ITE Expo 2019
Carefree cruising
US National Parks
I guess we all have our stories to tell of memorable travel experiences, and by that, I mean both good and bad. I had my fair share of bad experiences over the years, including such attitudinal problem of a Paris hotel receptionist who refused to converse with me in English, to downright cheating by a Hanoi hotel proprietor. But my most recent nasty experience was in San Francisco where I certainly haven't left my heart. At the Visitors processing section, they opened only five counters to handle a queue of more than a hundred. The female Afro-American immigration officer who interviewed me adopted an abrasive and condescending approach from the start, and when she was dissatisfied with my answer to her ill-framed questions, she sent me to secondary screening. In the end, it took me more than an hour to finally gain entry. What an irony when the signs streaming at the immigration counters read "Welcome to the United States of America!"

In sharp contrast, my visit last month to Singapore was a breeze. Firstly, there was no need to go through the vexing rigmarole of obtaining a visa, as for the US. The inflight service on Singapore Airlines was impeccable with the cabin crew speaking perfect English. Any request or question was handled promptly and in a most helpful and cheerful manner. Landing at the award-winning Changi Airport, I immediately felt the relaxing ambience of the Garden City, and the friendly immigration officer really meant it when he wished me a pleasant stay in Singapore.

In the final analysis, it's the little things added together that makes or breaks a journey.
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Happy globetrotting at ITE

Those with itchy feet and camera-ready must not miss the city’s most colorful and definitive travel fair, the International Travel Expo (ITE) Hong Kong, to be held from June 13 to 16 at halls 1A to 1E of the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai.

Spanning some 150,000 square feet in area, the travel extravaganza is a goldmine of information and entertainment hub for vacationers. It is open to trade and professionals only on the first 2 days from June 13 to 14, and to the public on June 15 and 16 when tickets can be purchased at the entrance.

Organized by TKS Exhibition Services Ltd., ITE is supported by Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong Tourism Board, Macau Government Tourism Office, the Travel Industry Council Hong Kong, and other tourism boards and associations of the travel and MICE trade.

Informative and entertaining

Business matching for quick dating between sellers and buyers will be organized for June 13 and 14. Professionals can look forward to forums on MICE, including ‘The business case for green travel & events’ organized by MIX, a creative meetings magazine for Asia, and ILEA (International Live Events Association) Hong Kong Chapter; a trade forum on the subject of ‘One Belt One Road’ by The Commercial Daily; plus a host of other specialist seminars.

There will be trade seminars on new destinations and travel themes. June 14 is designated as MICE Day when seminars will cover various topics such as volunteering tourism.

On June 15 and 16, public visitors can take part in a lucky draw with the fabulous Grand Prize of two round trip economy class tickets to Mauritius by Air Mauritius, paired with 2 nights at Constance Belle Mare Plage and 2 nights at Constance Prince Maurice by Constance Hotels, Resorts & Golf for a total worth of over HK$65,000.

The 4-day carnival will feature as many as 680 exhibitors with 85% from abroad, covering around 55 countries and regions from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas and Oceania. Visitors planning for their next vacation will find a treasure trove of information to help make up their mind. They will also be entertained by a kaleidoscope of spectacular programs, including seminars by popular travel hosts sharing their interesting experiences or tips, as well as cultural performances from abroad.
Alluring destinations

Many popular destination exhibitors are back in force with new attractions and innovative travel products this year at ITE Hong Kong, including Mainland China with over 100 booths, followed by Japan with 80 booths. Other active participants include Egypt, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macau, South Korea, Taiwan and Taichung, Thailand, and many more.

Those looking for fresh ideas and exciting itineraries should keep an eye open for new destination participants, including Botswana, Madagascar, Somalia, Morocco and Tunisia in Africa; Colombia, Ecuador and Peru in Latin America; Moscow, Spain, Cyprus and the Czech Republic in Europe; Guam in the Pacific; and India and Myanmar in Asia.

The pavilion of mainland China offers an incredible array of choices with over 110 booths covering various provinces and cities. Look out for what the new China’s High Speed Rail has to offer, as well as exhibitors and products from the Greater Bay Area. Public visitors should seize the many opportunities for special deals if they book tours on the spot on Saturday and Sunday.

The Japan pavilion comprises exhibitors from various prefectures, and as usual, they will be presenting a great variety of theme travel products many of which are tailored for FIT. Be sure to take part in games and activities organised on a mini stage at the corner of the pavilion.

Theme travel and exhibit highlights

Specially crafted for high-end travelers, in-depth and theme travel products include tours to the Galapagos Islands with the highlight on wildlife; Amazon expeditions for its biodiversity; Ice & Aurora tours in the Finnish Lapland; great train journeys through Russia’s Siberia; visits to the Rescue Elephant Centre in Thailand; and Trekking in the Himalayas.

Archaeology enthusiasts can soak in the Mycenaean Greek culture in Cyprus. For a unique experience off the beaten track, try the snow-capped mountains, turquoise lakes in canyons and dunes of the great steppe around Almaty of Kazakhstan.

As a pioneer in Asia promoting theme travel, ITE helps spice up your travels by offering ten popular travel themes, such as cruising, green and sports tourism, culture and gourmet.

Immerse in educational fun while travelling. For greater sharing of travel experiences and more effective study tours, ITE is holding an Oxford Primary English Writing Competition 2018/19 in co-operation with the Oxford University Press (China), as well as a Chinese travel writing competition in collaboration with the travel magazine of China Travel.
Go honeymoon, Tour de l’amour
Spend your nights in romantic Paris or let love run like water in the Venice City. Honeymoon is once in a lifetime with your loved one, so hutchgo.com helps newly-wed couples organize personalized honeymoon trips. In the Maldives, couples can spend honeymoon nights in a solitary villa or enjoy a breathtaking view of the horizon in an outdoor spa in Fiji. Go Honeymoon provides one-stop booking service with wide ranging products from air tickets, hotel accommodation, honeymoon activities, gourmet dining, airport transfer to car rental and more. Also, it supports custom-made honeymoon itineraries worldwide, to the Maldives, Japan, Fiji and Thailand, Greece, Prague, Italy and anywhere else you can name. Also, Go Honeymoon guarantees a surprise in experience for every honeymooning couple!
Finally, strolling on the beach in Fiji while holding your partner’s hands make the most precious moment. Customize your slick honeymoon trip with hutchgo.com, starting from HK$3,900 only (excluding taxes & surcharges).

