

Open Trade

CONNECTING GLOBAL COMMERCE

www.opentrade.in

Tourism Enriches

Focus

Madhya Pradesh

Frontrunner for
Foreign Investment



NEW
MEDIA

connecting global business

In This Issue



COVER STORY

07

WEF to Release Travel, Tourism Report & Index in March '07
Tourism Enriches

09

PERSPECTIVE

The 'Capital Tourist' & his Aversion to Hush Money



ECONOMY

11

Holy Lollapalooza!
An Indian Growth Story

14
to
48

TOURISM SECTION



FOCUS

49

Madhya Pradesh
The Frontrunner for Foreign Investment

57

PHOTO FEATURE

Connecting Global Commerce
The Launch of Open Trade



Distributed by:

New Media Communication Pvt. Ltd.

in association with

Trade Commissioners' Forum, Mumbai

Managing Editor: Satya Swaroop

Director: B.K. Sinha

Group Editor: Dev Varam

Consulting Editors: Prabhu Sinha,

Rajiv Tewari & Archana Sinha

Editorial: Ekta Bhargava

Strategic Advisor: Vinaya Shetty

Manager: Sunil Kumar

Head Projects: Prachi

Account Asst.: Vrunda Gurav

Circulation: Madhavi, Jawaharlal & Santosh Gangurde

Art Director: Santosh Nawar

Visualizers: Maya Vichare & Sagar Banawalikar

DTP: Nilima Kadam

Photographer: Bilal Khan

BRANCHES:

Kolkata:

Anurag Sinha, Branch Manager, A-7/1, Satyam Park, 2nd Lane, Near 3A Bus Stand, Thakurpukur Kolkata- 700 104
Tel: 098300 15667, 033-24537708
Email: anurag@newmediacomm.biz

Ranchi:

Dr. Shambhu Prasad, 22 Anjuman Plaza, 2nd Floor, Main Road, Ranchi- 834001
Tel: 0651-3095103, Telefax: 2246742

Pune:

Jagdish Khaladkar, Regional Director, Tel: 098230 38315
Geeta K, Regional Head, Sahyog Apartments 508, Narayan Peth, Patrya Maruti Chowk Pune 411 030.
Telefax: 020 2445 4642, 2445 1574
Email: pune@newmediacomm.biz
jagdishk@vsnl.com

Thiruvananthapuram:

Murugan, Branch Manager, TC-27/1749(3), PERA - 70, Vanchiyoor, Thiruvananthapuram
Tel: 09447555222, 0471-5540888
Email: murugan@newmediacomm.biz

Australia Office:

Bandhana Kumari Prasad, 129 Camboon Road, Noranda, Perth, W.A. 6062 Tel: 0061 892757447
Email: bandhana@newmediacomm.biz

New Media Communication Pvt. Ltd.,

B/302, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Marol, Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400 059 India
Tel: +91-22-28516690 Telefax: +91-22-28515279
E-mail: enquiry@newmediacomm.biz
www.newmediacomm.com

Printed & Published by

Veerendra Bhargava and printed at M/s Young Printers, A-2/237, Shah & Nahar Industrial Estate, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400 013 and published from B/302, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Marol, Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400 059 India
Tel: +91-22-28516690 Telefax: +91-22-28515279
Editor: Dev Varam

The news items and information published herein have been collected from various sources, which are considered to be reliable. Readers are however requested to verify the facts before making business decisions using the same.

Office of The Trade Commissioners' Forum

115, Maker Chamber VI, 11th Floor, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400 021.
Tel: +91-22-22821125/1214. Fax: +91-22-22821085.



A Tribute: We salute you, Mr. Chairman



R.K. Prasad
26/06/1932-12/10/2006

New Media Staff

It is with profound grief and deep respect that we bow our heads to your memory. Unassuming and without fuss, you oversaw the growth of New Media, the sapling you helped plant and nurture. You had seen it blossom into India's largest publishing house of bilateral trade magazines. Stunned as we are at the suddenness of your demise, we rededicate ourselves to work for the values you had cherished and the standards you had laid down for the publications. You'll forever remain an inspiration for us.



EDITORIAL



Dear Reader,

Greetings. The second issue of Open Trade is dedicated to tourism, which is a global phenomenon of great economic importance. It is no more looked upon as a leisure activity. Tourism is big business, which according to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), accounts for about 11 percent of the Global GDP. By being a facilitator of huge capital investment across the globe, tourism is also the biggest job providing industry. Tourism facilitates the movement of people across continents. For several smaller and poor countries, tourism has been the mainstay of their economies. It is precisely for this reason that UNWTO has come up with the campaign, 'Tourism Enriches'. The cover story gives details of this campaign, which is expected to help the poor countries achieve their millennium development goals. The issue covers the hotspots of tourism in various countries in five continents, from Australia to the US. India's liberalized policies on foreign investment in real estate have drawn to this country, droves of big ticket players from abroad. Umesh Luthria writes about the 'Capital' Tourist, his likes and his aversions. The current issue's focus is on Madhya Pradesh, a state that is in a hurry to catch up with development on all fronts. The state is holding an investors' meet in Khajuraho in January, followed by a much bigger event in October'07. There is plenty to read and enjoy.

I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year.

Satya Swaroop
Managing Editor
satya@newmediacomm.biz



Friends,

The second issue of Open Trade is dedicated to tourism, which is growing at a mind-blowing pace across the globe. Today, tourism is one of the world's biggest businesses, but with a difference. It has a human touch. Tourism connects nations. In fact, it connects people and hearts. Tourism brings out the best in both the hosts and the guests. As a catalytic component of the overall global economic growth, tourism facilitates the movement of wealth from the developed and rich nations to their poor and developing counterparts. Members of the Trade Commissioners' Forum in their individual capacity have been facilitating tourism between the countries they represent and India, which is helping both sides to promote their bilateral trade. I take this opportunity to thank TCF's Past President Joseph Koch, whose India tenure has just ended, for his relentless efforts at building TCF as a meaningful body that could effectively deal with various issues of collective concern. I wish him all the best in his future endeavours. I wish you a happy and prosperous new year.

Vittorio Mecozzi

President,

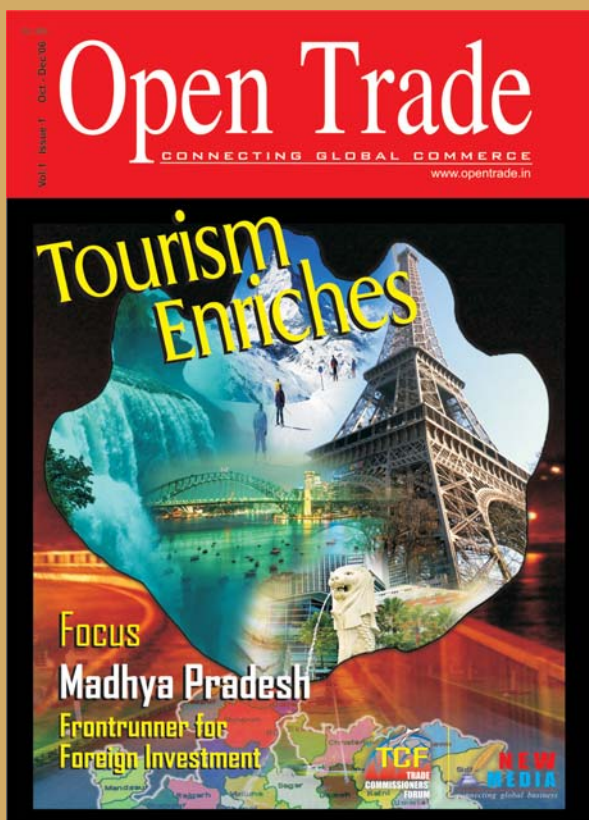
Trade Commissioners' Forum



Joseph, Wish You All The Best

Joseph Koch has just retired as Director, Swiss Business Forum, the organization that has solidly supported the bi-monthly, Indo-Swiss Business, one of the key publications of New Media Communication. Again, it is Joseph, who, as President of the Trade Commissioners' Forum, took initiative to inspire New Media to launch the quarterly magazine Open Trade, an exclusive publication for TCF. We would like to reiterate and place on record that it was Joseph, who came up with the title Open Trade when we were toying with various other high-sounding names. Open Trade was apt and agreeable to all as it reflected the spirit of commerce of our times, namely globalization. The first issue took off with a flying start and the second is in your hands. We assure you, there will be no looking back. Joseph has been a pillar of strength for New Media in every respect, as advisor, well wisher and supporter. We are delighted to note that though Joseph's official assignment has ended, he will continue to stay in India to liaise between businesses in this country and those in Switzerland. Joseph's India connection is strong. We at New Media thank our stars for it. We wish Joseph all the best and success in his every future endeavour.

Satya Swaroop and Staff, New Media Communication



WEF to release Travel, Tourism Report & Index in March '07

Tourism Enriches

Travel and Tourism is no more a leisure activity, patronized by the idle rich. It has grown into a global business, touching the lives millions of people, a bulk of them living in poor countries. Mother Nature does not discriminate. She has blessed the entire planet



Dev Varam

earth, both rich and poor countries with equal measure,

giving her unique touch to each and every nook of and corner of the world. Tourism is connectivity. Tourism brings people face to face. Tourism enables people to give each other the best they could offer. Rising incomes, vastly improved travel facilities and the widespread Information Technology and Telecommunications network have given a great fillip to the travel and tourism industry across the world. Rightly, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) adopted the theme of "Tourism Enriches" for World Tourism Day 2006, on September 27. Yes, Tourism enriches individuals, families, communities and all the world."

This is a central, simple but straight-forward message of the new awareness campaign with which the UNWTO wants to raise awareness of the positive impacts tourism can have on life, culture and economy, in short on society at all levels.

"This is the first time UNWTO has aimed a campaign at the general public," says UNWTO Secretary-General Francesco Frangialli. "It is a simple, upbeat idea and a simple beginning, but ultimately the campaign is intended to be developed and used by the tourism industry."

"The spirit of tourism embraces economies and enterprises: trade and development: communities and lives: peace and understanding," says Frangialli, adding, "In the final analysis, tourism enriches our planet and its peoples."

Frangialli rates tourism as one of the largest, fastest growing industries and the dominant service sector. It brings pleasure and added value to the lives of hundreds of millions of people. "Tourism is now well recognized as one of the key ways to bring wealth and experience from the richest to the poorest countries, particularly as it increasingly intersects with information technology, another catalytic sector. In this way it will help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals," Frangialli says.

Seized of the importance of tourism as one of the most important components of global economic growth, the Davos-based World Economic Forum is launching the first-ever Travel and Tourism Index covering 124 countries around the world. The annual report is set to be released on 1 March 2007 and preliminary data will be presented at



Francesco Frangialli

the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos.

In many countries, travel and tourism is a critical sector impacting national prosperity and economic growth. A cross-country analysis of the drivers of competitiveness in travel and tourism will provide useful comparative information for making business decisions and provide additional value to governments wishing to improve their travel and tourism environments.

"The index is not a 'beauty contest', or a statement about the attractiveness of a country. On the contrary, the index measures the factors that make it attractive to develop the travel and tourism industry of individual countries," says Jennifer

Blanke, Senior Economist of the World Economic Forum.

The World Economic Forum has become a leader in producing competitiveness reports with The Global Competitiveness Report, which is published annually, and The Global Information Technology Report.

The upcoming index uses hard data from publicly available sources such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) as well as survey data from the World Economic Forum's Executive Opinion Survey which provides unique information on many qualitative institutional and business environment issues.

The report is funded and supported by Booz Allen Hamilton, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), Bombardier, Carlson Group, Emirates Group, Qatar Airways, Royal Jordanian, Swiss International Airlines and Visa International. The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

In a New Year message, UNWTO Secretary-General Francesco Frangialli called for renewed effort to include sustainable tourism in the international development

agenda, as a key tool to advance the Millennium Development Goals.

"2007 should be a critical year to consolidate tourism as a key agent in the fight against poverty and a primary tool for sustainable development, Frangialli said.

He identified five major areas for consolidated global action :

- First: for Industrialized and Newly Emerging States to craft pro development strategies and agreements which encourage tourism to the world's poorest countries to advance economic well being, social development and mutual understanding.
- Second: for Least Developed States to collectively recognize the impact and potential of tourism across their economies, integrate it into national accounting systems using the UN Tourism Satellite Account and place it at the heart of their Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs.
- Third: for All States
- In acting within the Doha Development Round of the World Trade Organization, to increase tourism commitments and provide specific tools to help poor countries use tourism services to fight poverty and promote sustainable development.
- In acting on Climate Change, to build a pro development element into tourism and climate strategies, particularly for airline flights, taxation and emission trading.
- In acting on Security Enhancement, to recognize the importance of tourism in building understanding between people and to facilitate tourism links between industrialized and developing states as well as providing the technology and training support to poor countries.
- Fourth: for International Development Agencies the World Bank Group, the Regional Development Banks and National Aid Agencies, to place Tourism amongst their key priorities for infrastructure and entrepreneurial support.
- Fifth for Tourism Stakeholders public sector, private sector, non government organizations, tourists and the destinations they visit, to embrace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and pursue sustainable and responsible practices laid out in the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics.

"Governments have been putting a higher priority on tourism in the time of recent crises," stressed Frangialli, explaining that this resulted in recognition of tourism as the most prospective activity, important for environmental, cultural and social awareness, pursuit of peace and international cooperation recognition and in particular of its ability to alleviate poverty through the creation of small and medium sized tourism businesses and the creation of new jobs."

The 'Capital Tourist' & his aversion to hush money

By Umesh Luthria



Some two years back, the Government of India announced the Foreign Direct Investment policy in the real estate sector. Since then, the country has seen quite a few foreign investment entities setting up shop in India with a keen interest in the real estate space. Labeled by their local counterparts as the "Capital Tourist", what are they really here for? To claim their fair share in a real estate market that is projecting a need for 48 million rural and urban homes requiring an investment of about US\$ 21 billion or more? Or, are they here to participate in the retail, commercial and hospitality boom that seems to have lit up the economy? Or, honestly, are

they here to just chase the high double-digit returns on their money as compared to the pale 10 percent or less returns being offered in developed countries?

With the real estate sector now slated at over US\$ 12 billion contributing about 14 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and promising to grow at an average of 14.6 percent there is a mix of euphoria and fear and the larger question being asked is if this boom is for real or is it just a bubble created by the presence of this "Capital Tourist" that is touring around the country for deals with his money bags in tow?

The India GRI2006 meet organized by the Global Real Estate Institute on the 13th and 14th of November 2006 promised to be the kind of event where such questions and more would find the answers. The attendee list included the top echelon of virtually every major player in the Indian real estate industry be it developers, contractors, foreign and local funds and banks, sector consultants and specialists which made for excellent networking.

First of all, what I really liked about the initiative was that it was not all about listening to speakers flashing their pre-prepared power point presentations. Rather, it was a series of some serious group discussions on various topics concerning the FDI policy, legal and regulatory framework, investment opportunities, the do's and don'ts, expectations, etc., each discussion was guided by a group of eminent expert panelists.

Issues Concerning FDI

The first question that got the summit going was "International Investors in India nuisance or opportunity?" Prices around the country for real estate are defying gravity and what was considered plain logic; and each day a new deal is heard off that makes the previous one look small and in hindsight logical. But, most of these deals are being done by local players with little help from the international investors. The foreign investors in fact, are not a happy lot. They feel that the FDI policy has been drafted with an objective to see that foreign money goes into developing large projects and integrated townships in the new developing urban



areas that do not offer spectacular returns like the already established metros. The policy norms ensure that they (foreign investors) cannot invest in even strategic ready prime properties at key locations. Moreover, the land acquisition laws, permissions for development, and other related laws are clearly not conducive for them to go it alone. Looking for partners with integrity and experience is more an exception than a rule. Then, the partner is also looking at profiting immediately from the partnership by bring in land at market value to the joint venture rather than at a sensible profit; and, above that insist on holding the majority in the project.

Then, while bringing money into the country is relatively easy, taking it out is nearly impossible as at the moment the financial markets are not geared to real estate related public offerings and the deal sizes are too large for refinance by most local institutions. Exit is made tougher by the fact that local partners may not share the same exit strategy (as they hold the majority) and the contract laws are not capable of offering swift and equitable justice. Many feel that partnerships with the Government and semi-government agencies for land development are also not feasible as these bodies are only interested in profiting from offering the land without the required and promised clearances. Corruption is another issue dogging these investors with many in agreement that they have faced demands not for "Capital" but "Samsonite Bags" (hush money) required to facilitate permissions and clearances and acquisition of land. The majority of these "Capital Tourists" are just not used to carrying such "Samsonite bags". There was an overall airing of the view that despite the FDI policy the dice was clearly loaded in favour of the local players and there is a lack of a level playing field.

Role of Local Money

Therefore, the real fact is that it is not foreign money that has driven the real estate zoom but local money. It is no secret that the Indian economy has been on an overall boom cycle and that fact is being clearly reflected on the Indian stock markets and a lot of the profit from there has migrated to the real estate sector. As one leading Indian developer responded, there is more than enough local money floating around for real estate and that's the reason why the Government has opened 100 percent FDI in the sector in the first place. He also defended that the Indian partner takes the risk of land acquisition and getting all the clearances for development and is therefore entitled to his demand for profit at the market rate. His view was that the need for foreign investment is really in much larger issues like the development of real estate related infrastructure and foreign investors are just not looking at that opportunity. A leading banker for the housing sector too advised the foreign investors that rather than looking at large developers as partners who really don't need foreign money or are being chased by several suitors; they should look for partners who are professional and transparent and ones who could do with their international learning curve of the international investors in planning and developing larger projects than the local have executed thus far. He also suggested them to



focus on the 35 towns with a population of a million or more that are waiting to upgrade themselves to metros rather than chasing the existing eight metros. The expected returns in these areas are still very attractive as compared to what their money was earning elsewhere.

