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TIME TO REFLECT

REGIONAL STRIFE IN PARTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST SEEMS TO HAVE HAD LITTLE IMPACT ON INTEREST IN THIS FASCINATING AND EVER EVOLVING CORNER OF THE WORLD

PARADISE LOST?

DOES MAURITIUS STILL HAVE THE CHARM AND CACHET NEEDED TO STAY COMPETITIVE?

HOW TO... TRAINING

WHY BRUSHING UP ON YOUR SKILLS NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE

BANG ON

THAI HOT SPOT BANGKOK IS FILLED WITH OPTIONS FOR TOP-END TRAVEL

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WILDLIFE TOURISM, HONG KONG, PALM SPRINGS, TORONTO & MALDIVES

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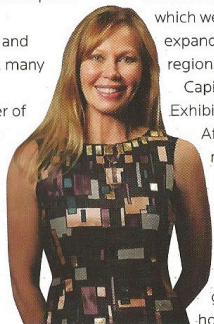


ILTM EXTENDS ITS REACH

The latest ILTM satellite event has proved a resounding success, according to Reed Exhibitions.

Six years after the launch of ILTM Asia, the inaugural ILTM Americas – which took place in October at Mexico's Fairmont Mayakoba – attracted 150 buyers and 150 exhibitors from 40 countries, many of whom were new to ILTM.

"We only have a certain number of places allocated for north and south American agents at ILTM in Cannes, so we wanted to produce an event of equal quality that would allow us to introduce new faces to ILTM," said the event's head of marketing and buyer programmes, Simon Mayle.



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"About 75% of buyers were new to ILTM, which we've taken as a sign that expanding into specific geographical regions is the right step."

Capitalising on the move, Reed Exhibitions will be launching ILTM Africa in Cape Town on April 8-9 next year, with a view to attracting 65 buyers and an equal number of suppliers. The format will be different, however, with suppliers from the African continent being given the opportunity to meet hosted buyers and agents from

primary and emerging global luxury markets such as Mexico and China.

Also new for 2013 will be ILTM Japan, the event's first country-specific venture.

Scheduled to take place in Kyoto from March 11-13, the niche programme is designed to help buyers and suppliers capitalise on Japan's status as the second highest-yield travel-buying market after the US – responsible for \$27 billion of spend in 2011 alone.

ILTM Spa should make a splash in 2013, too, when it holds its next event on September 30-October 2 in London, building on the successes of its launch in Austria earlier this year.

Despite the raft of new programmes, the original event in Cannes (December 3-6) continues to develop apace.

"The impact hasn't been diluted; ILTM has grown in popularity, and we've taken steps to make it better in 2012," said Mayle.

"At this year's Opening Forum, we will follow up insight from Nicholas Coleridge, president of Conde Nast International, with three one-to-one interviews, featuring Kit Kemp, owner and design director of Firmdale Hotels (left); PRS Oberoi, chairman and chief executive of the Oberoi Group; and Silvio Ursini, executive vice-president of Bulgari Hotels & Resorts, who previously headed up Bulgari's luxury goods group and who is expected to share his learnings from the sector with delegates."

For more on Silvio Ursini and his *Life in Luxury*, see p66 iltm.net

INDIA'S SOUTHERN CHARM

Tamil Nadu is poised to become one of India's hottest destinations for British travellers in 2013, according to industry predictions.

The state, which is located in the southernmost part of India, already ranks as the country's second biggest after Maharashtra in terms of foreign visitor numbers – attracting 3.4 million tourists last year, up 21.4% on 2010. But James Grace-Jayasundera, founder of Ampersand Travel, believes that the UK will play a role in further increasing visitor numbers thanks to increased British interest in the destination.

"This fascinating state is one of the most spiritual in India. Its temple architecture is

amongst the most beautiful and sophisticated found anywhere in the subcontinent," he said. "Travellers have only recently clocked that this is an incredible place to visit."

Grace-Jayasundera's forecast comes hot on the heels of the launch of The Leela Palace Chennai, which is currently undergoing a soft opening and was slated for a full-scale launch as *ttgluxury* went to press.

The new 326-room property, which includes 31 suites, is set in six acres of grounds with views over the Bay of Bengal. Features include an ESPA spa and four restaurants – including a 70-seat signature Indian restaurant, Jamavar, complete with show kitchen.

Other recent launches in Tamil Nadu include the ITC Grand Chola (left), also situated in the state capital, Chennai, which opened for business in September.

Incorporating 522 rooms and suites and 78 serviced apartments – all with iPad2s to control in-room features and state-of-the-art anti-stumble lighting – the Grand Chola benefits from a choice of 10 restaurants, bars and food areas, including a malt whisky and cigar lounge.

Additional incentives for travellers to visit Tamil Nadu are its eight Unesco World Heritage sites and its Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, which has just reopened for business following an earlier ban on tiger tourism (see p51 for more on wildlife tours).



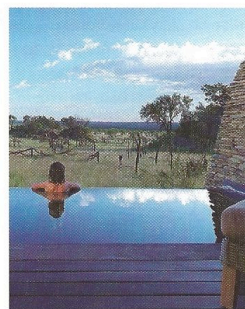
NOTES STARRY EYED

Astrologer Dr Parag Mahajani is to join Six Senses Laamu in the Maldives for a series of astronomical and solar-gazing sessions, running from February 12-24 and October

23-November (sixsenses.com).

CALL OF THE WILD The Four Seasons Safari Lodge Serengeti, Tanzania (pictured) is due to open for business in January, featuring 60 rooms, 12 suites and five villas, all with views over the national park (fourseasons.com).

BACK IN TIME Emirates Tours is tipping Burma as a top new destination for 2013,



with general manager Fabio Prestijacopo hailing a trip there as "the closest thing to time travel". The operator has launched a Classic Burma Tour as part of its 2013 brochure, including Rangoon, Inle Lake, Mandalay and Bagan from £2,609pp (emirates-tours.co.uk).

WOODLAND WONDER GHM Hotels is to open a new 60-room Chedi hotel in 1,000 hectares of Japanese forest on Hokkaido Island. Designed by Pritzker Architecture Prize winner, Tadao Ando, the hotel is due to open in 2015 (ghmhotels.com).

NEW DIRECTION Conrad Bali has appointed Australian spa expert Melanie James to head up the development of its 17-room Jiwa Spa as a leading wellness destination spa. James will work on creating innovative spa journeys and personalised wellness programmes (conradbali.com).