Go On a Journey Without Plans!
If you get burnt out and just want to take a travel time-out and relax for a few days, travel without a plan is a great idea!

Never go out of style
Planning for a short trip for a long weekend? hutchgo.com has curated hassle-free weekly short trip itineraries to popular destinations such as Taiwan, Japan, and Thailand. Without fuss, customers can go for a brisk yet immersive trip to places from the urban to the rural, namely Seoul, Tokyo, Taipei, as well as HuaHin in Thailand, and Phi Phi island in Thailand. The itineraries suggest routes to traveler havens. Blog posts include diverse topics and action-packed programs such as things to do for 48 hours in Bangkok, top hipster destinations in Taiwan, most instagram-worthy spots in Guam and following the Korean craze to check out where all Korean drama sets. Alternative travel routes take aficionado to see mural art, nature and historical trails like Thailand Road and local Market Lardyai in Phuket or cultural heritage and monuments like My Son Sanctuary and Ba Na Hills. For occasions like New Year’s Eve, Hutchgo.com also has it planned for you. Slurping soba noodles and the Japanese bell tolling for New Year allow tourists to immerse in Japanese festiveness.

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Haven’t planned for summer travel yet? Check out these amazing packages and treat yourself and the family to an unforgettable trip to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Visit hutchgo.com.hk to check out the popular attractions!

$188 off packages over $3,000!

**Singapore 3D2N**
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- YOTEL Singapore Orchard Road
- HK$2,496 up

**Bangkok 3D2N**
- Cathay Dragon Airways
- Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok
- HK$1,463 up

**Kuala Lumpur 3D2N**
- Cathay Dragon Airways
- Citin Hotel
- HK$2,104 up

**Hong Kong <-> Bangkok**
- Emirates
- HK$809 up

**Hong Kong <-> Kuala Lumpur**
- Cathay Dragon Airways
- HK$1,386 up

**Hong Kong <-> Singapore**
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- HK$1,402 up

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**Top Family-friendly Attractions in Sing-Ma-Thai**

- Book Flights, Hotels & Travel packages!
Redefining the meaning of luxury

Traveling to Macao and looking to splurge? THE 13 sets a new standard for luxury hotels with its unrivaled accommodation and services.

When you think about ‘luxury hotels’ you picture spacious rooms, mini-bar service, or perhaps facilities such as a hotel swimming pool and gym which you may access at will. But when you are greeted by THE 13’s fleet of 30 Rolls-Royce Phantoms when you arrive at the hotel, you know your expectations are not only going to be exceeded, but completely reimagined.

Located at Estrada de Seac Pai Van, Macao, THE 13 is considered to be at the pinnacle of luxury hotels in Macao. Once you check-in, you will be graced with a magnificent lobby which is nothing short of opulent. The whole décor of the hotel is based on the Palace of Versailles in France to replicate the lives of the French royalty.

For accommodation, there are 3 types of Villas: LA VILLA DU COMTE, LA VILLA DU MARQUIS, and LA VILLA DU DUC. LA VILLA DU COMTE is the most standard accommodation, but still generously proportioned at an average gross floor area of 2,000 s.f., arranged split-level. The one-bedroom villa has a separate living room and king-size bedroom which are both in Baroque setting complimented with a modern touch with woven fabrics and exceptional craftsmanship. It also has a spacious rain shower and bathtub, and a floor to ceiling stained-glass façade which exudes luxury.

The LA VILLA DU MARQUIS is the hotel’s deluxe accommodation, and has an even larger average gross floor area of 3,300 s.f. in split-levels. The two-bedroom villa has two separate King-size bedrooms and even a whole private dining room capable to fit 10 people. Tilt your head up and you will be able to admire stunning art covered ceilings that resemble those in Versailles, giving guests a true experience of grandeur.

Last but not least, there is the LA VILLA DU DUC, the super deluxe accommodation which is proportioned at a whopping gross floor area of 5,000 s.f. in 2 floors. The two-bedroom villa also has two separate King-size bedrooms and a private dining room capable for 10 people, but takes luxury to new heights with a lavish bath with Jacuzzi spa tub. If guests would like to have a relaxing dip or a mini Jacuzzi party, they can do so without even leaving their villa.

Aside from its unbeatable sumptuous accommodation, the hotel also has a variety of premium restaurants and bars that will sate even the most discerning gourmets. Tokugawa serves Japanese Kaiseki with award-winning Kobe beef; Chinoiserie serves lip-smacking Cantonese haute cuisine and regional specialties; Café Blanc serves casual Asian, International, and Portuguese classics in a glamorous, glittering crystal environment; and for guests that fancy a drink or a party, they can always head down to Chairman’s Bar where the world’s rarest liquors can be found, experiencing how it is to truly live the high life.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT THE 13 :
www.the13.com/
At the heart of the South Pacific, Fiji is blessed with picturesque tropical islands which are home to happiness.

No matter you are traveling alone, as a couple or with the whole family, Fiji has everything you want for your next dream island getaway. With 333 tropical islands, Fiji is a destination blessed with natural beauty that shines and warms everybody's heart. Offering unequalled access to Fiji and beyond, Fiji has never been more accessible with Fiji Airways which provides 5 weekly direct flights from Hong Kong to Nadi, and three weekly direct flights from Tokyo and Singapore, all operated by the upgraded Airbus 330. The island is now reachable in style, comfort, together with the renowned warm hospitality of Fijians to make you feel at home even before reaching your Fiji holiday destinations.

Let’s uncover some of the fun things to do in this tropical paradise!