Corruption is not an India phenomenon alone. It exists around the world. But, by and large the general view was that India is getting more transparent and as one of the attendees expressed "the days of the samsonite bag are numbered". It is also clearly emerging that the regulators are cautiously but surely addressing the ambiguities of this sector in terms of the financial markets. Full convertibility, REITs and Real estate mutual funds, structured debt instruments are no too far on the economic horizon allowing for better exit strategies. Then, there are already opportunities available for foreign money to by pass the FDI norms like investing in the hospitality industry notwithstanding that the FDI norms too are being relaxed over time to accommodate the genuine needs of long term foreign capital. Clearly the consensus is that the 'Capital Tourist' is welcome, provided the capital brought has a serious and a long term intent of parking itself here in the development of the nation. The return on capital in time will tighten but will still be great if not spectacular given the appetite of this nation in terms of its people and resource power.

(Umesh Luthria Sector Analyst & Consultant Editor to New Media Communications was a participant at the India GRI2006)

Holy Lollapalooza! An Indian Growth Story

By Umesh Luthria

The word Lollapalooza belongs to North American slang and means "something outstanding or unusual" and it's exactly how one would like to name the India Growth Story.

Move over 8 percent growth, the economy has now shifted gears to move up to 9 percent and the Chinese growth rate of 10 percent is just waiting to be scratched if all goes well fingers crossed. But, that is what the lollapalooza effect is all about just about everything is going right agriculture, services, manufacturing are all doing well. The political climate and the rupee are stable. Incomes, investments (foreign and domestic) and the stock markets are rising. One can see development everywhere. Real estate is on fire and there is so much pent up housing and commercial demand that will keep construction as a front runner for the next five years. In terms of technology, India has become the global offshoring sweat shop like China has become in the manufacturing area. There is so much money floating in the market that it is being taken for granted. Honestly, at this stage, it would be very silly to express any doubts specially looking at facts like the country has excellent young demographics with the majority of its populace between the age group of 25-45 with an ever increasing disposable income. This group is not averse to consuming or taking on debt (something associated with the success of the US economy) and as a result the world economy is out to welcome the "New Indian" as a power house in the making.

Then, I heard Dr. Phillippa Malmgren, the Chief Executive Officer of the Canonbury Group (UK) at a conference organized by the International Quality & Productivity Centre (Singapore) on "Investment Opportunities in Indian Real Estate & Infrastructure" in Mumbai on the 4th and 5th of December 2006. The Canonbury Group advises the investment and business community about the impact of global politics and policy on markets and large corporations, heads of governments, and major investors take what Dr. Malmgren has to say very seriously. She has three major concerns that may impact the economy and it's not India's infrastructure (the lack of it); corruption (our dubious high rank) or terrorism (with which India has coped very well). The serious threats being:

1. Global interest rate fluctuations.
2. The IndoUS nuclear deal.
3. Energy security.

Indian vulnerability to:

A) Foreign capital.



It is true that fund managers in developed countries are so flush with funds that they are being forced to slide down the risk ladder and deploy the capital in emerging markets including India. The lure of very high returns compared to the meager returns in their home countries compensates the risk taken. But in the last one year or so the U.S. Federal Reserve; most European Central Banks and the Bank of Japan have all raised interest rates. With developed markets offering better returns and emerging market margins getting squeezed on the rising and sometimes "insane" valuations and vanishing off shoring benefits, it will be sooner rather than later the flow of money may start showing signs of receding as high risk and not so high returns do not really make good investing for fund managers, nor for their investors. A pull back of foreign money also means weakening of the currencies of these emerging nations which in turn lowers earnings of foreign money and causes more rush to repatriate capital.

While the prophets of good tiding argue that raising interest rates is not a sustainable formula at least for the US economy as it will hurt many sectors including housing a major contributor; the US economists are not so worried. They feel

that having learnt lessons in the past, the US economy is not so dependant on the housing market anymore. And, in any event, the housing market is now at a level where it is quite mature and there is a lot of money being made in the housing refinance market. The US Fed is also quite happy that most Central Banks around the world are now getting away from their dollar dependence to other stronger currencies giving the US a more localized dollar impact than a global one.

India's growth story has been fueled with a lot of domestic and foreign speculative money and the danger is that once the money sitting on the fence that is fueling this speculation cycle disappears the market will have a lot of tears to shed. An interesting point that caught everyone's attention is that the regulators in a lot of economies concerned about speculation fueled growth (including India) have started scrutinizing markets from a policy and transaction point of view. Use and misuse of tax treaties, corporate reporting, market listings; investment anomalies are all being looked at very carefully and such practices too will ensure that short term profit takers look elsewhere.

B) Geo political developments.

There is a lot at stake for a whole lot of countries in terms of the IndoUS nuclear deal. Once accorded, India will have access to every hi-tech development including military from the US as the deal comes with a status of most favourable partner for India. This is most discomforting for the Russians and the Chinese. China has tried every trick in the book including virtually setting off the US-China trade deficit in order to get the status. But they have been denied the same. On the other hand, the Russians India's traditional allies are not too happy about the cozy commingling of the US

and Indian defense arms in terms of joint exercises. India on the other hand too has expressed displeasure at the Russians getting close to Pakistan and even closer to China vide the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Treaty of 2001. There are obvious fears that the US technical and financial might coupled with India's tech savvy and industrious population might is a very formidable cocktail specially when viewed in the context that despite the prior coldness between the US and Indian governments at heart the Indians as a population were more attracted to the US than any other nation. From India's point of view, it does not understand why the US is willing to open its heart at one level to India and offer it the most favoured nation status; yet oppose the largest democracy in the world from claiming a permanent seat on the United Nations' Security Council while it's second most fear China, is willing to support its claim for the same.

Clearly, new equations between traditional foes are being formed globally and not all of these equations are necessarily for the better nor ironically very clear.

C) Energy Security

Among the major worries for India is the realization that its growth is energy reliant. Nearly 70 percent of its energy required is met through imports. While Nuclear energy is the panacea for cheaper, cleaner energy it will be at least a couple of decades before nuclear energy will appear as any significant portion in India's energy pie. Until then, India will be reliant on oil and gas a resource largely in the hands of the Middle East Sheikdoms and Islamic countries where the people are becoming increasingly weary of the US and its policies. India's other major trading partner, defense ally, and a major oil and gas producer Russia is keen on supplying energy to India but is putting its own conditions on how close India should get with the US.

At one level, India will have to walk the diplomatic tightrope very carefully to contain the geo political and energy security risks and at another make sure that despite criticism the policy makers and regulators make sure that the various markets do not go off the handle. Any one of these could trigger an economic catastrophe. Difficult choices no doubt, but ones that will require to be taken for the lollapalooza effect to continue else like the revered "Holy Cow" even the revered economy will get slaughtered. ■



Record attendance at 2006 Rome global hotel meet



A record of nearly 400 hoteliers attended the fourth annual International Hotel Conference recently held at the Cavalieri Hilton in Rome, Italy, nearly doubling the record attendance of the previous year.

Stephen F. Bollenbach, co-chairman and CEO of Hilton Hotels Corporation opened the proceedings noting the rapidly accelerating globalization of the hotel industry. He provided details about his company's recent acquisition of Hilton International, saying that the flags of the Hilton Family brand were now fly in more than 80 countries, with aggressive plans to continue expansion through both conversions and new development.

Roberto E. Wirth, President and General Manager of Hassler Roma S.P.A., one of three keynote speakers, commented on the strong hotel economy and delighted many of the attendees with the announcement of the formation of the Italian chapter of the Cornell Hotel Society, the University alumnae association's 61st chapter.

"Not only did we set records in number of attendees, but we also doubled the number of sponsors and exhibitors," said Morris E. Lasky, conference co-chairman and president of Lodging Unlimited, Inc. "We had a very diversified group from 40 countries this year with content, both in the sessions and in casual "in-the-hall" conversations, focused on deal making, financing and hotel management. The relaxed atmosphere and setting made networking effortless."

As many as 90 speakers were featured at the International Hotel Conference. More than 30 think-tanks covered a wide range of topics, from the future of destination resort

hotels to acquisitions and hotel financing. Round tables of small groups discussed a variety of subjects, including ground-breaking hotel technology, trend-setting spa development and the outlook for condo hotels. The Deal Forum which consisted of one-on-one meetings with franchise companies, lenders, consultants, brokers and other key influentials was particularly active.

"Moving the conference to Rome was extremely well received, and we were welcomed graciously by the people of Rome, including Mariapia Garavaglia, Vice Mayor of Rome," said Mary Lou Koys, co-chairman of The International Hotel Conference. "The response was so overwhelmingly positive that we will book our next two year's session at the Cavalieri Hilton.

Some of the key speakers include: Peter M. Anscomb, senior vice president and international head of hospitality and leisure, The Royal Bank of Scotland; Russell Kett, managing director, HVS International; and Roland Vos, president Europe, Africa and Middle East, Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

The International Hotel Conference is the premier annual gathering of senior level hospitality executives, including owners, operators, brands, leading institutions, bankers, architects/designers, attorneys, brokers and other members of the hotel and related communities.

Additional information about the event, registration, sponsorships and related activities can be found at the event's.

Web site www.internationalhotelconference.com



Located in north-western Europe, Belgium is a small country bordered by The Netherlands, France, Germany, and Luxemburg. There's more to the country than Belgian fries, glass and beer: multicultural and multilingual, Belgium is a veritable Europe in miniature. Belgium reached its zenith under the Duke of Burgundy during the 15th century.

After the Second World War, Belgium witnessed an economic boom, which was further boosted by Brussels appointment as the headquarters of both the European Union and NATO.

Brussels today is a bustling city of diplomats, followed closely by towering skyscrapers and numerous restaurants. You will see superb examples of art and architecture, both past and present-Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque, and Art Nouveau. The city is also famous for some well-preserved ancient châteaux, colourful fairs and festivals, nature reserves as well as amusement parks-all within easy reach. Due to the country's strategic location, Belgians play host to tourists from all parts of the world.

How Belgium has some of the renowned art cities of Europe- Antwerp, Bruges and Ghent. The southern region of the country is interspersed with the rolling hills of the Ardennes, numerous castles, and the cities of Liege, and Tournai. The Ardennes, in particular, are a major centre for skiing in winter and kayaking in summer, with added facilities of hiking and mountain biking along the forest tracks.

Brussels A Global City

Beer, waffles and festivals - if this is what you're looking for you will find them in abundance when you visit the country's capital city.

Nowadays, the city is often primarily regarded as a destination for

businesspeople or diplomats it is the headquarters for the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) there is plenty to see and do for other travellers. 'Manneken Pis', plenty of impressive museums, delicious chocolate and a city centre divided into the upper and the lower town with a beautiful cathedral and the Grote Markt where you can enjoy your Belgian beers. Brussels requires a minimum of two nights to get a feeling for the city but an even longer stay should be planned if there is a festival in town.

Antwerp The City of Rubens

Antwerp is Belgium's second city, and is also a receptacle of monuments, museums and churches. Besides this, the city of Rubens, is the world's centre for diamond processing as well as Belgium's primary seaport.

The heart of the city on the Scheldt beats at the 'Grote Markt', an irregularly-shaped square, surrounded by decorative guild house dating from the 16th and 17th century. Antwerp's most famous resident is undoubtedly Pieter Paul Rubens. The painter's, and diplomat's, spirit is present all throughout town. His statue is at the 'Groenplaats' and he was buried at the St Paulus kerk. Many churches are enriched with his paintings.

The city of Rubens is a paradise for museum lovers. The Fine Arts Museum in the south houses over a thousand works by classical painters. If you are at the Berchem station, make sure you see the Zurenborg district, known for its unique architectural complexities. Nowhere else in Europe than here will you find such a decorative collection of Art Nouveau and Jugendstil houses.

The city of diamonds has its main museum in the heart of the diamond district, the streets behind the central station. This part of the city is known as the 'Jerusalem of the North', because it has the largest settlement of Orthodox Jews in this part of Europe.

Over 70 percent of the world's cutting and trading in diamonds takes place in Antwerp. One of the reasons why Antwerp can maintain its world centre position is because of the port's international trade links. A river cruise is definitely not to be missed. ■

Canada

A Country of Waterfalls

Canada and Niagara are synonymous. One cannot think of them separately. While Canada is a bewitching country as a whole, the Niagara Falls are ranked among the world's natural wonders. Tourists enjoy Southern Ontario visiting such places as Toronto, Niagara Falls and the Niagara Wine Region. Few people are aware that half way between Toronto and Niagara Falls is "The City of Waterfalls" - namely Hamilton. As many as 80 waterfalls and cascades are found within the boundaries of Hamilton making it the city having the largest number of waterfalls in the world for its size of a half million people. Many of these waterfalls can be reached by hiking the Bruce Trail through Hamilton.

Canada is one of the most exciting travel destinations in the world. It boasts a wide, diverse culture, which we celebrate with pride, and there is simply no way to see everything in one trip - or even in a lifetime. Full of surprises, Canada is simply the most astonishingly beautiful country in the world.

Canadian culture has historically been heavily influenced by British and French cultures and traditions. In more modern times, Canadian culture became greatly influenced by American culture, due to the proximity and the migration of people, ideas, and capital. Amidst this, Canadian culture has developed unique characteristics making it an interesting place. In many respects, a more robust and distinct Canadian culture has developed in recent years.

It has many interesting cities, like Vancouver, Ottawa, Quebec, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

Canada also has some of the most impressive natural locations- great for outdoor activities, like hiking, skiing, rafting and fishing. The country is very large (2nd largest in the world after Russia) and climate and geography varies considerably. From moderate, mild coastal British Columbia and the hot and dry Southern Ontario area, to the rugged tundra of Nunavut... from the "short winter/long summer" region of Ontario to the maritime Atlantic coast- temperatures can range from plus 40 C in summer to minus 40 C in the winter, so dress accordingly!

For those wanting to take advantage of the outdoors, best time is to visit in the summer. For those wanting to experience everything Canada has to offer, visit anytime. With Canada as your chosen holiday destination - the challenge is now where to go and what to see and do. To make the most of your precious time in this vast country.



Montreal

The Joy of Living

Though an incredible city in its own right, Montreal is both much more and less than this. When you visit here, you will be introduced to a whole new way of living life to the fullest. The locals here call it "joie de vivre" which literally translated means "joy of living" and that is what Montréal's people seem to be best at. More than anything else Montréal has a fantastic atmosphere, and possesses a vibrancy and excitement you won't find anywhere else. Culture seems to ooze out of the sidewalks. Montréal is a mix of ethnic and national influences that have all contributed to what makes it such a special place. Enjoy watching life go by from an outdoor café, shop in an underground shopping mall, dine at a fine French restaurant and follow with a jazz club. You will never run out of new things to experience, even after a multitude of visits.

Montréal is also a city rich in diversity. All peoples are accepted and embraced for their contribution to create a vast rainbow of different cultures. Be you straight or gay, Christian or Muslim or Bhuddist or even atheist. All are accepted for who they are. Keep an open mind and learn much about your fellow human beings and what they have to offer to make your life a little richer.

The seasons in Montréal are distinct. Summer is usually quite hot and sunny; it can sometimes be unbearably humid. Fall is a little cooler but still very pleasant and has the added bonus of the beautiful autumn leaves, which are numerous in a city full of maple trees. Winters are cold and snowy, but Montréal is well prepared for this, there is a vast underground city of shopping malls linked to hotels, office buildings and metro (Montréal's subway) stations. If you wanted to, you need never go outdoors. Spring revitalizes the city, the days are long and fairly warm so this is an ideal time to visit.

Montréal is a major transportation centre. Highways and railways converge here, so there are connections by bus and rail to all over Canada and the U.S.A. Montréal is a relatively short drive from many of the major population

centres of the Eastern Seaboard, and Ontario. Montréal has one international airport with direct flights to all major Canadian and most U.S. cities. There are also flights to many cities in Europe, the Caribbean and Mexico. The primary airport, Trudeau International (YUL), serves all scheduled and charter flights, while a second airport, Mirabel (YMX), is used for cargo flights.

Montréal is a city of festivals and these occur throughout the year. At the end of January is the Fête de Neiges (Festival of Snow) with skating, ice carving and tube slides. There is a major St Patrick's Day Parade, which is a tribute to the large part of the city's population celebrating their Irish origins. In the early summer there is the International Fireworks Festival one of the best in the world. This is held at La Ronde, located on the Parc des Îles a series of islands in the St. Lawrence which were originally developed for Expo '67 (the World's Fair of 1967.) In early June there is the Canadian Grand Prix, one of only two Formula 1 races in North America. On June 24th is Fête Nationale, formerly known as St Jean Baptiste Day, this is Québec's national holiday and includes a big parade. At the end of June and the beginning of July is the world renowned Montréal Jazz Festival. Many of the concerts are free and are held at various venues throughout the city. This is a big attraction so it is advisable to book accommodations early. Equally famous is the Just-for-Laugh Comedy Festival. This is a bilingual event with over 200 performers and over half a million attendees. Some acts are free and for others an admission is charged. Another event you might want to keep in mind is the Du Maurier Classic: a fairly large Tennis Tournament featuring top competitors. At the beginning of August there is Montréal's International Gay and Lesbian Pride Festival, which is a fun time for everybody. In early fall there is the Montreal World Film Festival, held at several theatres around town. An interesting sub-event is the Fant-Asia Film Festival, which features some of the top Asian films you won't find in your typical local cinema. ■



China

Land of Endless Sights

China is incredible in many ways. The list of sights and things to do here is endless, not to mention the thick culture and wonders of this country. A few notable must-sees include the barren highlands of Tibet via the Silk Road to the bewildering Forbidden City at Beijing, the magnificent Great Wall of China. There are also the amazing thousands of Terracotta Warriors and Horses at the tomb of Qin Shi'huang in Xi'an, the intriguing citylife of (Shanghai), the breath-taking scenic beauty of Yunnan and the original Asia's world city - Hong Kong.

Beijing is the capital of China. It has some of the most superb examples of Chinese architecture. No other place in China offers such a large number of old buildings as Beijing. On top of that, Beijing is one of the more convenient starting points for visiting The Great Wall.

Beijing has a very orderly design, which long, straight boulevards and avenues are crisscrossed by a network of lanes. The extensive Yanshan Mountain range forms a screen to the northeast, the long, winding Taihang Mountain range to the west. Just beyond, to the northwest, the vast Mongolian Plateau begins.

