

Business Right Here!

Where Team Spirit Converges





spoilt for CHOICE

HONG KONG CONTINUES to ramp up its group offerings with the move certainly paying dividends. **STORY BY BRAD FOSTER**

HKTB regional director Australia and New Zealand, Andrew Clark, is understandably upbeat about the year ahead.

Last year Hong Kong attracted close to 50,000 business events delegates from Australia and New Zealand (with Australia making up about 90 per cent of that figure). This is a growth in conference and incentive arrivals of around 14.5 per cent.

The fact that the Australian dollar is now buying more HK dollars (the HK dollar is linked to the US dollar), Mr Clark believes that 2011 will be a significantly strong year for the destination.

"This gives Hong Kong a really competitive edge," he explains.

"We are telling the conference and incentive market that significant savings can now be had in Hong Kong because of the high Australian dollar. The cost of hotels, food, and shopping are all lower.

"And the other thing that groups should be aware of is that the Hong Kong Government has dropped the duty on all wines coming into Hong Kong with the intent of making it a regional trading hub for wine."

This means that large groups who buy their wine in bulk will make significant savings compared to previous years.

What is also assisting local meeting and incentive planners is access to Hong Kong.

"Air capacity from Australia is very good," Mr Clark says.

"We've got almost 100 flights from Australia to Hong Kong per week with flights out of all major cities. This certainly helps when there's a national organisation considering where to go. Ease of access is a major consideration for many."

China beyond

Mr Clark said there has also been a growth in groups combining Hong Kong with a city in China such as Shanghai or Beijing, or smaller regional centres, particularly for those with a sense of adventure.

"We encourage that link because again the onward flights from Hong Kong to all areas of China is quite extensive these days."

Also assisting Hong Kong in its growth strategy is the ongoing development of Hong Kong Disneyland, and Ocean Park.

What started as a relatively small park, Hong Kong Disneyland is now going through a second phase of expansion which, by 2012, will offer more themed areas and thrill rides.

"As a MICE destination it's [already] doing well. With its two hotels, where the standard of service is excellent, and the opportunity to use the park of an evening, it is attracting group activity. Jetset Travelworld recently had a conference there for 450 from the Australian travel industry for three nights and I believe it worked extremely well.

The new additions to Hong Kong Disneyland include "Grizzly Gulch" and "Mystic Point" which will be exclusive to the park for the first five years after their respective openings. A third themed area "Toy Story Land," will be exclusive within Asia for the first five years after opening. Additionally, developments at the Ocean Park marine park, also due for completion in 2012, will significantly enhance Hong Kong's ability to cater to the family segment.

"For some groups this is an important aspect. Some conferences or incentives travel with their families. Even if the families are not involved in the official part of the meeting they have to have options for spouses and children to do other things. Disneyland and Ocean Park is another hook."

Mr Clark said the high levels of service, ease of access, great buying power of the Australian dollar right now, quality (and affordability of) accommodation, and the opportunities to shop for both high-end products and market-style goods, should continue to make Hong Kong highly attractive to meeting and incentive groups for 2011 and beyond.

119 reasons TO VISIT HONG KONG

AND YOU THOUGHT the food, service and cultural opportunities were reason enough to choose Hong Kong for an upcoming event. The HKTB thinks they have a few more reasons than that.

When it comes to group travel, what you do “beyond the ballroom” is often as important as what you do in your meetings. To that end, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB)’s Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK) office has specially produced “The Black Book – A MICE Guide for Hong Kong” offering 119 unique venues and inspiring reasons on why visitors should come to Hong Kong for MICE events. General manager of MEHK, Ms Gilly Wong, says the guide includes the latest products and activities designed to ignite inspiring ideas when planning for future MICE events.

“Hong Kong is not just a modern cosmopolitan city, but also a vibrant and innovative one. With the support of the travel trade and the launch of new products and services, Hong Kong is certainly a premier destination for corporations from around the world to conduct their meetings and incentive travel.”