**Explore the Presidential Village of Viseisei**

Viseisei is where the first Fijian people landed and established themselves. The indigenous Fijians are believed to be Melansians. Viseisei earned its nickname as the ‘Presidential Village’ for being the home of two presidents. Tourists must be accompanied by villagers to tour its church and monuments. Don’t miss this place if you are a history buff, and remember to show your appreciation to the villagers by getting some of their handmade souvenirs.

**Visiting the Garden of the Sleeping Giant**

Established in 1977, the Sleeping Giant contains a vast collection of orchids, fruit trees such as star fruits, the local produce Noni and other tropical beauties. A stroll through its lily ponds and rainforest boardwalk is a wonderful and educational activity for the whole family.

**Take a mud bath!**

Nearly every visitor is planning to soak in Fiji’s hot springs, as a Sabeto mud bath could work wonders for your rejuvenation. Indulging in a therapeutic natural spa is a rare opportunity and guaranteed to be a highlight of your journey. The rich essence within the therapeutic mud is said to have age-defying beauty benefits. After applying the mud all over your body and letting it air-dry, rinse with cold water then jump into the hot spring. The sulphur in the hot spring is said to have healing properties for arthritis and rheumatism. You can also visit a 72-degree hot steam spa nearby and enjoy a massage afterwards.

**Dare to take the Zip Line challenge?**

Fiji has some fantastic sports, both on land and in the water. Zip line adventures are now offering in 2 locations—in the South Pacific harbor and in the vicinity of Nadi, where Zip Line Nadi is more adventurous. With continuous progression of height and difficulty, the 16-up-line course provides a thrilling 3-hour adventure. The tour also includes an expedition to a cave for visitors to learn about the lifestyle of cannibals in the past.

**Hunting for treasures at Lautoka market**

The best way to understand Fijian culture is to browse the market and observe the daily lives of the locals. Located north of Nadi, Lautoka is the second largest city of Fiji, as well as the center of the sugar industry and seafood distribution in the island. Lautoka’s open-air market is the largest in Fiji and sells a fascinating variety of fresh food, vegetables, herbs, meat, seafood, and even souvenirs.

**Visit the Garden of the Sleeping Giant**

Established in 1977, the Sleeping Giant contains a vast collection of orchids, fruit trees such as star fruits, the local produce Noni and other tropical beauties. A stroll through its lily ponds and rainforest boardwalk is a wonderful and educational activity for the whole family.

**Themed travel**

Fiji Airways
Website www.fijiairways.com
Enquiries (852) 3192 7568
Sacred shrines and wisteria lanes

Kasuga Taisha is considered one of the most sacred sites in all of Japan. As a place where numerous gods are enshrined, it attracts both devotees and tourists seeking an iconic Shinto experience.

Just a 10-minute walk from Nara Park, Kasuga Taisha was built in 768 by a lord of the powerful Fujiwara clan. Whereas it is quite common for Japanese shrines to honor one or two gods, the influence of the Fujiwaras allowed Kasuga Taisha to host four of them, including ones from Chiba, Ibaraki and Osaka. Each has its own shrine.

The site is known for its colors and photogenic setting. The contrast between the bright vermilion paint, the white walls and the cypress wood roofs has inspired photographers for many years. The shrine was rebuilt every two decades, a practice that lasted until the Edo period ended.

Kasuga Taisha is renowned for being the finest example of the Kasuga-zukuri style of architecture, which dates back to the early 8th century and incorporates Chinese-style roofs and red, gold and vermilion decoration. A sloping roof gently extending over the front of the building also identifies structures of this style.

Another popular spot in the shrine grounds is the Shinen Manyo Botanical Garden, which has over 200 kinds of plants. The wisteria flowers that bloom from late April to early May are a particular favorite of visitors.

The symbol of the Kasuga Taisha Grand Shrine is a wisteria bloom and the miko, or shrine maidens, also wear headpieces decorated with the elegant purple flower.

The wisteria has historical significance as the flower emblazoned on the family crest of the Fujiwara clan that dominated the government of Japan from 710 to 1160. The clan used to control much of Nara, the ancient capital of Japan before Kyoto, and built the Kasuga Taisha Grand Shrine in 768.

One of the first things people notice when they enter Kasuga Taisha is its thousands of stone lanterns – over 3,000 of them, in fact. The path to the main building is flanked on both sides by these lanterns, and the main building has hundreds of bronze lanterns as well.

Not surprisingly, the area is known for its lantern festival, Mandoro. During this festival, held in early February and also in mid-August, the lanterns light up the shrine and surroundings.

As the path to Kasuga Taisha passes through Nara Park, deer roam freely around the area. The deer are believed to be sacred messengers of the Shinto gods that inhabit the shrine and the mountainous terrain around it.

For photographers, amateur botanists and nature lovers, a visit to Kasuga Taisha is a must, as there are bountiful sites, plants and wildlife to be captured and enjoyed here.
Air and Brunch combination

See Hong Kong in a different light with Heliservices, a premier provider of business and utility aircraft services in Hong Kong and around the region since 1978. Its services span aerial sightseeing, filming and photography, as well as lifting and construction services.

Heliservices’ deluxe air-conditioned twin engine MD902 Explorer Helicopter can seat up to six passengers for an exhilarating aerial experience. With excellent visibility all around, this is one high-flying experience you wouldn’t want to miss.

There are two take-off locations travelers can choose from: the Peninsula Hotel rooftop helipad, and the Wan Chai Heliport next to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The flightseeing tours take travelers over most of Hong Kong, with views of Victoria Harbour and the spectacular skyscrapers of Central. Flying down to the south side of Hong Kong Island, you can have a bird’s eye view of the picturesque bays and white, sandy beaches. Heading east, you can take in the rugged coastline and surfing beaches of the New Territories, as well as the seafood haven of Sai Kung and the traditional farmland along the border with the mainland.

For business travelers or those who wish to travel in style, Heliservices also offers VIP transfers to and from the Hong Kong International Airport, customized tours of Macau, as well as golf or wedding packages. Whatever your flightseeing desires, Heliservices works to make your dreams come true.

Heliservice’s current fleet includes three MD902 helicopters, with flights available seven days a week from 9am to before sunset.