Shanghai Paris of the Orient

That's what they called Shanghai in the past, when it was still the leading power in trade and opium. Today, Shanghai is the commercial center of China and has one of the most dynamic skylines in the world. The 17-million-citizen-strong city shows her dualistic face in every corner of the city. The Old Centre in the Yu Yuan area, where you can find one of the oldest streets of China, the 'sights, is the heart of the modern town. It is a good starting point for a boat trip on the Huangpu river or a visit to the Yu Yuan Market. You will find many city museums and interesting

sites along your way. Although the city is fairly commercial these days, Shanghai's residents have made an major effort in creating 'green zones' in the city....and they've succeeded. There is always a park or traditional garden in the vicinity.

Hong Kong Asia's World City

Hong Kong Island is the glitzy big brother of Kowloon - a tightly packed, towering paean to market capitalism that hasn't been dented one jot by Chinese rule. The bustle of people living and working is the biggest attraction on the island, although many visitors head around to Aberdeen, on the southern side of the island, where 6000 people live or work on junks anchored in the harbour. Sampan tours of the Aberdeen Harbour are definitely worth the expense. The other major draw is the floating restaurant.

The most popular beach is Repulse Bay, also on the southern side of the island, but it gets extremely crowded on weekends. Stanley, with its laid-back atmosphere, is another good spot for escaping Hong Kong's hustle and bustle, although it is the hustle and bustle that brings people here in the first place. City attractions include the Central Market, which visitors will have no trouble finding (just sniff the air), the old Man Mo Temple and the Zoological & Botanic Gardens. Hong Kong Island is steep, so if you're heading away from the harbour, do as the locals do and ride the 800m outdoor escalator.

If you're in the Hong Kong Island, you'd be mad to miss a trip to the top of Victoria Peak, 552m above sea level. The views are giddyingly beautiful in every direction, with the vista of the business district, Victoria Harbour and Kowloon especially grand. In true Hong Kong style the main viewing deck is on the roof of a large shopping mall. ■



Czech Republic really has a lot to boast about, and Prague, its capital, is definitely one of the most beautiful cities in the whole world. The country's ancient tradition of brewing beer (Budweiser was originally a Czech beer, the original - Budvar - is still brewed in Ěské Budjovice, where you'll find the largest town square in Europe) makes your stay in the country an even more enjoyable one.

But don't limit your stay to Prague! There are several beautifully preserved medieval cities, most notably Český Krumlov and Kutná Hora in Bohemia and Znojmo in south Moravia, near the Austrian border. Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) is a famous spa town, where you can take curative mineral water treatments while mingling with the rich and famous, many from Russia.

Brno, CZ's second-largest city is the capital of South Moravia, and the gateway to wineries, rolling hills, hiking trails galore, and caves. Beer lovers will also find delight at the "real" Pilsener brewery in Plzeň, rock climbers will love Štrbsko, etc.

Czech republic has many many beautiful historical cities and towns, mainly in the Southern Bohemia. Start early morning make a trip from Prague ride the D1 highway, exit at 90 (Humpolec) and stop in Pelhřimov, then go to Telč and further to Slavonice and Ěské Budjovice. There you stay for the evening and night. Next day go the very near gorgeous Český Krumlov. These places are sweet with beautiful historical centres, buildings, castles, gardens, squares and great easy atmosphere.

Prague A City of Awesome Beauty

Prague is a city of unique and awesome beauty. It is home to a wealth of incredible buildings, structures and monuments that span several eras. A wealth of architectural forms, ranging from Romanesque and Gothic through Renaissance and Baroque to Art Nouveau, Cubism and Deconstructionist, co-exist in an unusual harmony. The Czech capital was blessed in the sense that the majority of its man-made structures

survived the Second World War. Even the Socialist regime, with its penchant for cold strictly functional architecture, could not put a damper on Prague's historical glow.

Seeing the city in all its glory requires several days. The centre alone has plenty of gorgeous and quirky details that can be missed if going strictly by a guidebook. Of course, such structures and locations as Prague Castle, Old Town Square, Charles Bridge, Lesser Town Square and Petřín Hill are must-sees. But quarters outside the centre, such as Žižkov and Vinohrady, also have plenty to offer to those interested in sightseeing, dining, and drinking some of the world's best beers and wines. The zoo in Troja is also worth mentioning as its standards, along with its number of attractions, have been increasing on a yearly basis.

Prague is far more than just another pretty city. While those who want a restful stay will certainly find what they're looking for, the city also boasts a rich cultural calendar and lively nightlife. Whether you want to spend a night at the opera, visit an art gallery, participate in open mic poetry performances, take in or dance to your favourite genre of music, chances are that on any given day or night you will find something that interests you.

As the quantity and quality of goods and services continues to rise (though one should still be careful when it comes to taxi and restaurant rip-offs), Prague has become a prime destination not only for tourists, but for expatriates as well. The city's central location and the Czech Republic's excellent train and bus make it an excellent base for those who wish to see more of the country. ■



France

A Champagne Country

France is the number one tourist destination in the world. It has everything that you could ever want to see on your holidays: a great city like Paris, good beaches, more monuments than any other country, lovely nature, incredible mountain scenery; France is also a very pleasant place to stay. It has good food, great wines and people enjoy their lives.

The North of France consists of the flatlands around the town of Lille and the Channel. Paris, the city of lights and its surroundings are one of the most visited areas. Paris is without a doubt one of the most beautiful cities on the planet.

The West of France is turned towards the Atlantic Coast. In the north Normandy & Brittany have rolling hills, sandy beaches and quiet little harbour towns. Normandy & Brittany have a more rugged coast and many neolithic sites. It has quite a distinct atmosphere from the rest of the country; you can still sense the Celtic origin of the region and its inhabitants.

Nantes and Bordeaux are the biggest cities on the west coast. Bordeaux, capital of the south west, is a stylish city famous for its wines and its 18-th century architecture. The Pays Basque is the southernmost part of the Atlantic Coast of France. The resort of Biarritz is posh, but pretty.

The eastern part of France consists of the Alsace, Lorraine, Franche Comté and Burgundy regions. The landscape has rolling hills and many beautiful cities, such as Metz, Strasbourg, Nancy and Dijon. This region produces many famous wines, including magnificent pinot noirs and chardonnays valued the world over, as well as the famous "Yellow wine" from the Jura mountain vineyard.



The Center is in many ways the most quiet part of France. But the great treasure of this region is the Loire valley, with many great castles and beautiful towns. Chartres with its famous cathedral and Tours rate among the most beautiful French cities.

The Auvergne, centered on the Massif Central mountains that culminate at about 6000 ft, is one of the

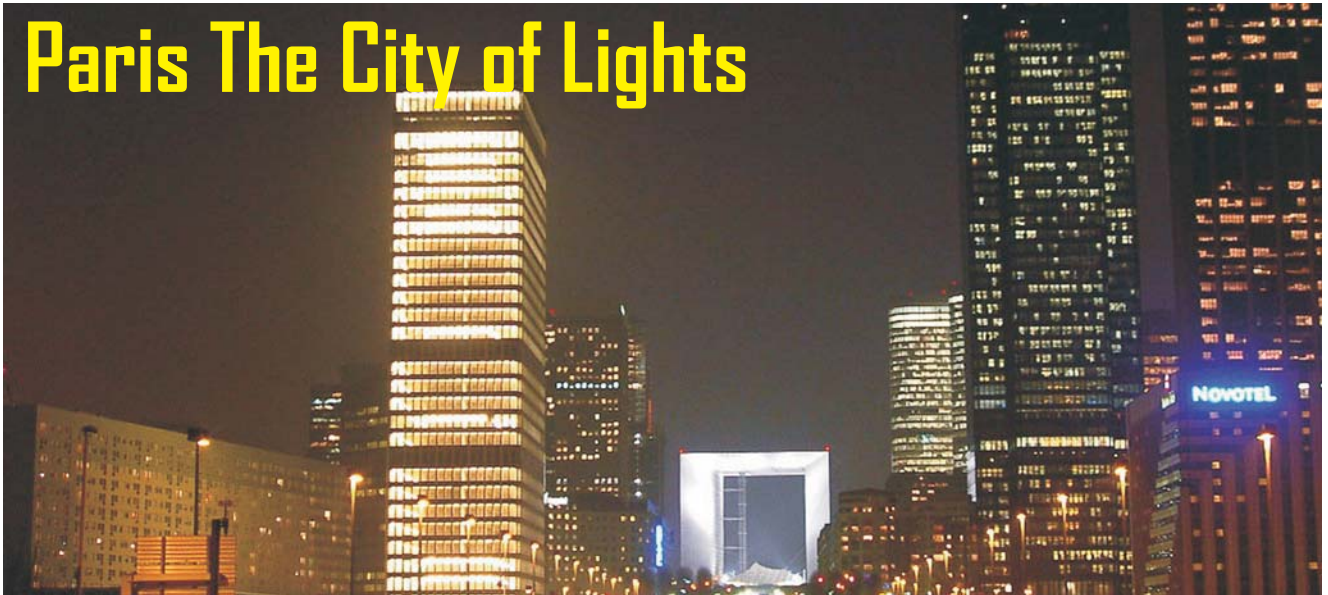


most beautiful regions of France. Much of it is upland, traversed by wild river valleys and an unspoilt natural environment. The north of the region stretches towards the flatter Loire valley. The regional capital is Clermont Ferrand, and the small city of Le Puy en Velay, with its historic churches perched on volcanic pinnacles, is one of the most surprising cities in France

The Alps are great for skiing in winter and hiking in summer. Albertville, Grenoble and Chamonix have all hosted the Olympic games. But the Alps also have nice towns to visit, such as Chambéry, Annecy or Grenoble.

The South with its lovely nature, good food, roman ruins and of course the Riviera draws a lot of visitors every year. Towns like Orange, and Arles but also big cities like Marseille and Toulon are must sees. The Provence is dotted with pleasant small villages. In the South west of France the Dordogne is one of the most quintessential French regions. The valley is so pretty, the towns are so cute and the food is so good, that it is hard to believe that the people who live here go somewhere else for their holidays. In the south of the Languedoc you find the Pyrenees, a great mountain range separating France from Spain, where you can hike and ski. The towns of Toulouse and Montpellier are nice and the medieval town of Carcassonne is a top destination. The island of Corsica has beautiful nature and a very special atmosphere.

Paris The City of Lights



Paris is known as The City of Lights and absolutely deserves this name. But it is much more than just the City of Lights. Paris is one of the best travel destinations. It has everything a traveller could possibly wish for.

A stay in Paris should at least include a visit to the Louvre, one of the best museums in the world, a climb of the Eiffel tower, a climb to the top of Notre Dame Cathedral,

You should also climb the steps to the Sacré Coeur in Montmartre, stroll around the Place du Tertre in front of it, visit the saucy Pigalle district, walk around the Latin quarter- St. Germain, Boulevard St. Michel, and feel the atmosphere of the

street performers outside the Centre Pompidou, before you enter, of course.

In the neighborhood of Paris you can visit, Fontainebleau, Versailles with its magnificent palace of Louis XIV, Vaux-le-Vicomte and the inspiration for Versailles Disneyland Paris. All of these make perfect daytrips.

Paris is full of surprises, just have a good breakfast with coffee and croissants and walk.

Paris has more sights than can be visited in one trip. Here we show a menu of all the different possibilities. Check out Museums - in any case be sure not to miss the Louvre, but the centre Pompidou, the Musee Rodin and the Musee d'Orsay also deserve special attention.

The beautiful Churches among them the Notre Dame and the Sacre Coeur with its great views over the city should be on every itinerary. The famous Landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower or the Arc de Triomphe are absolute highlights no traveler would want to miss. If you are a bit tired of all that you can relax in one of the many parks.

Paris is a number one destination, but few people would go there to see natural beauty. Still, Paris has a waterfall that is almost as high as Niagara falls! The Park Buttes-Chaumont in the North-East of Paris is the unusual destination where you can find this waterfall. It is a delightful change from the monuments, museums and the endless shopping Paris lures its visitors with. The park was a refuse dump for centuries and it had an evil reputation. In the 19th century it was transformed by Napoleon the third into a fantasy park, a sort of Disneyland avant la letter. A central place in the park is reserved for a lake with a 50 meter high mountain rising in the centre. At the top of this mountain is a small building that offers great views over Paris. Two bridges connect the island with the rest of the park. One of them has the macabre nickname "suicide bridge".

The island is honeycombed with caves through which you can walk and climb; it is hugely popular with children for that reason. They are quite safe, as well; there are railings to prevent one from falling. Sheer cliffs and sharp changes in elevation abound in this remarkable park. There is even a waterfall 40 meter high that drops precipitously into a grotto at the lake level for comparison purposes, this is about two-thirds the height of Niagara Falls!



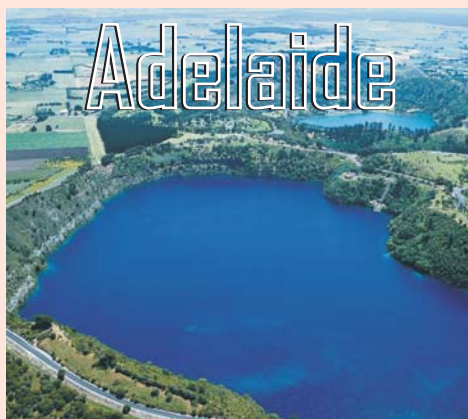


Australia is a land of contrasts - topographical, cultural, physical, meteorological and visual. It has a reputation of being a land of leisure, with sun, sea and an enviable 'Crocodile Dundee' outdoor lifestyle.

One of the states is the island state Tasmania of which one fifth is World Heritage area. Each state has its own national parks with their specific character where you can indulge in bush-walking or maybe even rock-climbing. When you're interested in the miracles of water-world, you can't miss out on the Great Barrier Reef on the east coast, the main reason for many travellers to visit Cairns. The Wet Tropics of Queensland comprise dense rainforests and foaming waterfalls. Rare species of animals can be spotted in the famous Kakadu National Park as well as ancient aboriginal art. These old drawings can also be seen in the Namadgi National Park.

Good places to set off for exploration of the great outdoors are big cities such as Canberra, Darwin, Adelaide and Perth, that all have interesting sights and a good cultural atmosphere as well. Of course, Australia is surrounded by sea, so good swimming and surfing beaches are more rule than exception. North of Brisbane, is the Sunshine Coast one of the many stretches of coast where you can find excellent beaches. Don't forget the smaller historically interesting Alice Springs, or William Creek that will lead you right to the famous Ayers Rock.

Deserts, rainforests, big cities....and just when you thought you'd caught a glimpse of the versatile character of this fascinating continent, you forgotten about Melbourne and the excellent skiing opportunities in the Alpine National Park. Another good option is the Snowy Mountains area in NSW. How many months could you stay?



Adelaide, South Australia's capital, with a population of 2 million, houses nearly 70 percent of all inhabitants of the state. The city itself was thoroughly planned and is noted for its spacious parklands and gardens. Australia's fifth largest city is noted for its attractiveness and relaxed atmosphere, quality of life and hospitality.

The city centre, especially around East End and Central Market, is covered with shopping centres and restaurant and cafés. Finding a way to spend your day won't be a problem, because Adelaide has plentiful options for travellers. Make sure that you leave some energy after visiting one of the many museums and seeing the famous statues and memorials. The sparkling nightlife, with an overload of bars, clubs and discos, most certainly deserves some of your attention.



Ah, the Marvellous Melbourne Melting Pot! Twice ranked the "World's most livable city", you are sure to feel right at home here. Melbourne claims to be the cultural capital of Australia and does indeed have something for everyone. There are plenty of cultural festivals, performances, galleries and museums plus the annual comedy festival.

Melbourne is known as the sporting capital of Australia (and maybe the world?) being the home of Aussie Rules (AFL) Football, the Australian Tennis Open, the Australian Grand Prix and the Melbourne Cup, the premier horse racing Carnival which stops a nation. Melbourne also has the distinguished honour of hosting the 2006 Commonwealth games, the second largest event of its type after the Olympics.

The city centre is packed with bars, cafés and shops, quaint arcades alternated with nice green parks to flee Melbourne's hustle and bustle. There is also the Queen Victoria Market, the place to go on Sunday for a bargain,

or good cheap fruit and vegetable most days of the week.

The tourist office offers some excellent day-trips that do not only offer you the chance to see the most interesting old buildings and museums but also a bit more of the surroundings.

When you've had it with the big city, make a day-trip to Philip Island (to see the penguins), the nearby Wilsons Promontory National Park, the goldfields or drive down the Great Ocean Road and let your breath be taken away by some astonishing views of the sea and its coastal rock formations.

Or head up into the Dandenongs and the Upper Yarra Valley to see the tallest flowering plants in the world (mountain ash eucalypts) and the ancient fern gulleys. Relax by the river in one of the many cafes and eateries at Warburton and maybe get chance to hand feed the kookaburras, cockatoos and king parrots, or toss some scraps to the ducks which cluster at the river banks.

Adelaide is renowned for its range of quality cafes and restaurants offering an affordable and delicious range of cuisine including Italian, Greek, Thai, Malaysian, Chinese, Argentinian, Mexican and so many more. The quality of the food is superb. Seafood such as prawns, crayfish, scallops, calamari and King George whiting is fresh and abundant. A perfect place for an indulgence weekend.

Thirsting for something else? Explore the famous wine regions in the city's vicinity or go to the Park Lands. The latter is an extended area surrounding Adelaide and consists of several parks and lakes where you can relax and enjoy a fabulous picnic (don't forget to bring the Australian wine!)

South Australia is renowned for its clean, sandy beaches and wine regions. The winegrowing districts of McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, Adelaide Hills, Clare Valley wine districts are within easy reach of Adelaide for day tours and the Coonawarra can be visited on the way to the South East or Melbourne in adjacent Victoria. South Australian wine is of world class.

For those who have not explored the outdoors yet, the Adelaide Hill Wildlife Parks might be a nice introduction to Australia's wildlife. Still don't know what to do yet? Take the tram to Glenelg beach and think it over on the long sandy beach.