Selected highlights of the showcase include:

Dim sum cooking class

Renowned as the “Culinary Capital of Asia”, Hong Kong not only lays a full table of international cuisines for visitors’ choice, but also houses a great diversity of mouth-watering local delicacies. This is a program from Ming Court at Langham Place Mongkok, a Michelin two-star restaurant, which gives groups an opportunity to experience the art of cookery. Under the guidance of the chef, participants will learn to cook dim sum, and taste their creations at the conclusion.

Wine tasting in the dark

In recent years, more corporations also combine elements of social responsibility into their staff training programs to help employees enhance their communication skills and learn mutual respect. Wine Tasting in the Dark is a new program for small groups to appreciate wines and make friends in darkness through ice-breaking exercises, food and wine pairing and socialising.

Tea appreciation

Groups take part in a tea-appreciation class as well as gaining a deeper insight into Chinese culture with the class held at the Nan Lian Garden, a Chinese garden that embodies the architectural style of the Tang Dynasty. The activity gives participants an authentic experience of Hong Kong’s cultural fusion and vibrancy in a distinctive setting.

Apart from the guide, more unique and inspiring activities are now available in MEHK’s dedicated website: www.mehongkong.com/promotions/brh-mi/.

A comprehensive Hong Kong MICE kit is also available for registration at www.mehongkong.com/mice/eng/jsp/mice-reply-form/index.html.



HONG KONG *Rewards*

Groups considering Hong Kong for an upcoming meeting or incentive may be eligible for some very special offers.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board and its partners have teamed up to offer a host of specially devised events.

These specials are contained in the HONG KONG REWARDS! Privilege program and are offered to groups of 20 or more staying a minimum of two consecutive nights in Hong Kong.

Now, more meeting and incentive groups coming to Hong Kong will be able to experience the vibrancy and excitement of Asia’s world city, making this the perfect place for incentive travel and corporate meetings.

Visit www.discoverhongkong.com where you can download an application to see if you are eligible.



hong kong snags CENTENNIAL DENTAL CONGRESS

THE FDI World Dental Federation has picked Hong Kong as the host city for the 2012 FDI Annual World Dental Congress (AWDC).

STORY BY PAULINE TAN

It formally informed the Hong Kong Dental Association (HKDA) of its choice recently. FDI attracts more than 10,000 oral health professionals from different parts of the world and showcases the latest dental technology and knowledge.

The congress location is decided by a stringent selection process and this is the second time HKDA has managed to bring this global event to Hong Kong. The association last hosted it in 1995.

The 2012 FDI AWDC will take place at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from August 29 to September 1, 2012. It will be the congress's centennial anniversary.

The HKDA held a signing ceremony in December 2010 with FDI World Dental Federation president, Dr Roberto Vianna and HKDA president Dr Sigmund Leung. On hand to celebrate the occasion were Permanent Secretary for Health, Sandra Lee, Hong Kong Coalition of Professional Services chairman, Leung Chun-ying, Hong Kong Tourism Board (Meetings & Exhibitions Hong Kong) general manager, Ms Gilly Wong, and Asia Pacific Dental Federation past president, Jeffrey Tsang.

Dr Vianna said: "FDI Council's decision to choose Hong Kong as the host city not only recognises Hong Kong's sound and comprehensive infrastructure but also her outstanding geographical location and global connectivity."

Mr Leung added: "Hong Kong's capability in hosting mega international congresses is also affirmed."

He said he hoped to demonstrate at the congress the HKDA's Dental Clinic Management System, which will be open-sourced with a view to encouraging Hong Kong dentists to maintain standardised e-health records for patients so as to facilitate future e-health record sharing.

The HKDA hosted FDI Annual World Dental Congress (FDI AWDC) in 1995 and organised three Asia Pacific Dental Congresses in 1984, 2004 and 2009 respectively. In 2010, the association initiated and organised its own international congress, the Hong Kong International Dental Expo and Symposium.