Available only on weekends, Heliservice has a Fly & Brunch package which includes a 16-minute shared flight tour of Hong Kong Island, and a three-course Weekend Champagne Brunch at The Lobby of the Peninsula. The package costs $3,070 per person, or $3,390 per person, with free-flow champagne. There is also the Fly & Tea option available for $5,758 for two or $2,918 per person.

HELISERVICES (HK) LIMITED
Booking hotline 2802 0200
Website www.heliservices.com.hk
Visit Heliservices’ booth at ITE HK (Booth no. M120)

The Ultimate Flight Experience
At The Peninsula Hong Kong

Fly & Tea
- Victoria Harbour Experience Shared Flight-seeing Tour (approx. 18mins)
- The Lobby Afternoon Tea set
HK$ 2,918 for one person
HK$ 5,758 for two people
Daily: 15:45 – 16:45 / 17:00 – 18:00

Fly & Brunch
- Victoria Harbour Experience Shared Flight-seeing Tour (approx. 18mins)
- The Lobby Weekend Champagne Brunch
HK$ 3,070 per person
HK$ 3,390 per person (with unlimited Perrier-Jouët Grand Brut Champagne)
Sat & Sun: 10:30 – 13:00

All the above prices are inclusive of 10% service charge. Blackout dates apply.
Thirty years of excellence in luxury cruising with Crystal Cruises

Taking its acclaimed elegance to the farthest reaches of the world, the award-winning Crystal Cruises will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2020 with a year-long celebration including commemorative gifts, special events aboard its ships as well as the gift of savings for its guests.

Voted ‘World’s Best’ by the readers of Travel + Leisure for 20 years, Crystal Cruises first launched on July 24, 1990 when Crystal Harmony sailed from San Francisco on a 12-day inaugural voyage to Alaska. The brand pioneered the luxury cruising industry and set the stage for three decades of award-winning vacation experiences.

“We are immensely proud of Crystal Cruises’ legacy of offering luxury travelers the very best experiences in the world for 30 years,” says Tom Wolber, Crystal Cruises’ president and CEO. “It’s our pleasure to celebrate this milestone with travelers in a meaningful way – with great value and the opportunity to experience all the diverse travel experiences Crystal has to offer.”

To commemorate this special occasion for travelers, Crystal Cruises proudly presents the ‘30th Anniversary Collection’, featuring sailings around the globe ranging from seven to 16 nights throughout 2020, with an awe-inspiring array of itineraries including 20 voyages on Crystal Cruises to the Mexican Riviera, Asia, the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, New England & Canada, Middle East & India, and the Caribbean; five voyages on Crystal River Cruises to the Rhine and Danube rivers; four voyages on Crystal Yacht Cruises to the Seychelles, the Adriatic, the Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula; and one voyage on Crystal Expedition Cruises to the South Pacific.

For special 30th Anniversary savings in 2020, Crystal has 30 designated sailings spanning its four brand experiences – Crystal Cruises, Crystal River Cruises, Crystal Yacht Cruises and Crystal Expedition Cruises. Savings will be doubled for Crystal Society members, which is five percent in total, whilst new-to-Crystal guests will enjoy two percent savings on the select voyages. These savings are in addition to two-for-one fares and Crystal’s compelling Book Now Savings, which rewards travelers who book early with up to $5,000 per suite.

All guests booked on the selected sailings will enjoy special events celebrating this milestone and plentiful of celebratory gifts including Crystal’s 30th Anniversary Cookbook featuring specialties from Crystal’s globally-inspired menus, a commemorative 30th Anniversary pin, a wine stopper, and personalized luggage tags as part of the festivities.

Take advantage of these special offers and book your ‘30th Anniversary Collection’ journey by June 30, 2019!
Inaugural offers on Celebrity Apex

Pushing modern luxury travel to new heights, the much loved cruising brand, Celebrity Cruises, is launching Celebrity Apex as the second ship in its revolutionary Edge series. Celebrity Apex comes right in the wake of the industry’s most anticipated new ship, Celebrity Edge.

Along with the third and fourth ships of the prestigious Edge series which will arrive in fall 2021 and fall 2022, the luxurious Celebrity Apex will make her debut in April 2020 from Southampton, England. Meanwhile, a mini season of five sailings to European destinations will be offered, including the Norwegian fjords and the northern coasts of Spain and Portugal. A new 10-night Capital Cities Cruise will take you to iconic cities like Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Oslo and Paris.

The Northern Europe mini season is followed by an inaugural summer sailing schedule of 7- to 12-night itineraries to the Mediterranean from Barcelona and Rome; special visits to Lisbon and Valletta; and many more.

Priding herself as the newest ship in the Edge Series, Celebrity Apex features exquisite accommodation, including Edge Staterooms with Infinite Verandas and two-story Edge Villas with outdoor plunge pools, as well as 29 world-class culinary venues. Book your cruise as sailings are now open with limited availability.

Explore the beauty of nature with Celebrity Flora

If you are in search of an active and fun-packed luxurious vacation, Celebrity Flora is perfect for you. With its all-suites accommodation, the 100-guest Celebrity Flora is one of the most energy-efficient ships purposely designed for the captivating Galapagos Islands.

Making its first sailing on Jun 30, the ship offers seamless sea-to-shore transportation with the innovative new Novurania Yacht Tenders, sailing from Baltra, Ecuador, year-round.

Celebrity Flora features an innovative outward-facing design, giving travelers 360-degree views of the islands, paired with personal suite attendants, new dining venues, open-air stargazing platform, and expert-led ecological seminars.

Guests can choose from a selection of 10-, 11-, and 16-night packages, which feature either pre- or post-cruise expeditions to bucket-list destinations and include one of two 7-night Inner or Outer Loop itineraries, both sailing from Baltra.

To enhance your cruising sensation, Celebrity Flora has just introduced the first-ever glamping experience at sea. Indulge in the once-in-a-lifetime camping experience on the top deck of the luxury yacht that allows guests to dine, drink, and even sleep beneath one of the most extravagant night skies in the world. Bookings are now open.

