employees for training now!



Building the next generation of Travel Professionals

Diploma Programmes

- WSQ Diploma in Tourism (Hospitality Management)
- WSQ Diploma in Tour and Travel Services **NEW**

Certificate Programmes

- WSQ Certificate in Attractions
- WSQ Certificate in Hotel Accommodation Services (Front Office)
- WSQ Higher Certificate in Tour and Travel Services **NEW**

Tourist Guide Programmes / PDC

- WSQ Tourist Guide Course (English/Chinese) **NEW**
- WSQ Provide Guide in Eco-Tourism and Nature Tourism **NEW**
- WSQ Provide Guide in Celebrity Restaurants (Chinese) **NEW**

Short Courses

- WSQ NATAS Professional Tour Leader (English/Chinese)
- WSQ Cruise Specialist **NEW**
- WSQ Corporate Ticketing **NEW**

Others (Not Applicable for SkillsFuture Credit)

- Certificate of Proficiency in Travel Insurance
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