HKCEC ADDS underground links

STORY BY **PAULINE TAN**

THE HONG KONG underground, famed for its seamless network of direct, sheltered connections into key public buildings and malls, is being tapped into by the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC).

Planning and a portion of the construction are now underway on major improvements and expansion to the road and underground rail network around the HKCEC which, when completed, will make the downtown venue even more accessible to organisers, exhibitors, visitors and the public.

Construction began early 2010 to provide a six-lane underground by-pass from Hong Kong's Central district to the eastern corridor underneath the HKCEC, which will free up surface traffic around the centre. Additionally, a new rail line is planned to run through multiple districts in Hong Kong and will pass under the HKCEC. A potential new adjacent exhibition station could provide direct access to the centre, as well as nearby hotels and other business facilities.

The infrastructure enhancements are not short-term developments, with completion only expected within the decade. However, as Hong Kong is targeting large-scale association meetings which are booked years ahead, the developments might tip the scale in the destination's favour when future events are being pitched for.

Upon completion, visitors and guests travelling between different districts in Hong Kong and HKCEC will benefit from significant reductions in travelling time. HKCEC managing director, Cliff Wallace, said: "I am also hopeful for future additional expansion to the HKCEC to meet the demand from ongoing growth of our current clients' events, many of them that have now become the world's most prestigious. Among these is the world's largest jewellery show held each September.