Game-changing Celebrity Revolution

The Celebrity Revolution isn’t a makeover, it’s a game-changer. Celebrity Cruises is set to transform the industry with the unveiling of the Celebrity Revolution, a more than US$500-million reimagining of the fleet in partnership with more than 500 leading architects, designers, and engineers designed to bring the rest of the brand’s award-winning fleet to the Edge.

Discerning world travelers will be able to enjoy enhancements that include completely redesigned staterooms and suites, the addition of The Retreat for suite guests, with an exclusive new sundeck and redesigned lounge; stunningly remodeled restaurants, bars and lounges; a redesigned spa and casinos; and new designer boutiques featuring the hottest designer names.

In the redesign process, every detail was carefully thought through with guest comfort in mind. Celebrity collaborated with the renowned international hospitality design firm Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA) to transform the staterooms, and with famed designer Kelly Hoppen MBE for the suites. As part of The Celebrity Revolution, Celebrity Millennium will also feature eXhale bedding with luxurious Cashmere mattresses; and more.

In terms of gastronomic indulgence, The icing on the cake is the introduction of Celebrity’s exclusive virtual La Petit Chef experience, created by the world-famous artists of Skullmapping and presented by TableMation exclusively for Celebrity.

For more exciting voyages, please call cruise hotline at 3180 6708 or contact your travel agent.
15 suite categories

As one of the largest and most elegant suites ever built on a luxury ship, the lavish Regent Suite on Seven Seas Splendor sets the tone for all 14 other suite categories.

The Master, Grand, Splendor and Seven Seas suite categories represent the 32 Distinctive Suites on board Seven Seas Splendor. Focusing on impeccable details, exquisite high-contrast materials and lush jewel-toned accents, the suites are crafted to blend comfort and luxury. Travellers can enjoy personalized butler service, dining reservations and customized pillows and bath products, among other amenities.

The Penthouse, Concierge, Superior, Deluxe Veranda and Veranda suite categories are purposefully designed to maximize ocean views that can be enjoyed from the solace of a large private balcony. Guests enjoy spacious closets, plush bathrobes and slippers, an included mini-bar stocked daily, and many other prime amenities.

Exciting itineraries

Luxury travellers can now book inaugural season itineraries on Seven Seas Splendor to the world’s most beautiful destinations that are as extraordinary as the ship herself. The first voyage beginning on February 7th, 2020 will take guests on an unforgettable 14-night transatlantic journey from Barcelona to Miami. The inaugural season reveals a lineup featuring a variety of destination-rich itineraries calling on iconic locations throughout the Caribbean, North America and the Mediterranean. Through free unlimited shore excursions, guests will have opportunities to explore renowned museums and famous landmarks on every voyage. The ship will visit highly sought-after ports of call such as San Juan, Barcelona, Cabo San Lucas, New York, Saint-Tropez, Portofino, Los Angeles, Dubrovnik, Amalfi/Positano, Corfu and Cartagena. After her first transatlantic voyage, Seven Seas Splendor will embark on journeys to the United States, Mediterranean countries and more.

Seven Seas Splendor offers a comfortable and stylish experience for luxury travellers with an expansive passenger-to-space ratio and an exceptionally low guest-to-crew ratio, making her “one of the world’s most spacious, intimate and beautiful ships ever to sail the globe,” says Jason Montague, President and CEO of Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

Culinary wonders

To satisfy your taste buds, Seven Seas Splendor will elevate the cruise line’s legendary cuisine by focusing on destination dishes that bring abroad local ingredients and culinary traditions from where Seven Seas Splendor is sailing, and featuring new curated Culinary Arts Kitchen classes: Culinary Arts Kitchen, and Gourmet Explorer Tours. Get ready for the seven amazing dining venues on board, including Compass Rose, Pacific Rim, and more, with a mouthwatering array of new dishes and new restaurant designs that excite all the senses to provide luxury travellers with world-class meals and an unrivalled experience.

2019-2020 Voyage Highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Itinerary</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cruise Fares</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seven Seas Explorer</td>
<td>Barcelona, Palma De Mallorca, Marseille, Monte Carlo, Livorno, Rome (Civitavecchia), Sorrento/Capri, Taormina, Corfu, Kotor, Dubrovnik, Venice</td>
<td>HK$65,988*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seven Seas Explorer</td>
<td>Venice, Ravenna, Dubrovnik, Kotor, Corfu, Taormina, Amalfi/Postiano, Decks, Livorno, Portofino, Rome (Civitavecchia)</td>
<td>HK$55,481*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seven Seas Explorer</td>
<td>Barcelona, Cadiz, Casablanca, Agadir, Arrecife, Santa Cruz, De Tenerife, Santa Cruz De La Palma, Funchal, Lisbon</td>
<td>HK$55,508*</td>
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<td>Seven Seas Splendor</td>
<td>Miami, Havana, Cozumel, Costa Maya, Harvest Caye, Santa Tomás De Castilla, Roatán, Key West, Miami</td>
<td>HK$38,072*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seven Seas Splendor</td>
<td>Barcelona, Palma De Mallorca, Sète, Toulon, Monte Carlo, Porto, Livorno, Rome (Civitavecchia)</td>
<td>HK$40,856*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seven Seas Splendor</td>
<td>Rome (Civitavecchia), Sorrento/Capri, Taormina, Valetta, Kotor, Zadar, Venice</td>
<td>HK$42,526*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fares are per person, based on double occupancy in HK dollar and subject to availability. Please contact us for details. Regent Seven Seas Cruises terms and conditions apply.

Miramar Express

Website: www.miramarexpress.hk
Tel.: 3960 0388

24 - TRAVEL
To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing, Dream Cruises invites Dr. Leroy Chiao to conduct Astronaut camp, perfect for kids who have dreams of flying off into space.