From the high Alps in the South, the Bavarian plain, and the flowing hills of central Germany to the coast of the North and Baltic Sea: it all looks like a miniature train landscape packed with the nicest of old towns, medieval houses, gothic churches and small villages.

Thanks to the different regional princedoms, earldoms, monarchies and states, Germany did not unite until the last centuries. Thus Germany has not one but many major cities. And each city has its own unique character, formed by its history and the surrounding region.

To start in the north, spend some days in Hamburg, Bremen or Lübeck, those old "Hanse" cities, whose prosperity arose from the independent shipping trade. Berlin, the capital, is of course one of the top travel destinations in Germany - no matter if you are going there for business, cultural or political reasons, or just to enjoy yourself: Berlin has everything!

Right in the centre Hannover is worth a visit. In the eastern part of Germany, you can find real jewels: Leipzig, Weimar, Schwerin and even Dresden, although it was bombed horribly, saved lots of their prewar architectural heritage, and the latter has just restored the famous Frauenkirche.

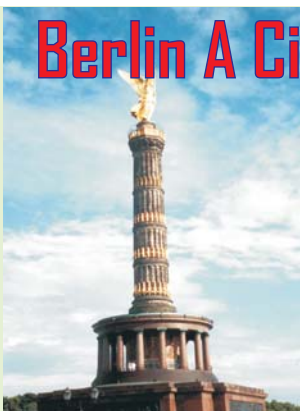
Continue going southwards, maybe with passing Nuremberg, you will sooner or later arrive in Munich, the capital city of beer, but also of art, with the famous Pinakothek. It is a good starting point to find the treasures of Bavaria.

Germany's cities have endless pleasant surprises in store for those who enjoy good food and drink. In addition to top-quality international cooking each region has its own local specialities, ranging from hearty country fare at simple inns to modern light cuisine at star-rated restaurants.

Accompanied by our world-famous beers and wines, all this plenty is guaranteed to make your tour of Germany's cities an unforgettable culinary experience.

Discover the beautiful Southwest of Germany with cities like Freiburg, Heidelberg and Tübingen. In the western part cities still have some french influence, discover Bonn, Düsseldorf, Cologne- the heart of the Rhineland, Trier, the oldest city of Germany and a former capital of the Roman Empire or Aachen with its impressive cathedral and history back to Charlemagne.

Berlin A City of Amazing Sights



than Berlin. There are lots of great clubs and dance parlors, just ask around for the best places. Most of the usual good places to go are in the center of Berlin (Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg, Kreuzberg), but the eastern part of the city has all the nightlife. Berlin is also perhaps one of the greenest cities in Europe: over 60 percent of its surface area is either a park or a river... it even has more bridges than Venice!

Berlin has an amazing number of sights, although it is not as centralized or small as other European cities. Sometimes the best things about it have nothing to do with landmarks: simply strolling along one of hundreds of charming streets complete with cafés is pleasurable enough.

Berlin offers a wonderful combination of history, nightlife, architecture and culture.

There is no city in Europe that parties harder

'Oktoberfest' in Munich



Sometimes called the "Village of One Million" Munich is a southern city located near the Alps. This wonderfully charming 800-year-old city is the capital of Bavaria and the home of the world-famous Oktoberfest. Despite its name, events starts in late September and spills into the first week of October dancing oompah bands and food dominate. Be prepared not only to drink but also to eat: You'll have your fill of sausages that is for sure but experiment a bit whole oxen for instance are cooked on giant spits. While the food is good, fest goers never let it distract from the main focus of the festival: beer. The city is filled with thousands of casual and committed beer drinkers guzzling foamy brew for days on end. If this sounds like heaven by all means go and enjoy it but if it doesn't avoid Munich at all costs during this time. Book accommodation well in advance for Oktoberfest. But don't think Oktoberfest is the only time Munich celebrates. The pre-Lenten celebration of Fasching is equally popular. It goes on for days with all sorts of costumed parties and festivities.

Munich is an important cultural center with special opera, theatre, ballet and concert seasons. It also has museums and galleries on every imaginable subject (including one about unusual museums). Some interesting ones are the German Theater Museum, Museum of Mankind and Nature, the Residenz (Egyptian Art and the crown jewels) and the Valentine Museum. The Deutsches Museum is the largest science and industry museum in Europe. The Alte Pinakothek and Neue Pinakothek (art museums) house

extensive collections of medieval to modern European painting. The Lenbachhaus Gallery also has an exceptional collection of expressionist paintings (Kandinsky Klee Macke Marc).

The Englischer Garten is a nice place to relax and watch the citizens of Munich take their walks or tan in the sun (often topless sometimes wearing even less). In the midst of the gardens are the Kleinhesseloher See, a small lake with a cafe that serves refreshments, and a Chinese Tower and Monopterus (a Greek temple).

The town itself is easy to get around thanks to an excellent transportation system. Visit the Nymphenburg Castle, a large baroque 17th-century palace that doubles as the Bavarian China

Factory, the botanical gardens and the Olympic Center north of Munich, built for the 1972 Olympics.

Be sure to see Kaufingerstrasse (great shopping street stretching from Stachus to the Marienplatz) and the Schwabing District with its arty atmosphere smart boutiques antique shops lively nightlife and a stellar selection of restaurants bars and discos. Continue shopping at Viktualienmarkt an open-air marketplace where everything from gingerbread cookies to fresh fish is available. Other attractions are the Hellabrunn Zoo, the beer gardens and the Rathaus a 19th-century Gothic city hall with a glockenspiel.

One of Munich's most recognizable structures is the twin-onion-domed Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady). The old exterior provides quite a contrast to the stark white interior rebuilt after war damage gutted the church. BMW aficionados may want to make a pilgrimage to the BMW museum for some history of the company (after all the B in BMW stands for Bavaria and the corporate headquarters are in Munich).

Do spend a day driving around the countryside. Munich also has the airport closest to the German Alps (skiing and quaint Bavarian towns). The town of Dachau is the site of the first Nazi concentration camp. Another day trip relating to that era can be taken to Berchtesgaden. Plan at least two or three days in Munich.

Indonesia

A Blend of Beauty & Chaos

Indonesia is made up of more than 13,000 islands which so far only less than 1500 having a name. Be sure to visit at least Bali and if you have some more time, try to make it to Sumatra, with its impressive natural beauty. The smaller islands of Indonesia include Madura, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores and Bali.

To most travelers, Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, is a starting or ending point of their trip. However, Jakarta is one of the most exciting nightlife cities in the world.

Although Jakarta itself doesn't have many "sights" to offer, it is the lively commercial centre of Java. In addition to several museums, the heart of the old Dutch town at 'Taman Fatahillah'. National Monument or known by locals at Monumen Nasional [Monas] and National Museum or Museum gajah nearby Merdeka Square. Sunda Kelapa, is the old harbour from which merchantmen from all over the world come and go. Take a weekend charter to Anak Krakatoa, and compare it to Captain Cook's 1773 description. The nighttime southern sky is not something you will soon forget.

Indonesia is a wonderful country with beautiful, friendly people. It is a wonderful mixture of beauty and chaos that you will either love, or hate. The rice paddies, volcanoes, small villages and ocean beaches are incomparable in this world.

Bali

Although it is relatively small compared to the other two favourite Indonesian holiday destinations Sumatra and

Java, Bali most certainly did not escape the Indonesian lover's attention. Whereas one can find great extended areas of dense forests on Sumatra and Buddhist centres (such as the one at Borobodur) and volcanoes on Java, Bali has a lot of the same kind - and maybe even of a prettier kind. However, everything is on a smaller scale, because Bali is not only small in size but also has a high density of population.

No visit to Bali can be complete without visiting magnificent Jimbaran Bay. The Bay is just outside Denpasar and is a long, beautiful sandy beach with the old fishing village of Jimbaran at one end. The beach is lined with small, family type restaurants offering fresh sea food with the main attraction being that you can choose your sea food, choose the cooking method and enjoy it overlooking the beach and the spectacular sunsets. At the other end of the tourist experience, Jimbaran is also the location of resorts such as the Four Seasons and the Ritz-Carlton, with the Bali locations typically being rated as some of the finest (and most expensive) in the world.

Kuta

This former Hippies' Paradise is still paradise for those who love sea, sun and sand. Besides the possibility of doing all sorts of sports such as diving, golfing, surfing and bungee-jumping, you can surely spend your money on shopping. Along the sea-side, you'll find plenty of shops and stalls. Life does not stop when the sun sets on Kuta. There are plenty of restaurants and bars where you can dance and drink the night away. ■



Iran

A Land of Rich Culture

Iran has a rich culture and Iranians are most friendly people. It is a great country to travel, with efficient public transport, old cities packed with sights, ruins from ancient Persian and Caspian Sea beach resorts.

The capital of Iran is Tehran and its political and cultural center. It is a big city, but not unpretty. From it you can reach Tabriz in the west, the old capital city with lots of sights and a great bazaar.

Iran is a country with great ancient sights, rich culture, splendid cuisine and a very hospitable people. Iran is a country which suffered changes held by Arabs, Mongols, Turkish Ottoman, Portuguese, Dutch, etc, but which will never lose the presence of the ancient Persian Empire and Persian Culture, unique in the whole world. The highlight of this Empire can yet be experience visiting its Capital City Persepolis or Fars near Shiraz .

The Southern part of the country in the Persian Gulf is in fact very beautiful and interesting. It's strange how to go down a few thousand miles South the country and find European presence. The Portuguese presence still remaining in street names, local settlements and forgotten defence castles like in Qeshme Island are things very interesting to visit.

Tabriz The City of Kings

Ark-e Tabriz (Citadel of Tabriz) is the capital of one of the most famous provinces of Iran, the Azarbaijan. It is the land of the fire temple of the Kings and the Nobles of Iran. It is perhaps the birthplace of Zaratushtra.

Tabriz has been the capital city of Iran on numerous times throughout the old history of this country. Tabriz is located in a valley to the north of the beautiful Mount Sahand. The valley opens out into a plain that slopes down gently to the northern end of Lake Orumieh, about 60 km to the west

With a very rich history, Tabriz used to house many historical monuments. Ark or Citadel of Tabriz is the impressive remainder of a great and imposing building in the town. The Blue Mosque (or Masjid-e Kaboud) on the north side of town, is a 15th-century structure destroyed partially by one of Tabriz's recurrent earthquakes. The walls of the mosque have been riveted with marble slabs and decorated with superb mosaic tiles. Do not miss El Goli (former Shah Goli), a pleasant hillside garden and park around an artificial lake El Goli, only four km south of downstream Tabriz, is so lovely a place that it deserves an illustration. It is a popular weekend resort for the locals. A hill in the eastern side of the park leads down to the pool with steps, and a fountain from top of the hill flows down to the pool. In the center of the pool there is a grand hexagonal building. Strolling in the center of Tabriz, one cannot miss its very large and 15th-century covered bazaar. It is a great place for getting hopelessly lost amid its dusty architectural splendors. Its architectural style, numerous caravansaries, mosques, and schools have added further beauty and glory to this complex.

From the earliest days of Christianity there has been a sizable Armenian community in Tabriz, and the city boasts a number of churches, including one mentioned by Marco Polo on his travels. ■

Israel

The Holy Land of history

Israel is a beautiful country and a great place to visit. The country has marvelous old cities, good beaches and plenty of culture, history and holy places... and really good food.

Israel is bordered by Egypt in the south, Lebanon in the North and Jordan and Syria in the East.

Jerusalem will be high on any list of favourite destinations and with good reason: in the old city there are many places of worship and other holy places. Be sure to go to Mount Scopus (the original campus location for Hebrew University) and get an incredible view of the Old City. While there, go to the other side of the university campus (near the amphitheater) and look out over the Judean Desert towards Jordan. On good visibility days you can see the Dead Sea in the distance and the Moab mountains of Jordan just beyond.

Tel Aviv is the place to party. It has good beaches, top cuisine restaurants and excellent nightlife, probably the best to be found within a circle of a few thousand kilometers.

The north of Israel is worth exploring: the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, the Golan Heights and the towns of Tiberias, Acre (aka Akko), and Haifa are the most important stops on your itinerary to the North.

The south offers the enormous Negev desert and the Dead Sea. In the southernmost point of Israel, the Red Sea beach resort of Eilat is a tourist hot spot. Located at the very bottom tip of Israel, this is a popular fun-in-the-sun vacation spot. Not to be missed is snorkeling or SCUBA diving at Hof Almog (Coral Beach) right on the border between Israel and Egypt.

Jerusalem



Jerusalem is the three times holy capital of the twice promised land. In the old city you will see priests, nuns, mollahs and rabbis all over the place. Churches of every possible denomination dot the town, the gold domed mosque of the Haram-al-Sharif is seen from afar, the Wailing Wall is always busy.

But the old city of Jerusalem is not just a holy place. It is also a very busy market place with more tourist shops than anywhere, the Arab part of town has bustling markets (especially near Damascus Gate) where anything is for sale.

Tel Aviv is the most modern and westernized place in Israel. Jerusalem is the official capital (although not

internationally recognized as such) and the religious capital, Tel Aviv is the party capital. When you walk the streets at night you can hardly imagine you are in the holy land.

Sidewalk cafes give the city a decidedly European flavor, especially in the areas with Bauhaus buildings. Shopping at the enclosed Dizengoff Center is pleasant.

Tel Aviv is also the business center of Israel, and has the largest percentage of young people. Jaffa is the old Arabic part of Tel Aviv. It is much older (Tel Aviv was founded in 1909) and is now some sort of the Quartier Latin of the city. Although it has many small and trendy boutiques it still retains some of its flavour as an Arabic city.

The best reason to come to Tel Aviv is to have a good time, the nightlife is great, there are good restaurants, there are so many shops, the beaches aren't bad and there is always something going on.

A good place for trendy shopping would be Sheinkin street; Kikar Hamedina is known for its upscale (and expensive) shops; and Azrieli center, Ramat Aviv mall and Dizengoff center would answer all your shopping mall needs. Alternatively, you can check out Shuk HaCarmel, a large street market held daily on Carmel St. Bazel and Rotschild streets have the best coffee places; Allenby, Liliensblum streets and the Tel Aviv port is where you'll find all night parties and bars; and you shouldn't miss the beach - for sunbathing and babe watching.



Nazareth of Jesus

Nazareth, a small and insignificant village in the period of Jesus, has now grown to be a modern city that serves as a regional economic center. It is the largest Arab city in Israel with a population of 60,000 most Christians and Muslims, living side by side in harmony.

Though Nazareth is one of the most important Christian holy sites in the world and some one million tourists and pilgrims visit this city every year. It's not a city that gets to you. Most tourists stay just for a few hours, just long enough to visit the religious and historical sites. In the past few years however large public budgets have been invested to

establish an appropriate infrastructure for the tourists and pilgrims who visit Nazareth's sites yearly.

If you want to experience what the city looked like 2000 years ago, it might be interesting to check out one of the many villages around in the horseshoe shaped Jezreel Valley. Less known but very interesting are the 19th century Venetian-style homes that have ceiling frescoes and red tile roofs. For those who come to find a stable with an ox, donkey and some sheep, the city might be a bit of a disappointment, but for those who are interested in a lively and exotic Middle Eastern town, Nazareth has a lot to offer. ■



Italy

A Country of Wine & Sunshine

Italy is one of those countries about which you probably have quite a number of preconceptions before you have put one foot into the country. A country of olive oil and mafia, pasta, wine and sunshine, roman ruins and renaissance palaces, Italy has a lot to offer its visitors. Although some of these images are appealing, it would be a shame if that was the only thing you come away with. Italy is certainly much more complex and interesting than that.

Italy is a modern country with deep Roman Catholic roots, full of interesting stuff for the casual tourist and even more for the educated visitor. It is easy to spend two weeks in major tourist centers without any reason to get bored, but it is equally simple to get off the beaten track. In the north, next to the Alps and the flatlands of the Po river, both cultural jewels and highly developed industrial cities attract. This is where Italy's economic heart beats, but even in the bustling cities, people live the "la vita Italiana".

In Lombardia's capital Milan, city of haute couture and business, you can easily spend weeks without being bored. Bergamo is only an hour away and has an upper Old Town. On every corner you will discover something new. The most famous tourist attractions in the north-east are Venice and Verona, that both let you think of romantic love affairs. To discover the beautiful landscapes around, for example, the Verona province may be even more fascinating. The north-west of Italy is a paradise for every culinary interested

traveler. For wine lovers, Piemonte is directly connected with Barolo and Barbaresco, the most famous wines made out of the Nebbiolo grape. Piemonte's capital, Turin offers more than just a starting point to visit these wine regions. Lots of museums, modern art, book and music fairs make Turin one of the leading Italian cities concerning cultural life. At the same time it is a booming industrial and multimedia city.

The coastal region of Liguria is another highlight. The Riviera delle Palme has no reason to envy its French counterpart. Beaches, countryside, the right climate and old towns like Genoa make this region a must to visit. Mostly undiscovered valleys offer beautiful walking possibilities. The Lunigiana region, Albenga and Ceriale are worth a visit and an even longer stay. Gourmets should not miss the Emilia Romagna, Italy's culinary centre. Bologna, "La Grassa" like the Italians say, is a must see as well as Ravenna with its impressive mosaic works and the Byzantine architecture and last but not least Rimini, on the Adriatic Sea. For Tuscany words fail to describe its beauty: You have to go there to see, smell and experience the beauty of the old towns and lovely valleys yourself. Florence, Lucca, Pisa, Prato and Siena, offer more cultural highlights than some countries as a whole. The way of living does the rest to attract every year millions of visitors. Elba, the island of Napoleons first exile, is only one of seven Tuscan Archipelago islands.



Rome The Eternal City

What can we say about Rome? The Eternal City, with its monumental palaces, churches, squares, and fountains still fed by aqueducts with ancient water sources, has to be visited by every Italy traveler. To discover Rome, it is said, "A lifetime is not enough." The southern part of Italy fascinates the traveler with its great hospitality and gorgeous landscapes. Campania has attracted visitors over the centuries: Capri, Ischia, Sorrento and Amalfi became the chosen destinations of visitors from many countries.