THE LANGHAM

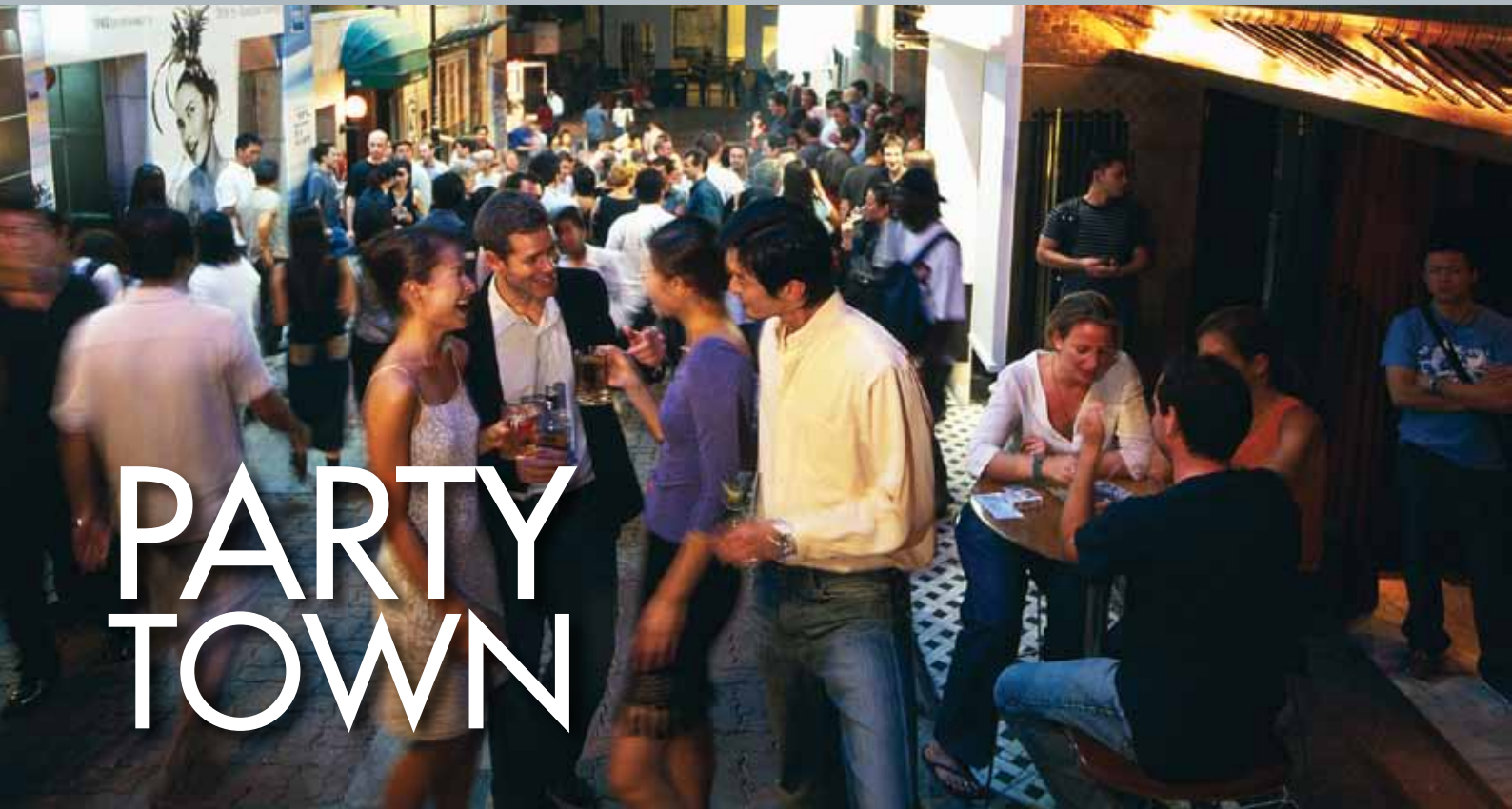
Hong Kong

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PARTY TOWN

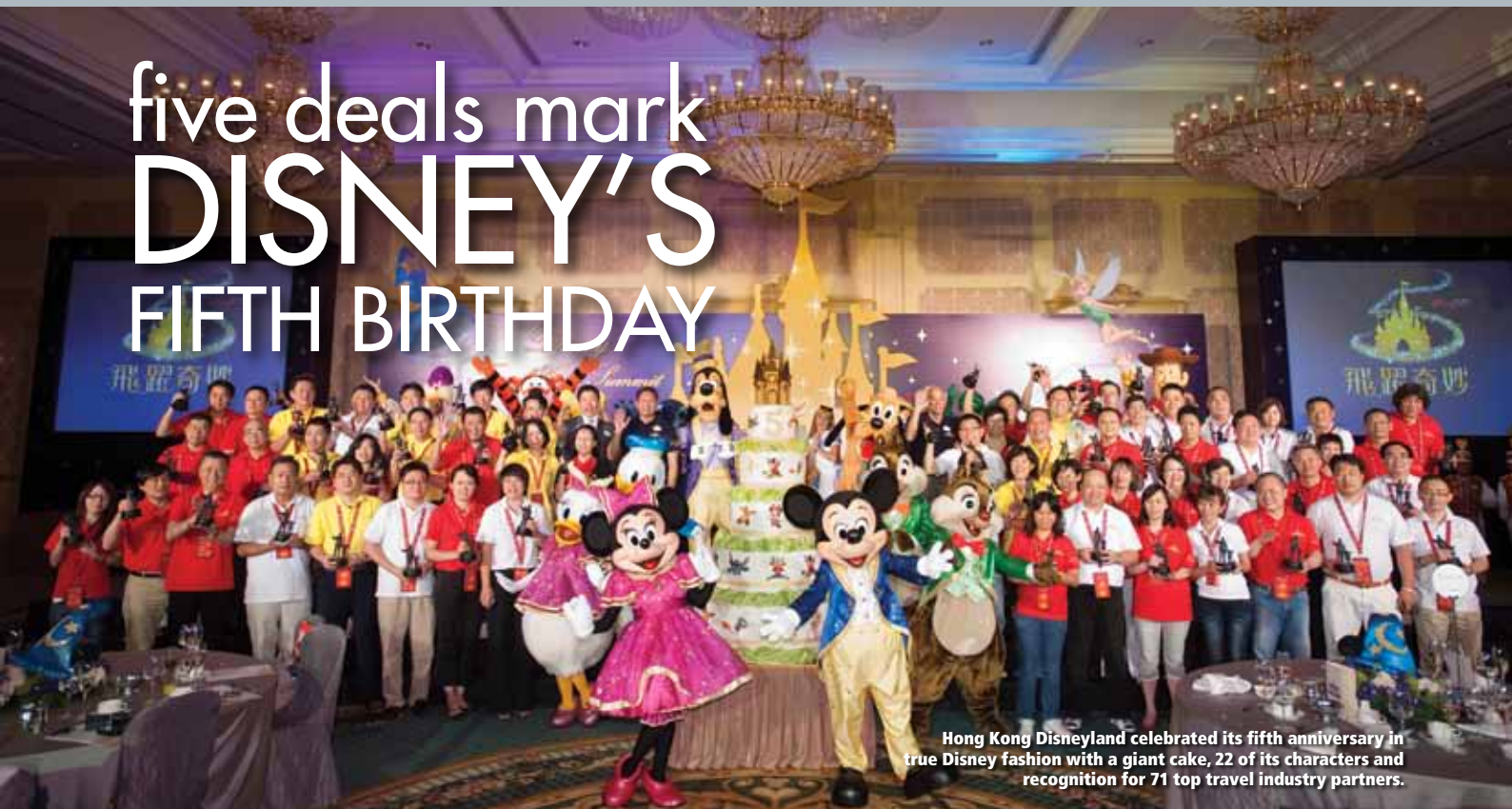
HONG KONG'S REPUTATION as a non-stop party town can't be underestimated, especially when you examine its annual events calendar.