Dr. Chiao is a former NASA astronaut with over 229 days in space – kids can learn through the Astronaut Camp Activities on how to design, build and launch their own rockets; build their own lunar probes with the L-Cross Design Challenge; and learn more about moons, planets and space exploration. Dream Cruises is turned into an Astronaut Training Centre where both your body and mind are challenged with the “Moon Craters Climb” at Rock Climbing Wall and the “Wire Loop” space mission, as well as the fly missions in Star Wars: Battle Pod Arcade machines.

One of the best parts of going on a Dream Cruises holiday is that you can try all the flavors of the world on one cruise ship. Dream Cruises offers its guests food for all seasons: from buffets, afternoon teas and fancy dinners, guests can pick and choose their whims from an array of international cuisines; Japanese, Chinese, Asian and International fare are all available!

For guests sailing in June, you are welcomed to try the fresh cut Tuna for FREE onboard World Dream. There is also an unlimited supply of fresh fruits and sumptuous desserts that will quench your sweet tooth and your thirst for cooling refreshments.

For more info on Dream Cruises sailings, visit dreamcruiseline.com
Explore European culinary excellence board Oceania Cruises

Oceania Cruises welcomes you aboard the Riviera for a 12-day voyage from Barcelona to Rome, or a 14-day voyage from Rome to London! Designed with the ultimate epicurean and travel connoisseur in mind, Riviera offers guests a host of dining experiences, both onboard and offshore.

The 12-day cruise will visit Ibiza, Palma de Mallorca, Provence, Saint-Tropez, Monte Carlo, Portofino, Florence, Pisa, Tuscany, Taormina, Sorrento/Capri and Rome while the 14-day journey will stop along Toulon, Bordeaux, Saint-Malo, Barcelona, Cartagena, Malaga, Seville, Lisbon, and Oporto, with two days cruising through the Bay of Biscay.

Guests aboard the Riviera can look forward to plenty of offshore excursions with a culinary theme. The trademark Culinary Discovery Tours will bring guests to local markets where you can sample authentic local produce and exotic spices.

In Seville, you can go to The Culinary Centre with one of Oceania’s master chefs to discover the flavours of Spain and the Mediterranean. There will also be a guided walking tour through the stunning Old Quarter as well as a visit to one of Seville’s most well-known tapas restaurant.

At St-Malo, you will be treated to a culinary extravaganza at one of the region’s most cherished restaurants, Castelbrac, that serves local specialties like scallop tarts, and fresh-foraged mushroom custard.

And your culinary experience just gets better once you’re back on board that Riviera! From a classic steakhouse to authentic Tuscan cuisine, Riviera offers six unique, open-seating restaurants, including The Grand Dining Room and a coffee bar. Guests are also welcome to hold private dinner parties at the exclusive onboard dining venue, Privee.

The Polo Grill is perfect for those who enjoy time-honoured grill favourites, while La Reserve by Wine Spectator comes with a Dom Perignon Experience. Guests can indulge in an exuberant six-course gustatory indulgence that pairs each course with a special Dom Perignon vintage.

From Britanny Blue Lobster in Yellow Curry Broth with Coco Foam to Sashimi-Style Seared Wagyu Beef with Sauteed Anguilla, Blood Orange-Soya Jus and Caviar Perlita, each beguiling bite is a celebration of the finer things in life.

Gala dinner with wine pairings are included, and the Executive Chef and his team are there to guide you through the evening. You will also have the option to order from our à la carte menu, or even create your own custom dish! The Executive Chef and his team look forward to welcoming you aboard for a truly unforgettable dining experience.

For more information or to book your cruise, please visit www.oceaniacruises.com.
Asia set to lead the boom in the global cruising market

There is plenty of room for further growth in the global cruising market with Asia playing a key role in the exciting developments ahead, according to Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH), the world’s third largest cruise line.

Harry Sommer, NCLH’s President International, points out that new ships are coming on line on a continued basis, with special features that are fuelling new demands. But he does concede that there will be a higher level of differentiation in the market, with each cruising company finding its own niche, at the same time as consumers are becoming more sophisticated.

Steve Odell, NCLH’s Senior Vice President & Managing Director Asia Pacific, explains that the brand comprises three award-winning lines: Norwegian Cruise Line – innovator in premium-contemporary cruising; Oceania Cruises – leader in upper-premium cruising and renowned for ‘The Finest Cuisine at Sea’; and Regent Seven Seas Cruises – ‘The Most Inclusive Luxury Experience’ in the world.

While mature markets like the US, Europe and Australia are continuing to do well, says Sommer, Asia has made spectacular headway, led by China, while others like Hong Kong, Japan, India and southeast Asia have all witnessed strong growth.

Felix Chan, NCLH’s Vice President of Sales Asia, points out that they now have six offices in Asia, including Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai, and business has doubled in the last three years. Customers like the idea of an all-inclusive fare that covers shore excursions, F&B and gratuities, so some 60% of their passengers are repeat customers.

Sommer emphasizes that NCLH is dedicated to a sustained spirit of innovation. “As a luxury cruise operator, we make sure our products are not assembly produced, but made to order,” he explains. “We offer the best of the best, be it in amenities, service standard, food & beverage, and entertainment.”

With a combined fleet of 26 ships with approximately 54,400 berths, the three brands offer itineraries to more than 450 destinations worldwide, with a plethora of exciting choices, including tailor-made culinary tours and wellness tours.

Norwegian Cruise Line will take delivery of its newest ship, Norwegian Encore, in November 2019. It is one of the eleven on order for delivery for the group through 2027. Regent Seven Seas Cruises has also announced its new ship, Seven Seas Splendor, with high-end features and amenities, and a scheduled delivery in February 2020. Oceania Cruises meanwhile has ordered two 67,000-gross ton Allura-class ships for delivery in 2022 and 2025 respectively. With a capacity for 1,200 guests each, they will retain the design elements and signature amenities of the line’s award-winning Marina and Riviera.

These new arrivals, together with its multi-million-dollar revitalization program on existing ships, will ensure that guests have an unrivaled experience whichever vessel they choose.

Sommer explains that there has been a boom in the middle class all over the world, but notably in China and India. Asian passengers, he notes, are affluent and many choose to cruise in a multi-generation mode, so cruise operators must make a point of looking after the kids on board.