Roma: The name inverts neatly to form amor[e]. No wonder that a natural occurrence is to fall in love with Rome, the fabled Eternal City, the city that exerts the most fascination in the mind of the traveler, and can reward as no other city can. Do not expect her playful, exuberant fountains to cease from casting their liquid diamonds into the sky, even during the quiet hours of the night, for there is no stopping the water-flow of her hundreds of miles of aqueducts, which will also be serving your hotel room. Yet, as no other city has been the focal point of the world for such a long period of time, few have such a long and turbulent history as has Roma. Lavished with architectural jewelry from republican to imperial to early-Christian to medieval to renaissance to baroque to modern times by history's greatest artists, the queen of cities has also experienced sieges and raids that left their scars; but each time the Eternal City recovered from her injuries in glorious form. Roma's history is tightly connected to the history of Europe as a whole. Not just the Roman emperors but also medieval emperors and kings, such as Charlemagne and Otto I, regarded Rome as the true seat of power; only here could their authority, through benediction by the popes, could be sanctified.

"Non basta una vita," it is said: One does not have to be

one of the countless academics residing in her many foreign institutes to declare that one life is not enough to get to know Roma. Maybe you'll need about nine, as many as have the stray cats that also populate the city. At each corner of each street there is a multitude of stories to tell, with layer upon layer of history beneath the feet. A modern school occupying a renaissance palace built on the foundations of an imperial bath complex whose mosaics and aqueduct conduits can still be seen, and a baroque church incorporating the structure of a medieval basilica built on the foundations of a republican temple are a couple of the thousands of stories, which together hardly even begin to reveal the history of this three-thousand-year-old city.

St. Peter's Basilica

Be certain not to miss The Eternal City's Trevi Fountain (remember Anita Ekberg in the classic scene in *La Dolce Vita*) the Spanish Steps, Piazza Navona, Piazza del Popolo, some of the Roman heritage sights, such as the Pantheon, the Colosseum and the Forum Romanum, a few of her world-famous churches, such as Il Gesu, S. Giovanni in Laterano and Sta. Maria Maggiore, and the Vatican with the incredibly huge St. Peter's Basilica and the unrivalled Vatican Museums. Sunrise on the Gianicolo and sunset on the Pincio, with vistas of a sea of golden domes and bell-towers, are sure to record images on the mind never to be forgotten.

Not far from Roma you can find the wonderful Ancient Ostia, the ancient port of Rome, where you can enjoy a great day walking among bath complexes, squares, temples, and lots of well-preserved stores, like the Tabernae, an ancient take-away/pub restaurant. ■



Japan is situated in northeastern Asia between the North Pacific and the Sea of Japan. Japan consists of four major islands, surrounded by more than 4,000 smaller islands.

Japan's topographical features include coastlines with varied scenery, towering mountains, which are very often volcanic and twisted valleys that invite visitors into the mysterious world of nature.

Japan is a country of contrasts, and Tokyo is no exception. From the glitz of Roppongi and Shibuya, where great restaurants, theme bars and karaoke clubs offer you a unique nighttime experience, to the tranquility of Buddhist temples and sleepy side streets, where antique shops and old cafes reside.

But if you ask people whether they would consider Japan as a holiday destination, the response you often hear is, "I would love to go, but it's too expensive."

Indeed, many rule out the possibility of a holiday in Japan without even checking the facts. The myth of the hyper expensive country, where you are reputed to pay up to \$200 for a melon, still pervades. A little investigation and inside information from those in the know, like Tokyo's expatriate residents, shows that a trip to Japan doesn't have to be so expensive. In fact, it is surprising what you can do on a limited budget.

Members of the expatriate community are a mixed bunch with different reasons for being here and different interests. But one thing they all agree on is that life is never boring here; Japan has something for everyone, whatever your tastes or interests; and it is possible to have a good time relatively cheaply if you pick and choose.

Japan is a food paradise. Of that there is no question. From smoky yakitori stalls (Japanese-style chicken kebabs), where customers sit at makeshift tables, drinking ice-cold

beer as the sun goes down on a hot summer's day, to high class restaurants, where kimono-clad waitresses serve the freshest sushi, the sheer variety and quality of the food in Japan is unmatched elsewhere.

Autumn in Japan

Autumn paints the land with a stunning blend of red and yellow hues, drawing many visitors and hikers on excursions called Momiji-gari, meaning to savor the view of the enchanting maple leaves.

The Shakotan-hanto Peninsula, in western Hokkaido, juts into the Sea of Japan and forms a beautiful coastline full of variety and clear water. The area from O-gon-misaki Point to the Shakotan-misaki Point and Kamui-misaki Point is Hokkaido's only sea park. Rental cars are available at the station in Yoichi, which is at the base of the peninsula. Using this as a starting point, you can drive around the peninsula on a single road.

A seabed sightseeing boat leaves from Bikuni Port, and you can see Shakotan's blue sea from the underwater glass observation room. Also, the Yoichi Uchu-Kinenkan (Yoichi Space Memorial Museum) commemorates Mamoru Mori, the astronaut who was born here. There, you can experience being a space shuttle pilot through a simulation device.

Niseko is a large resort area encompassing Mt. Yotei-zan, which looks like Mt. Fuji, and has the Niseko Range of peaks at its center. You can easily enjoy a variety of outdoor sports throughout the year, including skiing, hiking and rafting. There are also so many hot springs that it is said to take six days to visit them all, even if you bathe three times a day. There is also a park where fresh water gushes out from Mt. Yotei-zan: this is known as the source of one of Japan's 100 best-tasting water. ■



South Korea

Where Traditions Are Kept Alive

South Korea is located in Northeast Asia. Its only border is with North Korea. After the dramatic split-up in the fifties (The Korean War was 1950-1953), the South has fared very well. It has become one of the richest countries in Asia and even in the world. And it has managed to keep up a rather frenetic pace of economic development. It is currently ranked 10th in the world in terms of GPD. This certainly does not mean Korea has lost touch with its roots. Like Japan, it manages to combine the ultra modern with the very traditional.

The capital city of Seoul is a big, dynamic city, but sometimes makes tourists confused. Seoul keeps the traditions of the ancestors alive. Old temples are still well visited, and the many palaces of former rulers remind the visitor of the past. But the general impression of this city is a big, complex, busy megalopolis.



South Korea is full of life even after the working hours with many restaurants and bars full of people. Seoul is basically split in two - Kang Buk (North of the Han River) and Kang Nam (South of Han River). Kang Buk has many traditional landmarks and shopping districts and Kang Nam offers the upmost cosmopolitan life Seoul has to offer with world class shopping districts, and pricey restaurants. You can experience the young and trendy life at Apgujeong-dong.

If you want to go shopping, you should not miss Dongdaemun (East Gate) Market. There are several big shopping centers such as Doota, Pyunghwa Sijang etc. They sell so many good and trendy clothes at good prices all night. If you'd like to buy Korean traditional goods for souvenirs, visit Insadong. It's famous for narrow street full of small beautiful shops.

Gyumbok-gung (gung means palace) is the most popular place for foreigners. It was the main palace of Chosun dynasty. It has many beautiful building with traditional small gardens. Another famous places are Duksu-goong, Biwon (Secret Garden), Jongmyo, Changduk-gung. They are located in the center of Kang Buk old downtown.

Pusan, in the south, is a large harbor city. It is a nice city and offers good possibilities for excursions. It also offers some of the freshest seafood in the world. Manono Island and Apolima Island are very popular places to visit on a short trip.

Ulsan, an hour north-east of Busan, is considered the industrial capital of the country and another city of note. ■



Mauritius

A Tropical Paradise

God created Mauritius and then Heaven, at least according to Mark Twain and if you are looking for what brochures call a tropical paradise, Mauritius is there for you. Mauritius consists of two islands. By far the biggest one is known as Mauritius - the capital city Port Louis is located here. Then there is a smaller island some 500 km away, called Rodrigues.

Black river gorges national park

From Plaine Champagne, the highest part of the central plateau of the island, there is a superb breathtaking view of the Black River Gorges and the sea lining the horizon. The Black River Gorges is a 6,574 hectare park proclaimed natural reserve in 1994. It protects much of the remaining indigenous forests of Mauritius and provides an excellent opportunity to visitors to enjoy a wonderful hiking with a spectacular scenery and also an occasion to appreciate some of the unique endemic plants and birdlife of Mauritius. The gorges have immensely contributed to the regeneration of some endangered endemic bird species like the Mauritian Kestrel and the Pink Pigeon.

The National Park is easily accessible from Vacoas or Curepipe via La Marie and Mare aux Vacoas. A visitor information centre has been set up at Le Pétrin to welcome and direct visitors and also to provide picnic facilities. A boardwalk leads to the typical dwarf forest of the region and a fenced conservation management area (from which invasive non-native plants have been removed) protects a sample of the remaining heathland. From there, various hiking tracks are offered and visitors can choose to walk to Maccabée forest (7km return) or down through the Gorges to Black River (15km) from the road across Plaine Champagne towards Chamarel where there is easy access to viewpoints at Alexandra Falls, over Bel Ombre and over the spectacular Black River Gorges. There are also a number of longer walking trails including one to the island's highest point, Black River Peak (828m). Road access into the Black River Gorges from the coast road has been upgraded and offers a Visitor Centre as well as a camping area.

The forest-clad slopes of the gorges and the Maccabé Forest nearby contain some interesting specimens of indigenous timber, namely the Bois de Natte, Colophane, Ebony, Tatamaka or Tambalacoque, as well as fine plants peculiar to the island such as the Trochetia, the national flower of Mauritius.

Port Louis A City of Elegance

Capital and main port of Mauritius, Port Louis was founded by the French governor, Mahé de Labourdonnais, in 1735. The harbour lies sheltered in a semi-circle of mountains. The town has plenty of character, and shows in certain quarters of its past elegance. Off the main square, palm-lined Place d'Armes, there are some particularly fine French colonial buildings, especially the Government House (eighteenth century) and the Municipal Theatre, built around the same time. There are two Cathedrals, Anglican and Catholic, a Mosque, a Chinese Casino, a fine Supreme Court, some 18th century Barracks, a Natural History Museum.

To see a fascinating cross-section of Mauritian life, visit the lively covered market. Champs de Mars, originally laid out by the French for military parades is now a racecourse. The best high-up views of the racecourse, town and harbour, are from a splendid boulevard called Edward VII Avenue and from Fort Adélaïde, a citadel fortified in the time of William IV. South of Port Louis is Le Réduit, French colonial residence of the former Governor-General of Mauritius, set in magnificent gardens. From Port Louis you can drive through the residential townships of Beau Bassin, Rose Hill, Quatre Bornes and Vacoas.

Casela

Set in a magnificent site between Bambous and Tamarin in the Rivière Noire district, the Casela Bird Park hosts some 140 varieties of birds from around the world. ■



The Netherlands

Cool & Relaxed

The Netherlands is a 'big' small monarchy in the Northwest of Europe is known for much more than cheese, windmills, wooden shoes and tulips. Most construction in the Netherlands was done in the era of oversea expansion and in the 19th century when the industrial revolution started.

In Amsterdam, Leiden or Utrecht you can see the big 17th century mansions once owned by the commanders of the Dutch fleet and those of the rich merchants who financed the wars with their overseas gains. They were the Dutch elite. They preferred small items of great value stashed away in their mansions and baroque palaces. Though the Dutch never were really extravagant and did not have a real court like there was in Germany, France and Spain, they were very proud of themselves. This can still be seen in the countless portrait paintings they commissioned. Many of the world's famous painters are Dutch, such as Rembrandt, van Gogh, Frans Hals and Johannes Vermeer.

Apart from the glory days of the 17th century there is much in the Netherlands to attract the present-day visitor. Visitors will find a very open, relaxed and international atmosphere, and some great museums with both modern art and historical chef d'oeuvres. Due to the bombardment that levelled the city and the renovations that followed, Rotterdam is the only real modern town of the Netherlands (not to mention, the largest seaport in the world).

Compared to megacities like New York, London, Paris or even Cologne, the Dutch cities are very hip and relaxed. Places like Den Bosch ('s Hertogenbosch) and Arnhem and Zwolle are also certainly worth a visit, with the latter being close to the national park 'Hoge Veluwe'. Maastricht is the most important city of the South. The atmosphere is quite different from the North. The town is pretty and is a good base for exploring the countryside as well as making daytrips to Aachen and Liege. Because of its size and flatness the Netherlands is a great country to explore by bicycle. Public transport is another good option because parking is problematic in most town centers. Trains and buses provide excellent transport in the entire country.

Finally, the young mainly visit the Netherlands for two characteristics: the permissive attitude towards erotic activity (prostitution is legal) and drugs (possession of small quantities of soft drugs for personal use is legal, and marijuana - in small quantities for personal use - is for sale legally in 'coffee shops' throughout the country).

The Netherlands is the 'big' small country you have to visit at least once in your life to ride a bike, see all the fantastic paintings by the Dutch painters such as van Gogh and Rembrandt and see how liberal law works in daily life. ■

Poland

Where Times Slows down

Welcome to Poland. Poland is the home of Nicolaus Copernicus, Fryderyk Chopin, Lech Walsea and Pope John Paul II. Located in the plains of Central Europe Poland has suffered severely from the ravages of war. But each time it has been rebuilt by its inhabitants. Poland has really opened up after the fall of the Berlin wall and is becoming a very attractive destination for travelers. It has many historic towns and cities that testify of the long history of the Polish state, great natural beauty and a unique coast. The two primary destinations are the present capital Warsaw, which like a phoenix rose from the ashes of total destruction in

World War II, and the ancient capital Krakow, untouched by war, which is an exquisite treasure of Gothic and Renaissance architecture.

Poland is too large to be properly appreciated in one visit. There is too much to see. Discover central Poland, with its many wild national parks easily reached from Warsaw, or the north and the Baltic coast with the ancient port of Gdansk. In the western part you will find Wielkopolska, the cradle of the nation, and in the south Malopolska and the Tatra mountains easily reached from Krakow. In the southwest Silesia with its many old castles and mountains is worth a visit.

Krakow

Where Old World Charm Rules

Krakow is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. It was originally the home of the Polish royalty (between 1038 and 1596), before the capital was moved to Warsaw. Visiting Krakow is a refreshing break from much of European travel, where similar cities blend together, and the dominance of English might make you wonder if you ever left North America. The cobblestoned streets, majestic churches (almost 100 historical churches!), and old world charm make Krakow an unforgettable destination.

Add to it the former Jewish district with its seven synagogues, three gigantic Gothic churches and more than 800 of pubs huddled in beautiful nooks and

alleyways where time slows down and you'd be coming back here as often as you can.

Krakow is located in the south of Poland, about halfway from Warsaw and Prague and is a good place to break up your trip if you are traveling from one to the other. Krakow is now the third most popular tourist destination in central and eastern Europe, following Prague and Budapest.

Warsaw

The City of Music & Museums

The first impact with Warsaw may be disappointing for the tourists. Especially so for those who arrive from Okęcie airport: in fact the city appears as long rows of anonymous residence buildings rather grey and gloomy. You need to keep in mind that Warsaw, which was one of the most lively and cosmopolite cities in Europe before the 2nd World War, was destroyed in 1944 and 90 percent of it was completely dilapidated. You can then feel the deep respect and great admiration for its surviving citizens who have been able to make Warsaw arise again from its ruins like phoenix rising from its own ashes.



Warsaw is the national centre of culture and learning. It hosts the Polish Academy of Science, 13 higher education institutions, about 27 museums and 20 theatres, the national philharmonic, and opera and operetta companies. Warsaw plays host to several important cultural events, including the International Chopin Piano Competition every five years, the annual Warsaw Autumn Modern Music Festival in September, the International Book Fair in May, the International Jazz Jamboree Festival in October and the Warsaw Poetry Autumn. Warsaw is also Poland's largest industrial centre, though factories and industrial enterprises are certainly not what tourists like best.

Posen

Poznan (Posen). Located by the Warta River it is one of the oldest cities in Poland, making it an important historical center. Poznan's impressive cathedral is the earliest church in the country, containing the tombs of the first Polish rulers. Today the city is a vibrant center for trade, industry, and education. Poznań is Poland's 5th largest city and 4th biggest industrial center. It is also the administrative capital of the Greater Poland Voivodship. It's also a place which is popular with *Steam Railway* enthusiasts as there are regular steam services to Wolsztyn at 72 kms SW of Poznan.

Danzig

The City Where WWII Started

Gdansk (Danzig) is an amazingly beautiful city in spite of (or with thanks to?) its turbulent history. There are not many places in the world where the history of our time seems more immediate. After all it was here in September 1939 that the hell of the Second World War started, the war that



was to realise Hitler's mad plans to make Europe and half the world into the dominion of his 'thousand-year' Third Reich.

The city center was completely destroyed during WWII. In the Długi Targ (Long Market) with the beautiful coloured houses, only two were still standing after the bombardments! After the war all these houses were rebuilt stone by stone.

Walking along the medieval docks and city is an experience in itself, however any walk should lead you to the exceptional Solidarity (Solidarność) museum at the former Lenin shipyards. The museum has a fantastic interactive exhibit and is an important reminder of how the oppressed will never be defeated. ■

Romania

A Nation of Many Landmarks

Romania is divided into four geographical areas. Transylvania (a belt of Alpine massifs and forests) and Moldavia compose the northern half of the country, which is divided down the middle by the north-south strip of the Carpathian Mountains. South of the east-west line of the Carpathians lies the flat Danube plain of Walachia with the capital Bucharest, its border with Bulgaria being defined by the course of the Danube. Romania's coastline is along the Black Sea, incorporating the port of Constanta and the Danube Delta. The region between the Black Sea and the Danube (after it veers North), is also known as Dobrudja (Dobrogea).

The 500-year-old city of Bucharest was once touted as the "Small Paris". Bucharest today, like any big capital, is a bustling modern metropolis full of life and diversity. Boasting a rich and full history, Bucharest offers attractive opportunities to enjoy and explore. Much of Bucharest's past can be seen along Calea Victoriei and Piata Victoriei and the streets leading from them. Some of the points of interest on Calea Victoriei are The National Museum of History, The Romanian Athenaeum and The Royal Palace known also as The National Art Museum, George Enescu Palace and The Museum of Art Collections.