From cultural performances, food and shopping festivals, to Chinese New Year celebrations, Hong Kong really is one big party town 24/7, 365 days a year.

With so much going on meeting and incentive travel planners have a very real opportunity to tap into existing events, giving their delegates a few surprises that they may not have been expecting. The following is a snapshot of just some events in Hong Kong in 2011:

- The 39th Hong Kong Arts Festival – February 17 – March 27
- Hong Kong Sevens - March 25-27
- The 35th Hong Kong International Film Festival - March 20 - April 5
- Hong Kong Cultural Celebrations – April 25 – May 11
- Birthday of Tin Hau (April 25) with celebrations in Yuen Long/Sai Kung & Tsing Yi
- Birthday of Lord Buddha (May 10) celebration at Po Lin Monastery, Lantau Island, with Buddha Bathing, cultural variety show and Shaolin Kung Fu
- Cheng Chau Bun Festival (May 10) with float procession and bun scrambling competition
- Birthday of Tam Kung (May 10) with lion and dragon dance procession
- Hong Kong Summer Spectacular – June 17 to August 31
- Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival (June 17-19) with international dragon boat races (Sat & Sun), Beer garden, Dragon Boat Exhibition, Bath Tug Race and Large dragon boat race, welcome and celebration parties
- Mega Shopping Sprees (June 17 – August 31)
- Hong Kong Halloween Treats - September 24 – October 31
- Mid-Autumn Lantern Celebration - September 3-13. The Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival is one of the most charming and colourful annual events that celebrates, among other things, harvest time with the biggest and brightest moon of the year. Celebrate with a fire dragon dance at Tai Hang, lantern carnivals and exhibitions throughout the city.
- Hong Kong Wine and Dine Month - November. As the Culinary Capital of Asia, Hong Kong has expanded its Wine and Dine Month which will be kicked off by a four-day Wine and Dine Festival (October 27-30). Celebrate throughout November with Street Carnivals in Lan Kwai Fong and SoHo in Central and the Sai Kung Seafood Festival. Hong Kong's major hotels and party hotspots will also be offering various territory-wide food and wine promotions.
- Hong Kong Winterfest – November 25 – Jan 1 (2012). Christmastime is a magical time to be in Hong Kong as a warm and happy spirit embraces the city. You will be awed by the skyscrapers and their fantastic illuminations. The city's malls and shops are all decked out in their fantastic Christmas finery, plus there will be lots of wonderful seasonal promotions on offer.
- Hong Kong's new year countdown – December 31. At the stroke of midnight, a pyrotechnic show will be launched from the major buildings on Hong Kong Island providing a radiant shower of lights, illuminating the harbour and creating an unforgettable celebration.
- 2012 Chinese New Year Celebrations 23 January 2012. The Chinese New Year festival is always a special occasion. Festivities involve flamboyant flower markets, a spectacular Cathay Pacific International Chinese New Year Night Parade, a fascinating fiesta, fabulous fireworks, lively sporting events and plenty of other attractions and cultural activities, including fortune tellers, learn to write fai chun (lucky sayings), try traditional Chinese New Year snacks and of course, indulge in the fabulous shopping opportunities.