There is also a need to meet the desire of luxury class passengers for more intimacy and a higher level of personalized service. That is why, says Sommer, they have introduced ‘The Haven’ on their ships with a limited number of suites that come with private pool and dining, concierge service and personal butlers.

As a luxury cruise operator, we make sure our products are not assembly produced, but made to order,” he explains. “We offer the best of the best, be it in amenities, service standard, food & beverage, and entertainment.”
Experience sheer grandeur

Being the first hotel in Macao to be awarded as the ‘Best Luxurious Hotels of China’, Legend Palace sets itself apart with its premium luxury hotel experience like no other.

If you are an avid traveler, you will know that a good hotel experience is fundamental as it can make or break the entire trip. Located at Macau Fisherman’s Wharf at Macao, Legend Palace embodies everything you would expect in a luxury hotel and more.

The moment you step into the hotel, its opulent décor will instantly take your breath away. Being adjacent to the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, its accommodation enjoys a spectacular sea view of the Pearl River which reminisce Monte Carlo’s iconic seaside scenery, and is both comfortable and spacious. Chairman and Royal Suites enjoy a stunning sea view bathroom, with a large balcony and even a private bar and pantry with 24-hour personal butler service available for the ultimate indulgence.

In addition to the outstanding accommodation, guests can also enjoy an array of state-of-the-art amenities. The outdoor swimming pool with poolside cabanas is perfect for a relaxing dip and sun tanning, while its fitness centre which is equipped with comprehensive exercise facilities will allow guests to stay active continue their fitness routines even while they are travelling.

Fancy a nice massage? Head to the Senses Health Club for holistic therapies and a comprehensive range of treatments from rejuvenating facials to body rituals, tailored to suit every client’s needs in a serene setting, rejuvenating both the mind and the body. Business travelers will find the business centre and conference rooms to be of great use. The former provides all sorts of secretarial services like photocopying, printing and binding, while the latter provides a quiet meeting space that is equipped with high-definition TV and conference table.

After a day of pampering and exploring, it’s time to indulge in a variety of lip-smacking culinary delights that are right on the doorstep. Just to name a few, The Grand Palace serves exquisite Chinese cuisine including handmade dim sums; Brasserie De Paris is a Parisian-themed restaurant inspired by Monte Carlo, and serves high-class international cuisines in both buffet and a la carte style; Infinite provides delectable all-day selections of Chinese delicacies; while Lounge on Eight is exclusive to guests staying in Executive Rooms and Suites, providing exquisite food and a selection of wines in a classy and private space, perfect for a little mingling. Visit these exceptional diners and end your day on a high note!

For more information, please visit:

LEGEND PALACE MACAU
Website legendpalace.com.mo/en/home
Facebook www.facebook.com/legendpalacehotelmacao/
Located in the Maldives, the art immersive resort Joali is surrounded by interactive and experiential artistic pieces that are inspired by and incorporate the island’s surrounding nature. Curated by Zeynep Ercan and Asliala Onur of Istanbul-based company NoLab, the resort features an array of original works of art and dynamic designs from 13 different artists.

One imposing installation is the Manta Ray Tree House, designed by architect and designer Porky Hefer from Cape Town. Inspired by the huge Manta Rays that surround the Maldives, Hefer used traditional Maldivian design skills, building techniques, crafts and sustainable materials for the 15-meter wide, 5-foot tall structure.

Guests at Joali can visit the Manta Ray Tree House via the 50-meter manta’s tail - a steel structure clad with wood and local palm. Up to 10 guests can be seated at the tree house, where they can feast on an Omakase menu while taking in glorious views of the island.

Another eye-catching, yet functional piece of art is Misha Kahn’s Club Tropicana Table. Renowned for his use of unconventional materials such as recycled materials, bronze, glue and glass, the New York-based artist and his team worked with local craftsmen to create the pieces for Joali.

Paying homage to the rich underwater world of the Maldives, Israeli sculptor and installation artist Zemer Peled created the Maldives Vibes, which he hopes will reflect the beauty of the underwater world in an unexpected way.

Although corals should be colorful and vibrant, the sculpture is primarily white, which symbolizes the bleach of the Maldivian coral. Peled hopes this will encourage protection for the corals and serve as a reminder of their beauty.

Joali Maldives is the first in a new brand of luxurious retreats with the “Joy of Living” intrinsic to its offering, seeking to create unique and unforgettable experiences, and curating the finest in architecture, art and design at exceptional locations.

MGM COTAI
Website: www.mgm.mo/en/cotai

Awarded by TTG China Travel Awards, MGM Cotai makes its mark

The latest addition to the MGM portfolio in China, the hotel was designed as the “jewelry box” of Cotai. With approximately 1,400 hotel rooms and suites, the luxurious experience also offers a high-end spa, retail offerings and food and beverage outlets as well as the first international Maison at MGM for the ultimate luxury experience.

MGM Cotai also offers Asia’s first dynamic theater and a spectacle for guests to enjoy. The resort is currently being developed to drive greater product diversification and to bring more advanced and innovative forms of entertainment to Macau as it grows as a global tourist destination. The property is the largest and the first mega-sized complex project in Macau to achieve the China Green Building Design Label Three-Star Certification.

As sign of the growing recognition of MGM Cotai’s Excellence, the TTG China Travel Awards 2019 named the Best New Hotel in Macau at their 12th annual ceremony back in March.

The TTG China Travel Awards honors stellar travel suppliers across airline, hotel chain, individual hotel, resort hotel, serviced residence and travel service segments in the region.

“We are absolutely delighted to have won this esteemed award, especially as we were up against so many fantastic new hotels,” said Grant Bowes, chief executive officer and executive director of MGM China Holdings Limited.

“I am extremely proud of the entire Golden Lion Team and thank them for their determination and commitment to exceptional service,” he added. “The Greater Bay Area plan enables the growth of Macau’s MICE and tourism industry, with such recognition from TTG, MGM Cotai and MGM Macau will continue to offer diversified travel experiences with highest industry standards.”