Among the attractions is Parliament Palace listed in the Guinness Book of World Records, under "Administrative

Buildings" as the second largest building in the world after the Pentagon. In point of volume of the building, the Romanian Parliament Palace ranks third in the world. Ranking first is a Cape Canaveral rocket-assembly building and ranking second is Quetzacoatl's pyramid in Cholula, Mexico.

Of special interest for the Romanian ethnography is Village Museum. Located on the bank of the Lake Herastrau in Bucharest, the museum is a result of Profesor Dimitrie Gusti's research on rural regions. The Village Museum was opened in 1936 the same year as the one from Skansen (Stockholm). Both museums are the first open-air ethnographic museums in the world.

Impressive by their simplicity of forms and colors many of the churches from Bucharest are an original expression of the Romanian architectural style. Some of the most valuable and old are Church of St. Gheorghe on Magheru, Cretulescu Church on Calea Victoriei, Antim Monastery (1715) close to The Arch of Triumph, Patriarchal Church (1665) on the Mitropoliei Hill in Unirii Square and many others.

Another point of interest is The Old Princely Court Museum, the ruins of a palace built in the 1500s by Vlad Tepes a.k.a. Count Dracula. Nearby stands the oldest church in Bucharest, Church Saint Anton, which unfortunately rebuilt many times does not keep too much of its old look.

In case the noisy and crowded streets of the center get you down, be sure to visit the Cismigiu Gardens (1860), an old and historical park located downtown or Herastrau Park, located just a couple of metro stops from the city center.

In Bucharest there is broad range of cultural events at fairly low prices. "Sapte Seri" magazine, a free magazine available on brochure stands, details Bucharest's restaurants and entertainment, including information about cultural events going on in the capital. ■





Russia has for many years been a land of mystery and intrigue to Westerners. For hundreds of years, depending on the direction of political winds, Russia has been an enigma, a friend, or an enemy of the West. It is a miraculous country and still mysterious to many foreigners, with many cultural and historic treasures, unspoiled nature; and industrious, bright and hospitable people. Russia mothered Peter and Catherine the Great, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Pushkin, Tchaikovsky, Nabokov, among others, who have contributed to the rich cultural heritage.

Russia is geographically enormous, far larger than Canada or the United States. It is still the biggest country in the world, stretching from Poland to Korea and from the Polar Regions to the deserts Asia. It is also the country with the most number of neighbors in the world. On this huge landmass there are many of the worlds greatest sights to discover. St. Petersburg and Moscow are surely exciting places to start your sightseeing of Russia, with world class museums, churches and other historic centers well worth exploring.

Moscow The City of Diverse Styles

Moscow is one of the oldest and most beautiful Russian cities. The emperors, or tsars, made the city their base of rule until 1712, when the capital was moved to Saint Petersburg. Moscow was restored as Russia's capital in 1918, and it served as the capital of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1922 until 1991. Since then Moscow has been the capital of the Russian Federation.

Moscow has a long and dramatic history. The city has been completely destroyed and rebuilt again many times throughout the years. Its most ancient wooden buildings disappeared in fires. Each time the city was resurrected from the ashes, it became more and more beautiful. For every rebuilding, the most talented and famous architects were invited from around the world to restore Moscow.

This history of reconstruction Moscow has undergone is part of the reason she has absorbed the many different and diverse styles that visitors experience here. Stalin's epic and monumental buildings neighbor with small two-store nineteenth century town houses, while splendid cathedrals peer out from behind modern skyscrapers. Even in the heart



of Moscow, in the Kremlin, old churches compete with the immense Congress Palace for space.

Despite the size of the city (about 900 square kilometers) and the scale of many of the buildings and avenues there, the general layout is easily grasped - a series of concentric circles and radial lines, emanating from the Kremlin; the center being compact enough to explore on foot.

Red Square & Kremlin

The Red Square and the Kremlin are the historic nucleus of Moscow, a magnificent stage for political drama, signifying a great sweep of history that includes Ivan the Terrible, Peter and Catherine the Great, Romanovs dynasty, Stalin and Gorbachev.

Here you'll find Lenin's Mausoleum and St Basil's Cathedral, the famous GUM department store, and the



Kremlin itself, whose splendid cathedrals and Armoury museum head the list of attractions.

The Kremlin is Moscow's heart, symbolically, historically and strategically: Red Square lies along its eastern side and the Moscow River is to the south. From here, Moscow spreads out in four distinctive rings of development, each area having its own collection of monasteries, museums and elegant buildings. Most of the city's sights are within the first circle - an area that can easily be covered on foot.

The Kremlin and its surroundings are a great place to spend time. In the summer the temperature can get high. This surprises many people, as they associate Russia with snow. The Kremlin deserves a full circumnavigation to appreciate the architectural splendour. This area is a very cool place to chill out!

Museums

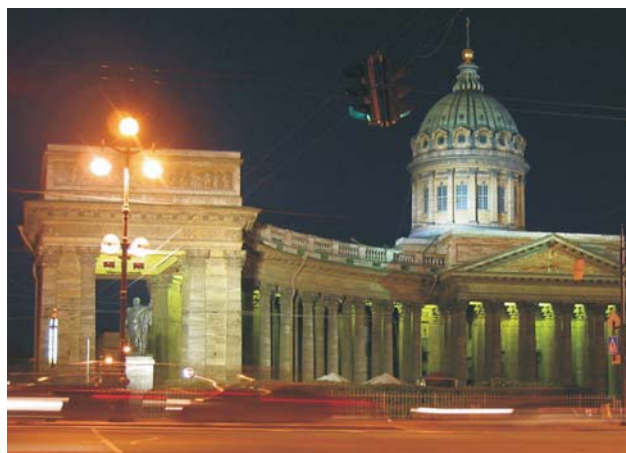
The oldest museums of Moscow are located in the territory of the Moscow Kremlin. One of them is "Oruzheinaya



Palata" or "The Armoury" (Armoury Chamber). The Armoury was founded about 500 years ago. In the 15th century it was called "Kazennaya Palata", where the Tsar treasures had been stored. The museum displays the unique specimens of applied art and precious utensils, i.e. collection of jewelry of the 12th-20th centuries; the collection of West-European silver utensils of the 13th-19th centuries (ambassador's gifts); the collection of elite arms and (12th to 19th centuries); the collection of golden and silver embroidery (14th to 19th centuries); the collection of fabrics and clothing of the 14th to the beginning of 20th centuries; accouterments and Tsars' carriages.

St Petersburg

St Petersburg is the cultural capital of Russia. The city was founded in 1703 by Peter the Great. It was renamed Petrograd, then Leningrad, during the twentieth century. In the early nineties people voted to return to the name of St. Petersburg. The city contains many cultural heritages including the Hermitage, the Mariinsky Theatre, and the Russian Museum. The most famous inhabitants of this city are Dostoyevski, Pushkin, Tschajkovski, and Tcherniavski. ■





Singapore

A City-Nation of Shopping Malls

The Central Business District (CBD) is located in the heart of the island of Singapore. Here, especially at the mouth of the Singapore River, Asian tradition meets modern technology - gleaming skyscrapers tower over traditional architecture, while squat Chinese and Hindu temples dot the city. A curious blend of ancient and modern, the city is home to an ethnic mix of Chinese, Malaysians and Indians, as well as ex-pats from all over the world, in a predominantly English-speaking society. These different races live harmoniously thanks to religious tolerance, increased prosperity, stringent no-nonsense laws and a constant balmy equatorial heat.

Since the island became an independent Republic in 1965, it has enjoyed a vigorous and successful free trade policy, as introduced by its then Prime Minister (now Minister Mentor) Lee Kuan Yew. This has led to an unprecedented rise in the standard of living (most city dwellers own their own homes) and exponential economic growth, due mainly to the export industry.

Asian Civilization Museum

There are many buildings in Singapore that date as far back as the colonial era. They are now progressively being converted for use as museums.

This museum will introduce us to the world of Chinese beliefs, symbolism, and



Singapore is an island city in South East Asia. It is well-known for being one of the richest, most well organised, efficient countries in the world with a very high standard of living and an excellent skyline by the water. Singapore is an island with "1000 shopping malls" or so they say. Despite the hot climate, it is a tropical paradise for most tourists. This great diversity of lifestyles, cultures and religions thrives within the framework of a regulated society. Singapore's "FINE" city reputation is well-earned, and in fact, many will admire at once the clean, modern metropolis. Surrounded by artificially 'ordered' parks, its tall housing projects are populated by more than 80 percent of the population.

Highlights of Singapore include some of the ethnic parts of town: Arab street, Chinatown, Colonial District, Orchard road and Little India. South of Singapore are a few beautiful islands that are well worth visiting. The most visited is Sentosa island. It is a playground for people of all ages.

Singapore, the diamond-shaped island off the southern tip of Malaysia, is an unlikely success story. Once a simple fishing village, it was founded in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles, an official of the British East India Company, who decided it was the perfect location as a trading station. Since then it has become one of the world's most successful and prosperous cities, known as the Lion City.

scholar traditions. A combination of the past and the present, it is aimed at highlighting important sociopolitical-economic developments throughout Chinese history. Some interesting works include Buddhist artifacts, imperial porcelain, a collection of 17th Century Ming-style furniture, and fascinating objects from the Neolithic Period (5000-1600 BC).

Nightlife

As the young middle class begins to spend more on entertainment, Singapore's nightlife has also grown with its increase in interesting night spots. There are a large number of bars and discos, which are becoming increasingly sophisticated in Singapore today. Pool, wine, and cigars are the norm and that is what the young-at-heart are indulging in these days at the various groovy hangouts. Visitors can choose between exciting bars, clubs, discos, and karaoke. Singapore's nightlife does, indeed, make the country a truly bustling city.

Orchard Road

The sustenance of Singapore's shopping scene during the day, Orchard Road pulsates to a different beat at night. It was and still is the main center for nightlife, showcasing bars, discos, and nightclubs to please all who visit this place. Many of the well known places are located in the hotels here, whereas other favorites are found in shopping centers, such as Orchard Plaza, Orchard Towers, and Ngee Ann City.

Clarke Quay

Although it is the quieter cousin of Boat Quay, Clarke Quay does have a good selection of places for a beer. It features five blocks of restored and renovated warehouses, which are now homes to hip entertainment, dining outlets and shops of all kinds, including second-hand and antique shops. During the daytime, Clarke Quay presents the Stay Club, which is popular for its satay (a Malay dish) and barbecued seafood. In the evening, theme pubs and bars come alive with all kinds of music, such as classic rock, hard rock, the blues, and music from the 60s. Moored Chinese junks are also refurbished into floating pubs and restaurants. The bars here are not as crowded as those in Boat Quay.

Boat Quay

Boat Quay has become so popular that the rest of Singapore just seem to pale in comparison. It is arguably Singapore's best place to hang out. It has a good mix of high-end restaurants and alfresco dining, lively bars and pubs. It has so many bars that visitors can wander along until one takes their fancy. Boat Quay attracts everyone from the rich and famous to the younger Singaporeans.

Chinese Food

Chinese food in Singapore can range from the subtle Cantonese to the fiery Szechuan cuisine. Rice is the staple in most Chinese cuisine. However, noodles made from several types of flour and cooked in a variety of styles are also popular. A Chinese meal will usually consist of rice accompanied by small portions of several types of meat, poultry, fish, and vegetables. There are over 80 different styles of cooking, although most would refer to them in terms of four to five main regions of China. ■



South Africa

The Land of Gold & Diamonds

South Africa is a world leader in the production of gold, diamonds, aluminosilicates, chromium, manganese, vanadium, and platinum. Other leading minerals extracted are copper ore, coal, asbestos, iron ore, silver, and titanium. Uranium is also mined.

South Africa's climatic temperature varies from cold mild winters between 0-16C (32-59F) to warm, hot summers between 20-40C (68-104F). Summer is from October to March and winter from April to September which is a welcome winter get-away for visitors from the Northern Hemisphere.

Johannesburg, the capital of South Africa is a fascinating city with a modern centre, combining its ways with the older surroundings.

It is a very modern city by African standards but it does not hold many attractions for tourists. Sights in Johannesburg include the new Museum Africa which offers an honest and self-critical look at the nation's sometimes troubled past and the Market Theater Complex which houses theaters and a Saturday flea market.

History buffs will be interested in the Smuts Library at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University) where South African statesman Jan Smuts' book collection is preserved. The university's Gubbins Library has an extensive collection of books on Africa.

Negotiate with a taxi driver to give you an impromptu tour through Jo'burg's neighborhoods he'll take you past some large and impressive mansions hidden behind imposing security (home security is big business in South Africa).

Tours are easily arranged in Johannesburg for those interested in visiting the black suburb of Soweto (the name is an abbreviation of Southwestern Townships). The tour

also includes Mandela's humble home where he lived when he was arrested more than 30 years ago. For tourists the most striking sight was a functioning high school with every single window broken. It was surrounded by razor-wire fences. Also consider visiting Oriental Plaza, a shopping complex, where the majority of shop owners are South African Indians (much of the wares have Indian connections).





Excursions include a half-day trip to see the fossils at Sterkfontein Caves (a half-hour drive from town the site itself takes several hours to tour). Gold Reef City (part of what was once Crown Mines, one of many mines in and around Johannesburg) is more like a theme park than a mine tour: it features a museum ride on a vintage steam train and performances by African tribal dancers. There are several working gold mines to visit near Johannesburg, including Welkom, Evander, Carletonville, Klerksdorp and Orkney. However, to visit these mines prior permission is needed write months in advance.

There are also several game reserves and breeding stations within a half-day drive, such as the De Wildt Cheetah Research and Breeding Station and the Crocodile Farm. If you're going to be in Johannesburg on a Sunday consider a visit to the Heia Safari Ranch 24 mi/38 km from town where tribal dancers perform it provides a good introduction to the country if Johannesburg is your first stop. An alternative to the ranch is South Ndebele Village: an interesting Botshabelo tribe open-air museum that shows how tribes used to live.

The range of jagged mountains thrusting into the splendid desolation of the southern Atlantic, the Cape Peninsula is one of the world's most beautiful places.

Pristine beaches, sheltered bays and secluded coves encircle the majestic might of Table Mountain, a World Heritage Site and home to some 8,500 species of flower. Between the mountain's looming crags and Table Bay's

deep blue sweep lies South Africa's Mother City and the cosmopolitan hub of the Western Cape Province - Cape Town.

The best way to revel in the Peninsula's unrivalled beauty is to travel to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve along one of two coastal drives, each dramatically different. To the west, the famous Chapman's Peak route traverses Sea Point's cosmopolitan seaboard and the natural beauty of Clifton's famed beaches, leading one from the quiet rusticity of Hout Bay over the awe-inspiring, cliff-hugging Chapman's Peak Drive to the endless, white expanse of Noordhoek's Long Beach. The famous Argus Bicycle Race takes place on this spectacular road. The False Bay road heads north, hugging the mountains, snaking past Fish Hoek, a popular family beach, Kalk Bay, a fishing village imbued with character and colour, and Muizenberg, renowned for its safe swimming and excellent surfing.

Museums and art galleries abound and South Africa's oldest building, the Castle of Good Hope, is in the city centre. The cobbled streets of Bo-Kaap with their delightful old buildings and the first mosque in South Africa stand in cultural contrast to the buildings of the oldest homestead and wine farm in the Cape, Groot Constantia. On the Constantia wine route, Groot Constantia is tied by history and the vine to estates in the Helderberg and Durbanville. A short drive from the theme parks, malls, cineplexes and entertainment centres of Century City.

The energetic and those wanting to explore the abundance of the Cape Floral Kingdom's fauna and flora can take to the hills, choosing from myriad walks and climbs: up Table Mountain or Lion's Head, through Kirstenbosch, Silvermine, Newlands Forest or through the Nature Reserves of Tygerberg, Cape of Good Hope or Helderberg.

The beaches to the city's north-west have the post-card picture view of Table Mountain. Because of its geographical location, Cape Town and the Western Cape Province have a pleasant mediterranean climate. Rain in summer and spring is rare, while winter has fairly frequent bright sunny days.

The city is bordered by two ocean currents, the cold Benguela current on the Atlantic side, and the warm Agulhas current from the Indian Ocean side, further moderating the temperatures. Further attractions in the vicinity are the wine estates of Stellenbosch, Paarl and surrounding areas; the mountains of the Cederberg Wilderness Area; and the West Coast and Namaqualand with their spectacular wild spring flower displays.

Cape Town is an all year destination, although the warmest months of October till March are the most popular. The spring months of August and September offer wonderful opportunities to see the Cape Floral Kingdom at its best. ■

Switzerland

The Nature's Playground

Located in central Europe, Switzerland is bordered by Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Italy, and France. A small country, Switzerland's very name conjures up images of chocolates, cheese, watches, bankers, and snow-capped mountains. Since Switzerland is in the middle of the Alps outdoor opportunities like hiking or skiing are better than anywhere else.

Switzerland is nature's playground and offers numerous opportunities for outdoor activities. The Alps and the Jura slopes are great places for skiing. Hiking, mountaineering and ski mountaineering, paragliding and hang-gliding, water-skiing, sailing, windsurfing, rafting, and canoeing are some of the outdoor activities that you can undertake in Switzerland.



Geneva The Global City

On the banks of the River Rhône is Geneva, a city that houses over 200 international organisations. The ropeway journey to Mont Salève offers a breathtaking view of the entire city. The Cathedral St Pierre, Place du Bourg-de-Four, Museum of Art and History, Petit Palais, Museum of Old Musical Instruments, and the Horology Museum are some attractions of Geneva.

Say 'Geneva' to a person and what will come up first? An inhabitant of the city itself will probably say that it is 'a continent on its own'. Say it to a foreigner and he or she will probably refer to the

building of the United Nations located in Geneva. After the foundation of the Red Cross in 1864, Geneva became the home of many international organizations. The European head-office is located here still, together with departments of organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Centre for Particle Physics (CERN).

Geneva is divided in two parts by the Rhone river that flows out of the lac Lemman (lake Geneva). The old city is located on the southern shore (rive gauche or left bank), the train station north of the river, and the airport north-west of the city, straddling the French border, but only a short bus ride

away. Most sights are within easy walking distance and the public transport system (with busses and trams) is very reliable.