five deals mark DISNEY'S FIFTH BIRTHDAY



Hong Kong Disneyland celebrated its fifth anniversary in true Disney fashion with a giant cake, 22 of its characters and recognition for 71 top travel industry partners.

HONG KONG DISNEYLAND has revealed plans for new attractions at a recent travel trade summit. STORY BY PAULINE TAN

The business solutions & events team at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort has five special meetings and social events offers to mark its year-long fifth anniversary celebrations that begin January 21, 2011.

These can be paired with professional development content through the Disney Institute, with the resort's teams customising team-building programs and private events in Disneyland. Bookers and agents were told of the impending additions at a recent travel trade summit to mark its fifth anniversary.

Sales and distribution marketing vice-president, Aliana Ho, said: "Our facilities are unlike anything else you'll find in Hong Kong or anywhere else in Asia, but what sets Disney apart is its ability to deliver more than hotel rooms and meeting space. We make event organisers feel like royalty and give them the power to make their events shine. The Disney business solutions & events team is the single source for everything you need to execute your event. It's like having a fairy godmother to help you with all of the details."

In the first of the special deals, planners who book meetings of 50 or more participants more than five months in advance will each receive one-night complimentary stay and a complimentary dinner for two. They will also receive five per cent savings on the meeting package price, along with a special fifth anniversary-themed enhancement to the afternoon break.

For repeat bookers confirming programs of 50 persons or more, there is a 10 per cent f&b savings and five complimentary theme park tickets. Programs must be booked and actualised during the promotional period.

MICE planners looking to surprise their delegates can provide "magical moments" for their participants with an in-room surprise during one of the meeting luncheons. Several lucky participants will be rewarded with prizes that might be theme park tickets,

merchandise goodie bags, dinner vouchers or other special gifts.

Should an organisation be celebrating its own five-year milestone, whether a corporate anniversary of five, 10, 15 years or more, complimentary fifth anniversary-themed floral décor design or snacks are being offered.

Finally, as the resort is renowned for spectacular holiday events, events held during seasonal festivities will be overlaid with the theme for the period for additional flair.

Disney Institute is a training organisation offering professional development programs. Its portfolio of keynote presentations, workshops and seminars take participants inside the Disney organisation to discover ideas in the fields of leadership, creativity, service, brand loyalty and people management.

Each program explores proven business best practices that are adaptable to any organisation. They are facilitated by experienced Disney leaders, and many programs include guided field experiences to onstage and behind-the-scenes operating locations throughout Hong Kong Disneyland Resort.

In terms of infrastructure, the theme park will premiere three new lands in the coming years as part of an expansion that will bring the total number of attractions and entertainment experiences to more than 100. The first phase will open at the end of 2011 with Toy Story Land. Following Toy Story Land will be the opening of Grizzly Gulch, an abandoned frontier mining town that will be home to the high-speed Grizzly Mountain coaster. When it opens, the new coaster will be the longest in Asia.

The expansion culminates in 2014 with the opening of Mystic Point, a land that will be exclusive to Hong Kong Disneyland Resort. In a "supernatural rainforest", participants will discover the mysterious Mystic Manor.

Visit www.hongkongdisneylandmeetings.com.



HONG KONG TOURISM BOARD