This 'smallest of the large capitals', as it is called, offers nearly everything, ranging from extensive banking and shopping areas to rich artistic and cultural input. Geneva is packed with museums and, to a lesser extent, historical sights. When you have had it for the day, go to one of the many parks, largely created by the financial input of many wealthy citizens. Most of the time during the summer, you can watch a free concert in one of the theatres or simply prepare yourself for the nightlife in Geneva.



Zurich, located on the banks of the Limmat River, is the intellectual and cultural capital of Switzerland and the hub of tourist activity. The 13th-century St. Peter's Church and the Fraumünster Church are two important sights. An evening walk along the banks of Lake Zürich or the alleys of the old town will cover almost all the attractions of the city.

Zurich is Switzerland's most important business centre and the world's gold trading centre. The Old Town consists of narrow streets which can be easily explored on foot. Along the riverside, you can find baroque guild houses that tell their own version of the city's past. Winding streets that show a nostalgic Zürich or maybe even expose the city's fringe - just give way for the enthusiasm this inspired and colourful (both with houses and people) city appeals. You will find a myriad of small boutiques, antique shops, bars and cafes in the Old Town on the left bank of the Limmat.

The main shopping area is concentrated nearby the train station. Stroll down the famous 'Bahnhofstrasse' - one of the most beautiful shopping streets in Europe - towards 'Paradeplatz' and the lake. Here you will find all sorts of elegant boutiques, department stores and specialist shops with a rich selection of high

quality goods. When you feel like it, take a tour on the river so you can lay eyes on the nice skyline of Zürich.

Besides being a business centre and a shopping paradise (for the wealthy, that is), Zürich is known for 'culture': Old Churches, such as the 'Grossmünster' and the 'Fraumünster' with stained glass windows by Marc Chagall; art galleries with the finest collections, amongst them Chagall, Miro and Picasso and museums for all sorts of tastes. Try to stay at least two days. This will give you the time to explore not only the city by daylight but also Zürich's exciting and varied nightlife, ranging from jazzy bars and popular discos to cabaret performances in smokey clubs.

If you plan to stay over night, Zürich offers a wide variety of amusements. There is not only the famous Schauspielhaus (which kept German drama alive during the 2nd world war), but some small but fine theatres with less well known ensembles that offer exquisite drama. As for a small city of only around 350,000 inhabitants, Zürich also has excellent movie theatres (for a price, though). Unlike in Germany, movies here are not dubbed and mostly shown in their original language with German and French subtitles - and usually you'll see good copies. ■



The United States

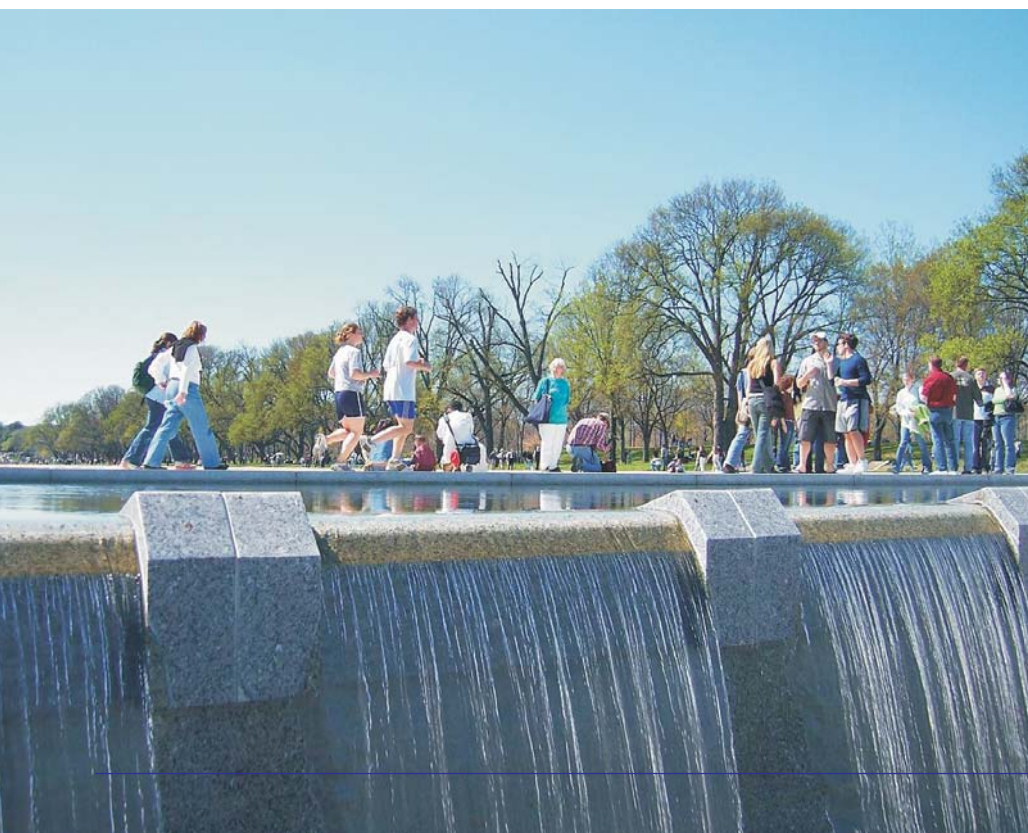
A Melting Pot of Many Cultures

The East coast has many cities worth discovering, such as New York, a unique melting pot of cultures with the world's most famous skyline; Boston, also known as "Bean Town"; Philadelphia - remember Rocky running up the stairs? It's in Philly. The capital city, Washington D.C, home of the President, and more museums than you can see in a lifetime. Also worth visiting is Atlanta, where the 1996 Olympics were held. Miami is one of the most popular International Tourist Destinations in the world. Known for its Latin Culture, never ending nightlife and amazing beaches.

The West Coast, from the state of Washington to California, is well known for its relaxed atmosphere. Los Angeles is a micro universe. You can find everything from rags to riches, from Tinseltown to East L.A. Head south to visit Orange County's Huntington Beach for the ultimate experience in Surf City USA or head to the Californian Riviera city of Laguna Beach to check out the famous art scene. LA is also home to a little thing called Hollywood.

Drive north on the Pacific Highway - possibly one of the country's greatest drives - to gorgeous San Francisco, one of America's nicest cities home of the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz, the prison island. From sparkling beaches and fog enshrouded mountains, the "City by the Bay" offers the ultimate in a relaxed lifestyle in the middle of a big city. Travellers will find wonderful daytrips to the beaches, wine country, and deserts.

Located on the shores of the Great Lakes, Chicago, the "Windy City", is where the Skyscraper was invented. Even today, downtown Chicago is the beautiful early laboratory of this new form of building. The city is also vibrant with an



excellent Jazz and Blues scene, two great ballparks, good food and much more.

Dallas is an international city best known for the television show of the same name, Walker, Texas Ranger, and the Dallas Cowboys football team and Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders. But Dallas is also home to the original Galleria mall, the original Neiman Marcus store, The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, and many other sports teams, shopping malls, conventions, and events.

Houston is a city that exemplifies Texas and acts as a microcosm of the state. With a dizzying array of attractions, festivals, restaurants, shopping, and local get-aways; the nation's fourth largest city is home to a wide array of sights for all to enjoy. It's also home to one of the most diverse populations in the country.

Las Vegas is paradise for anyone who likes to roll the dice. No need to go to Paris, Rome or Egypt—all the best monuments have been copied, and some would say improved, and can be found right there in the Nevada desert.

Kentucky is a hidden gem for travelers interested in exploring natural artifacts; such as Mammoth Cave, the largest recorded cave systems in the world. The numerous campgrounds, state parks, and recreational lakes draw cost-conscious travelers from all over the South. The rolling



hills of Eastern Kentucky sport some of the finest horse parks in the United States. The Kentucky Derby Festival includes a huge balloon race, air show, and spectacular fireworks performance as just three of its features. For some the race is just an afterthought.

Florida is popular with anyone looking for sunshine, beaches and hurricanes. Tampa, Orlando and Miami are ideal bases from which to explore the Sunshine State. The New England States are magnificent. From land to sea, you have it made here. Magnificent beaches in the summer, beautiful foliage in the fall. Connecticut is everybody's favorite, a small activity packed state, with something new around every corner. Two of the best casinos in the world, Mohegan sun and Foxwoods are located in Connecticut. Quaint little cities by the sea and historic places nestled in the woods are just two hours away. Beaches, woods,

farms, waterfalls, sea and fresh water fishing, wineries, wildlife, both land and sea, are wonderful places to shop and eat. Ever see the movie Mystic Pizza, well there really is a Mystic Pizza, in Mystic CT and the pizza is delicious! They have a lot of pictures of the filming of the movie there. You will never want to go anywhere else again! All over the country you find many excellent National Parks, which are great places to go for hiking, biking and other activities. Yellowstone, Yosemite, and the Grand Canyon are well known, but there are many more places of great beauty in God's own country. The Appalachian trail, running from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Katahdin in Maine is unique. More than 2000 miles long, a 'thru-hiker' needs one season to walk it from end to end.





Madhya Pradesh

The Frontrunner for Foreign Investment

In an amazing turn-round, Madhya Pradesh has embarked on the path of development in every sphere. Landlocked and centrally located, the State is taking full advantage of connectivity in terms of logistics. The State Government, under the stewardship of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has initiated a number of policy measures to facilitate investments in a big way. Attractive incentives for infrastructure development have been announced. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have taken off. Today Madhya Pradesh is wooing investors, especially NRIs and step towards this end, the State meet in the historical city of 2007. This meet will be event The Destination Summit 2007, which the State Capital of

among the frontrunners, successfully other major overseas players. As a first Government is hosting an investor's Khajuraho on 16 and 17 January part of and predecessor to the larger Madhya Pradesh - Global Investors' will be held on 4 and 5 October 2007 in Bhopal.



Investors' Meet - 16 & 17 Jan '07

Khajuraho Calling



The Madhya Pradesh Government is hosting an investors' meet in Khajuraho on 16 and 17 January 2007 at Hotel Clarks, to make identified key non-resident Indians (NRIs) and other prospective overseas investors aware of the exciting investment opportunities now available in the State.

This event will be part of and predecessor to the larger event The Destination Madhya Pradesh - Global Investors' Summit 2007, which will be held on 4 and 5 October 2007 in the State Capital of Bhopal.

The Khajuraho meet is aimed at motivating investors to come to the State individually or collaborate in joint ventures with industrialists already operating there.

The Khajuraho meet, where Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be present, will provide an interactive platform to investors, industrialists and businessmen to have focused and direct discussions with key officials of the State Government.



The State Government will take the opportunity to present various project profiles presently available in the identified sectors and areas. Senior state functionaries would elaborate on the new initiatives being taken by government for stepping up the inflow of fresh investments and advantages of setting up new industries and businesses in Madhya Pradesh.

The State Government will facilitate on the spot signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Expressions of Interest (EOIs) of firmed up and bankable project proposals of prospective investors.

Investor-friendly Industrial Policy



The Government of MP has devised an investor friendly industrial policy, which is aimed at achieving global competitiveness. The policy emphasizes industrial growth in the state through adopting a cluster approach, establishing specialized infrastructure and offering favourable incentives.

The main thrust of this policy is:

- Establishment of a Madhya Pradesh Trade and Investment Facilitation Corporation, which would take decisions about rationalization of taxes, facilities of mega projects and other related matters.
- Enacting an Industrial Facilitation Act and to change the rules of business with a view to make single window system decisive and result oriented.
- Developing infrastructure for supporting the identified industrial clusters
- Reviving closed down/ sick industrial units by granting special packages.
- Attractive incentive schemes.

In order to facilitate a larger flow of investments, the government has announced a Special Incentive Package for Mega Projects. The package features include:

- Clearance of projects by apex level investment promotion empowered committee headed by the Chief Minister.
- Industrial investment promotion assistance 50 percent to

75 percent of commercial tax for 3-10 years

- Concessional registration charges and stamp duty exemption for Term Loans.
- Interest subsidy on term loan for 5 years @ 3.5 percent.
- For thrust sector industries, 25% capital subsidy would be provided limiting up to a maximum of USD 56,000
- Land on 75% concessive rate for Mega Projects limited to USD 4.4 million.
- Entry tax exemption for 5 years.
- 5 years electricity duty exemption on captive power generation
- 15 percent capital subsidy to SSI up to USD 33,000 in backward areas
- Infrastructure grant up to USD 0.22 million crore for developing private sector industrial parks
- Partial reimbursement for Project report, ISO Certification, Patent and Technology Purchase cost

Madhya Pradesh: An Emerging Industrial Powerhouse

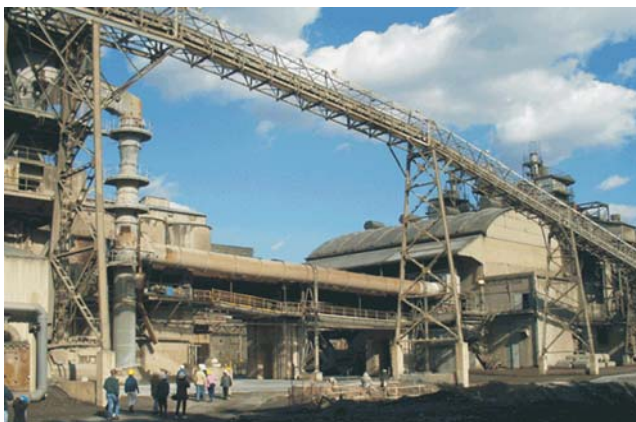
Madhya Pradesh is an emerging industrial powerhouse of the country. The State houses around 1,800 companies and 19 industrial growth centers (located across 7147 hectares) that are close to major cities. This makes good social infrastructure accessible to industrial units.

Further, there are around 171,000 small-scale industries that contribute significantly to the economy.

MNCs like Cadbury, Bridgestone, Hindustan Lever, Coke and renowned Indian companies like Ranbaxy, Tata, Grasim, Hindustan Motors, Eicher, Kinetic, Hotline, Raymonds, Lupin, Crompton Greaves, Surya Roshni, Nahar Spinning, Anant Spinning, Godrej, HEG and several other big groups have presence in Madhya Pradesh.

These companies not only meet local requirements, but also export a variety of products and services to both developed and developing countries.





The Great Locational Advantage

Madhya Pradesh offers an unparalleled locational advantage to companies as they incur lower transportation cost for transferring goods to every corner of the country. Further, cost of basic requirement such as land, water, skilled manpower is less as compared to other states.

On the labour front, the state provides peaceful & conducive atmosphere for industrialization, law and order situation in the state is under control.

Captive Power Plants

State also allows the industrial units to have captive power plants to produce power as per their requirement. The State Government desires to have a higher rate of economic development through rapid industrialization. Some of the key initiatives taken by government recently include:

- New Industrial Policy-2004
- Madhya Pradesh Trade and Investment Facilitation Corporation (TRIFAC)
- Udyog Mitra Yojana- 2004
- Industrial Facilitation Council
- Industrial Projects SEZ, Indore, Food Park, Apparel Parks, etc
- Modernization of Roads and other infrastructure
- Power Sector Reforms

Enabling Infrastructure

The State Government is committed to support the investors & provide them a hassle free atmosphere in the Government machinery. The state has taken several initiatives to promote investments in the state by creating



enabling infrastructure. Some of the key initiatives are highlighted below.

- A Special Economic Zone at Indore is being established in 1038 hectares of land with the investment of US\$ 222 million, has become operational.
- Eight IIDs (Integrated Infrastructure Development Centre) are being setup at Nandantola, Nimrani, Jagga Khedi, Lamtara, Naogaon, Sindiya, Pratappura, Jaderua
- As many as 165 Industrial Areas with basic infrastructure facilities are functional.

Investment Highlights

- 217 proposals of foreign direct investment with an investment of US\$ 1.3 billion are cleared by GOI for M.P.
- 207 letter of Intent with a proposed investment of US\$ 804 million are cleared by GOI for M.P.
- 1978 Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandum have been issued by GOI in favour of industrial groups who have shown interest to invest in M.P. with a proposed investment of US\$ 14.43 billion.

SEZ Advantage

The Madhya Pradesh Government has adopted the SEZ policy for developing Special Economic Zones in the state. The SEZs, earmarked as duty-free enclaves, aim at promoting rapid industrial development and employment generation. The approved policy regime includes:

- Exemption of all state and local taxes
- Exemption from stamp duty and registration fees
- Grant of labour, energy, environment, industrial health and safety related permits and approvals through a dedicated single window mechanism
- Exemption from electricity duty; cess and any other tax or levy on sale of electricity for self generated and purchased power.
- Expeditious process for land acquisition to set up SEZs

Thrust Areas:

Industry in Madhya Pradesh is largely resource-driven, leveraging the state's natural wealth in the form of limestone, coal, soya, cotton, bauxite, iron-ore, silica etc. Therefore the state has a strong industrial base in sectors like textile, cement, steel, soya processing and optical fibers.

However, there have been a few exceptions to the resource driven industrialization and the State as a result of its aggressive incentive policies and strong solicitation/facilitation is developing into a strong base in the Auto, auto ancillary and textile sectors.

Substantial opportunity would emerge in following sectors.

- Cement
- Auto & Auto Components
- Textiles & Apparels
- Pharmaceuticals
- Engineering & Electrical Equipment
- Chemicals

Agri-Export Zones to spur investment in farm sector

The Madhya Pradesh Government has taken initiative to set up Agri-Export Zones (AEZs). The objectives are:

To facilitate promotion and development of specific products, several AEZs (Agri Export Zones) have been identified in the State of Madhya Pradesh. These zones have been set up for facilitating export of specific products from a geographically contiguous area.

The AEZs are present at such a location that it is easy to source the raw materials and hence developing the final product. The concentration of AEZs is more towards the eastern and north eastern parts of the State and the investors can look forward to tap these regions of the State for their investments. Especially MNCs who have operations abroad and want to grow in terms of international trade can harness opportunities in these areas.

The commodities that can have an immense potential are potato, spices (in the western parts), pulses (in the central part of the State), wheat (in the western and central regions) and oranges (south districts).

With the objective to promote agricultural exports from the country and remunerative returns to the farming community, the concept of the Agri Export Zones (AEZ) has been initiated by the Government under all aspects of efficient agri-practices such as production, R&D, post harvest management, packaging, leading to final exports. Further market promotion and development are also undertaken in the AEZs

Contract Farming:

Future Trend in Agriculture

Contract farming is an emerging concept in MP that provides vast opportunities for potential investors wherein the production and supply of agricultural/ horticultural produce are pre agreed under forward contracts between producers/suppliers and buyers. The



contract details the type of agri commodity required at a time and a price, and in the required quantity.

The presence of AEZs in the state is expected to provide favourable grounds for investors to tap the opportunities.

The concept of contract farming is being recognized in MP as the most promising opportunity for an investor. The state has identified around 100 agricultural farms with an area of over 20,000 acres which is available on lease to investors.

The State has the potential to develop and increase the production of horticulture crops for each of the 11 Agro-climatic sub-zones. Many opportunities are also available at each part of the value chain in agro processing industries.

The sanction for six food parks for the state has already been obtained. The proposed food parks are coming up in Mandsaur, Khargone, Hoshangabad, Chhindwara, Mandla and Bhind. The main objective of the state and central government in setting up these parks is to help establishment of food processing industrial estates/ infrastructures by providing assistance for the common facilities such as research laboratories, cold storages, warehousing facilities etc.

Ministry of Food Processing Industries sanctions the projects within the Food Parks. Further to this, the monetary support from the Government of





India is 50 percent proposed investment, limited to a maximum of US\$0.8 million.

The State Government offers special incentives for the investors looking forward to invest in the State. The project clearance with approvals are granted within 15 days of application or submission of project reports and the Government also offers customized package of concessions on mega venture.

A green field Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has been developed as a globally competitive investment destination at Pithampur in Indore. Land allotment has already begun with several units starting commercial production. Again this SEZ may act as a single point investment destination for various agro processing companies. Indore, thereby facilitating their growth along with the growth of the State.

Ministry of Food Processing Industries sanctions the projects within the Food Parks. Further to this, the monetary support from the Government of India is 50% of the proposed investment, limited to a maximum of USD 0.8 million.

The State Government offers special incentives for the investors looking forward to invest in the State. The project clearance with approvals are granted within 15 days of application or submission of project reports and the Government also offers customized package of concessions on mega ventures.

The other facilities and concession offered by the government include:-

Eyeing the business opportunity in one of the most bio diverse and strategically located states the players in the agriculture sector will look forward to MP as the next haven for investment.

A fair amount of leverage can also be gained by the identified Agri Export Zones across the state. Some of the key opportunities in the sector have been listed below.

Madhya Pradesh is a significant contributor to India's overall agricultural produce. Around 75 percent of the state's rural population depends on agriculture for a living. The agriculture sector accounts for one-third of the gross state domestic product and forms the backbone of the State's economy.

The State's agriculture is very diverse and wide ranging in its produce. It has five crop zones, 11 agro climatic regions and four types of soil. Following are some distinct features

- Madhya Pradesh is the largest producer of pulses and oilseeds in the country. The State also shares a major share of the National agriculture production. About 25 percent of pulses and 40 percent of grams are grown in the state.
- The State is the largest producer of soya bean and gram and the second largest producer of jowar and masoor in the Country
- The agricultural land in the district Narsinghpur is considered to be the most fertile land all over Asia. The district is famous for its rich agricultural production.

Madhya Pradesh leads in spices production with the largest production of garlic, accounting for 37 percent of the total national production

- The state is the second largest producer of Coriander in the country.
- MP's share in the total national production of peas is 15 percent.

MP is the most biodiverse state in the country with 11 agro climatic zones, 5 crop zones and 4 zones varying in soil types.

- The soil and agro climatic conditions are suitable for rapid agricultural development.

The state has a strong base in horticulture.

Location Analysis - Soils of MP

The State has four different types of soil available in four distinct parts. The western and central regions are covered by medium and deep soils constituting 53 percent of the soil area. The eastern part of the State is primarily covered by black soils, which comprises of 25-26 percent of the total geographical area.

Most of the State's potential in agriculture lies in the central and western zones. These zones are rich in medium and deep soils consisting of several agri export zones and would be ideal for setting up industrial ventures. ■



MP's power needs rising steeply

Public-Private Participation in Power Generation Holds Key



Madhya Pradesh is witnessing rapid industrialization, which will result in a steep increase in energy demand in the coming years. However, the installed capacity is also expected to increase in the coming years, with new projects coming up in the State. The State Government has already taken necessary policy initiatives to facilitate power sector reforms, which in turn will lead to the flow of investments into this key sector.

The increasing energy shortages and peak deficit indicates a need for rapid increase in power generation capacity of the State. Further, the new Government reforms, and presence of necessary resources make the power sector very attractive for the private investors to set-

up their plants in the state.

The private sector has a very insignificant presence as of now with their major presence only in non-renewable resources and captive plants. However, various major companies are contemplating to set-up their units in Madhya Pradesh.

Agriculture sector is one of the main energy consumers in the State. The HT consumers such as railway traction, coal mines, HT industrial and non-industrial activities etc. together accounted for 6549 MU of sales followed by domestic consumers in the year 2005-06.

Madhya Pradesh accounts for about 5.0 percent of the country's total installed power generation capacity. capacity of India with 6449.25 MW as on July 2006 including the Central, State and private sector. The sources of power generation in the State includes thermal, hydel, wind power, methane gas etc. The State's share in the installed capacity was about 3000.2 MW in the year 2005-06. Out of which 72% is thermal power and remaining is hydel power.

The total energy availability in the State has increased from 26,606 MUs to 29,237 MUs during 2001-02 to 2005-06 at a CAGR of 2.68%, wherein power purchase of the State has outgrown the own generation of the State.

India's power industry is growing faster as compared to most of the other countries. In the last decade with substantial capacity addition, India has moved to 5th rank from 8th in terms of generation capacity globally.

The country has installed generation capacity of 126 GW as on July 2006, and a transmission & distribution network of more than 6.3 million circuit kms (2004).

India consumes about 3.7% of the world's commercial energy and is ranked 5th largest consumer of energy in the world. India's power generation is largely coal dependent with 55 percent share in the total capacity mix.

With India's booming economy and vibrant industrial scenario, per capita consumption of power had almost doubled from 350 units in 1998 to over 600 units in 2005 and is further expected to reach 1000 units in 2012. With the targeted GDP growth rate of over 8.0 percent, energy demand is expected to grow at the rate of 5.2 percent annually. To support this the power supply of the country needs to be augmented by 10 percent annually.

The mismatch in energy demand and supply in the country had resulted in the increased energy shortage from 27 BU in 1995 to 80 BU in 2005. Peak demand is expected to increase by 77 percent to 157,107 MW by 2012. Also the energy requirement is expected to increase by 274% to 975,222 MU by 2012.



Opportunities for Private Sector

The Union Government envisages to provide power to all the households under its ambitious plan "Electricity for all villages by 2007" and "Power for all by 2012". The government aims at enhancing the installed capacity to 200,000 MW by 2012, accompanied by an increase in transmission and distribution network.

The investment required in this regard in the sector is estimated to be over US\$200 billion. Almost 50 percent of this amount would be required for generation projects alone. The scale of investment required in power sector along with the need of advanced technical inputs, has carved out a significant role for private players in power sector.

Nearly 5000 MW has already been added by the private sector

under the 10th five-year plan. It is expected to contribute 11,912 MW during the 11th plan from 2007-12.

Incentives for Investment

The government has initiated a string of reforms by enactment of Electricity Act, 2003 to attract foreign and private investment in the power sector. From allowing FDI up to 100 percent via the automatic route in all the segments (generation, transmission and retail distribution),

to extending tax holiday for mega power projects, the government is keen to create an investor's friendly environment.

Given the projected demand scenario coupled with favorable investment policies, the sector offers huge opportunities for foreign and private players. ■



Connecting Global Commerce

The Launch of Open Trade

The launch of Open Trade, a magazine jointly conceived and executed by the Trade Commissioners' Forum (TCF) and New Media Communication was a small but significant step towards promoting India's economic relations with various countries. The inaugural issue of the quarterly magazine was unveiled at the World Trade Centre on June 23, jointly by Joseph Koch, Director, Swiss Business Hub & TCF's Past President and T.C. Venkat Subramanian, Chairman and Managing Director, Export-Import Bank of India. The occasion offered an interactive session between TCF members and the top



brass of
the Exim Bank.

In his welcome address, Exim Bank CMD T. C. Venkat Subramanian highlighted India's progress in the last 15 years and the investment opportunities that the country offered.



Exim Bank CMD T.C. Venkat Subramanian browsing through Open Trade soon after the magazine's launch, flanked by Joseph Koch, Director, Swiss Business Hub & Past President TCF and New Media Managing Editor Satya Swaroop

A Special Moment for TCF



Joseph Koch addressing the TCF-Exim Bank interactive session.

For Joseph Koch, Director of Swiss Business Hub, India is like a second home. During his earlier stint with the Swiss Embassy in New Delhi in the 1980s he watched a stagnant India, where the rule of a 'Licence Raj' prevailed. And now, placed in Mumbai, India's vibrant commercial capital, Koch is witness to the wonderful metamorphosis of the country turning into an economic powerhouse. In an address delivered at the launch of the Open Trade magazine, Koch talks about the economic reforms initiated in the early 1990s by the then Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, who is Prime Minister today. Improving bilateral trade has always been Koch's passion. To achieve this end, he has always been finding ways and means and he has the knack of discovering many. Koch is the spirit behind Open Trade, believing sincerely that such a magazine, besides highlighting TCF's own concerns, will in its own way contribute to the promotion of India's bilateral trade. In the absence of TCF's current President Vittorio Mecozzi, Italian Trade Commissioner, Koch, Past President of the Forum, presented a short history and objectives of the Trade Commissioners Forum, based in Mumbai and the launch of Open Trade. Excerpts.

It is a really special moment today for us Trade Commissioners. Not only just the idea of having our own magazine sounded some years ago as a project in the air - but with the support of New Media Communications we have come very far and have launched the first edition of OPEN TRADE.

Please let me first give you a short glance of the Trade Commissioners Forum and its uniqueness. As in many other cities and economic centres in this world, diplomats of the various embassies and consulates are in charge of trade promotions and secure the link between local trade and the countries they represent. So, this was also the case here in Mumbai until in 2001, when this group was founded. In those days it was Doug Paterson from Canada who assembled Trade Commissioners from Australia, Western Australia, China, Flanders, Germany, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mauritius, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland and USA - all five continents represented.

Needless to say, that this Forum is unique in the world. Never did I hear in my career of over 30 years of an existence of such a group, of such an organization. Our intention is to bring the products of our countries to India, The question is simply how? And where do we source the information. And this is the job of our committee. We are approached by members of the Forum of certain problems their countrymen are facing and we take the matter up and - as it is in most cases; there is not just one country involved: Therefore, we call on guest speakers and have interactive sessions with decision makers in the government. But, we are just sitting idle behind our desks. We are traveling in the South of India, where most of our colleagues have their consular jurisdiction. We meet Chambers of Commerce, Trade Bodies and companies. We have to smell the soil, we have to visualize the potential of certain areas, we have to meet local people and get their opinions because, all of us are generally the first point of contact, the first source of information for



T.C. Venkat Subramanian addressing the session



Satya Swaroop presenting a gift-wrapped copy of the Open Trade magazine to Koch. Venkat Subramanian looks on



Koch being interviewed by TV news channel



Western Australia's Simon Johnson finds two good listeners, Joseph Koch and Jerzy Midak



Audience's view



Jerzy Midak (Poland), Michael Duck (CMP Asia) with S.R. Rao Executive Director, Exim Bank



Joseph Koch and T.C. Venkat Subramanian in conversation

business people from our respective countries who have plans to come to India, of course, we are in many ways also competing against each other but all this is in a friendly way, because we are sourcing business opportunities, forwarding them to our headquarters and let them work out the criteria requested. Having sat many times on the dais, I know that not only in Switzerland is chocolate produced, not only in Poland is heavy machinery produced, not only in Italy do they have fashion designers... Just to mention sport activities - as today three friends of the TCF are watching football games in group G: France, South Korea and Switzerland. We are sitting together today and tomorrow as well...

Please give me also a few minutes to talk about India our country of residence. Having served with the Swiss embassy in Delhi from 1980 to 1984, I think I have the chance to compare the situation in the 1980s and 2006. And if we look even further back, the time of partition, I must congratulate you Indians on the way you have been able to manage your economy, breaking out of a long spell of stagnation. Earlier, the bureaucrats had the say. You needed for every product a licence. I remember very clearly that during the 80s, there were two cars available and the waiting list running up to five years. You had the rigid rules of foreign exchange when houses were raided because they were hoping to find some dollar notes or foreign liquor. But... you have developed into a prosperous nation since 1993 when the actual Prime Minister took over the finance portfolio and opened up India to globalization as a respectable business partner. The first sign of the smart looking IT specialists draw the attention around the world of India's existence and now India has the largest business potential in the world. Just to mention Bharat Forge, which is providing 35 percent of the world's car market with gear boxes etc.

Koch thanked Exim Bank and New Media for providing an opportunity to Trade Commissioners to participate in the interaction session and to make their presentations.



(L-to-R) M. GANDHI, R.K. PRASAD (Chairman New Media) T.C. VENKAT SUBRAMANIAN, SATYA SWAROOP, S.R. RAO

MAKING PRESENTATIONS



- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 KALIM R. GALIEV (Russian Federation) | 6 AJIT MANGRULKAR (Australia) |
| 2 ANNIE DUBE (Canada) | 7 M. GANDHI (UBM India) |
| 3 HELEN DEAS (United Kingdom) | 8 MICHAEL DUCK (CMP Asia) |
| 4 THALESH KUMAR CHAMANE (Mauritius) | 9 JIM CUNNINGHAM (USA) |
| 5 SIMON JOHNSON (Western Australia) | |

Metropolitan Hotel Nikko

A Deluxe Stay in Corporate Style



The Metropolitan Hotel Nikko is a five-star deluxe experience but with a difference. Conveniently located in Connaught Place in New Delhi, the hotel has been at the forefront in providing business travelers the best of corporate facilities to meet their exacting demands. The Metropolitan Hotel Nikko, which blends Indian tradition, world standard services and Japanese hospitality, has set aside an exclusive Executive Floor to provide full-fledged professional services of impeccable standards. The Executive Floor offers guests business friendly efficiency to ease the burden of their hectic schedules. Business is a pleasure on the Executive Floor of the Metropolitan Hotel Nikko. An exclusive club lounge is available for guests of the executive floor where they have access to the Internet, snacks, tea, coffee and liquor offered complimentary.



Each of the 178 guests rooms, spread over eight floors, including one non-smoking floor is a delicate blend of convenience and taste. Comfort and personalized service are inter-linked with modern amenities like Wi-Fi High speed Internet connection, safety deposit, specially designed mini - bar and bathrooms with shower cubicles make your stay memorable. You could choose from a range of executive rooms and suites for an extra touch of exclusivity.



The Metropolitan Hotel Nikko has exclusive signature restaurants that offer authentic cuisine prepared by master chefs. Be it Sakura's Japanese Kitchen or Chutney - the soul of Indian cuisine, they offer authentic cuisine, while Patio redefines the very concept fine dining. Then there is the Tuskers Bar and Lounge, the perfect place to unwind after a hard day. As the evenings mellow into nights you have live music played by Roselyn, Mac and Diki, playing retro, country, sentimental and rock. Now there is an exciting offer from New Year - an ultra-modern state of the art, luxurious Spa, which will offer various treatments from Asia, Europe and India's very own Ayurvedic treatments.



The hotel boasts of an exclusive retail store which is spread over two levels. Mindful of Indian aesthetics, Craft House pushes the limit of exquisite detailing. The result is an Art Heaven. Every single merchandise is handpicked and handcrafted, especially for visitors' appreciation. Visit Craft House to discover India at its limitless best.



Italy shares expertise on woodwork machinery

The Italian Trade Commission (ICE) with the active support from Italian Woodworking Machinery and Tools Manufacturers' Association (ACIMALL) are organized a seminar/workshop on the technological developments in woodworking sector with special focus on maximizing productivity, where Italy's best and leading woodwork machinery companies had participated.

The seminar was being organised at the Hilton Towers, Mumbai on 17 November 2006 as part of the Italian Festival/Festa Italiana 2006 which was announced earlier.

Vittorio Mecozzi, Trade Commissioner, Trade Promotion Attaché, Consulate General of Italy, said, "Today, Italy is an undisputed leader in terms of product quality, innovation and the ability to respond to the needs of the market in the woodwork machinery sector. But despite its vast potential in employment and income generation, the wood product industry has generally remained underdeveloped in India. Keeping in mind the need of properly trained personnel, precise and accurate machinery and strong industry institute linkages a special partnership was taken up with Italian Woodworking Machinery and Tools Manufacturers' Association ACIMALL to launch the Advanced Woodworking Training Centre in India. ICE promotes and provides for the recurring cost of the Centre."

The first of its kind, Advanced Woodworking Training



Centre was launched in 2003, in Bangalore, jointly by the Institute of Wood Science & Technology IWST, ACIMALL and the Italian Trade Commission, Mumbai. This non-profit training and research centre help build and enhance the capabilities of Indian wood products manufacturing industries, promoting them to attain a globally competitive position.

Dario Corbetta, Marketing Manager of ACIMALL, said, "As the Italian woodworking machines are among the best in the world, the Advanced Woodworking Training Centre has a potential to eventually develop into a research, education and technology transfer centre of excellence, through this international partnership. The response of the industries has been overwhelming so far, and the outlook very promising. The Italian Festival/Festa Italiana - woodworking seminar and workshop gives us an opportunity to explore the sector in India.

About ICE: The Italian Institute for Foreign Trade (ICE), also known as Italian Trade Commission, is the government agency entrusted with promoting trade, business opportunities and industrial co-operation between Italian and foreign companies. It operates through 100 branch offices in over 80 countries in the world.