The cutting-edge, multi-sensory realm of innovation, with the hotel’s Art Collection featuring over 300 captivating and thought-provoking works of art, as well as nine innovative dining concepts, all contributed towards MGM Cotai being named an outstanding winner of this award.

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Call to action

‘Move Beyond’ is our call to action, he emphasizes. “For us, it is to have an ambitious leadership mindset. We choose to lead and blaze a trail of progress. It represents our continued commitment to delivering personal service that moves people emotionally; and to never stand still.”

The airline’s brand reflects its determination to challenge what is considered ‘standard’ or ‘expected’: to move beyond and be the very best it can be. Living up to this aspiration will enable Cathay Pacific to reach levels of service and customer experience that place it amongst the world’s greatest service brands,” he adds.

Core values

Hogg points out that thoughtful, progressive and can-do spirit are the three core values that matter most to Cathay Pacific:

• Thoughtful – to respect and care for everyone, wherever they’re from and wherever they’re going to, treating them as the airline’s people would wish to be treated themselves. Cathay Pacific goes to great lengths to understand and help them on their way in life.

• Progressive – inspired by the airline’s dynamic home of Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific region, Cathay Pacific brings modern, forward-thinking attitudes and ideas to its customers, in a simple way. The use of technology makes customers’ journeys easy and enjoyable.

• Can-Do Spirit – inspiring confidence and trust among its customers with positivity and determination.

Moving beyond for customers

Cathay Pacific is moving beyond for its customers by bringing personal recognition and a sense of care and reliability to the whole travel experience.

Hogg reveals that they have introduced new seats, installed Wi-Fi across the majority of their long-haul fleet of aircraft; enhanced food and beverage offerings in all classes, and upgraded their digital platform to give customers more control of their journey – with the promise of more to come in the months ahead.

In addition to having one of the youngest fleets in the world, ongoing network growth, digital enhancements and the re-opening of a stylish Cathay Pacific signature lounge in Shanghai Pudong, the airline will be introducing a wealth of new inflight entertainment content in the next few months, giving the Cathay group the greatest range and volume of movies, TV and audio programmes of any Asian airline.

This will be followed by the launch of a new Business Class experience later in the year, complementing the modernised dining proposition introduced on all their long-haul flights. Backed by popular demand, customers can also look forward to the return of Betsy Beer, the craft ale that has been specially brewed to be enjoyed at 35,000 feet.

The spirit of progress

The Cathay Pacific story has always been one of innovation and ambition, Hogg explains. “Throughout our history, we have pushed boundaries of long-haul travel, being the first to enter new markets and directly linking Hong Kong with key destinations worldwide.

“Recent times have also seen an unprecedented rate of expansion, with the Cathay Pacific group launching 12 new routes since 2018, in tandem with the arrival of new, technologically-advanced Airbus A350 aircraft and a range of customer-centric enhancements. “It does not matter how far we have come, what matters is how far we will go.” Hogg concludes. “It is exactly this spirit of progress that is shared by Cathay Pacific’s people, our customers, our home and the people of Hong Kong.”

CATHAY PACIFIC

Website www.cathaypacific.com
Turkish Airlines redesigns travel comfort with the Flow Sleeping Set

As part of the airline’s ongoing mission to ensure a perfect travel experience for its guests, Turkish Airlines has introduced a new collection offered in Business Class that promises sleep as comfortable as your home. The Flow Sleeping Set is a successful collaboration between Turkish Airlines and Zorlu Tekstil, and aims to offer healthier and higher quality sleep environment. Combining elegant lines with comfort, all of the new pieces were developed with the comfort of travelers in mind.

Passengers aboard Turkish Airlines can expect to enjoy a relaxing sleep to finish their flights in a zen state, and the design reflects the airline’s Flow philosophy, which represents its dynamic brand identity and continuous service concept.

“We prepared new products after a lengthy R&D and design period as they offer a unique experience with their design and comfort,” said Zeki Cukur, Turkish Airlines Catering & Inflight Products SVP.

The Flow Sleeping Set consists of a blanket, sleeping pad and pillow. Opting for a contemporary and minimalist design, the fabrics used for the set were specifically chosen to enhance comfort and ease the ability for passengers to take a rest. Additionally, the patterns of the new collection also aesthetically match the designs of the new cabin interiors and cabin uniforms.

The Flow Sleeping blanket features a soft, two-sided design that supports better air flow, ensuring that the product helps maintain the ideal temperature during all four seasons. The sleeping pad, meanwhile, provides an orthopedic sleep surface with its dense interior filling which offers extra comfort and ease. Finally, the pillow, which can be used when sitting down or sleeping, is designed at an ideal size, classical form and comfortable material.

Cukur said he hopes passengers will experience quality improvement brought about by the Flow Sleeping Set. “With Istanbul Airport, our new home, we continue to add new innovations to the change we are going through.”

Finnair introduces new business class amenities by Marimekko and L:A Bruket

In order to further pamper guests flying on Finnair, and to celebrate the launch of its new route from Helsinki to Los Angeles, the airline introduces a range of new amenities for business class passengers that are both sustainable and fashionable.

Sustainability in all its forms is key for Finnair and as such, environmental considerations played a big part in the new products’ design. Plastic has been replaced with either wax paper, or bio-plastic, which contains cornstarch, while some products are made entirely from recycled PET plastic bottles. Packaging has also been replaced with a cardboard band instead of plastic.

These changes are estimated to save plastic waste by almost 4,500 kilograms per year! The amenity kit, by Finnish design house Marimekko, will be available for all transcontinental flights operated by the Airbus A350 and Airbus A330, including those to and from Hong Kong. The amenity kits are designed to complement the new sleep textiles in Finnair’s long-haul business class: the Maija Isola classic Kaivo print in a dark blue tone on tone colourway.

The sleep textiles - which include a pillow, blanket, sleep slippers, towel, toiletries and eye shades - feature four different Maija Isola designs from the 1960s. These four designs – Rautasänky, Joonas, Jenkka and Pieni Melooni – each have a pattern in two different colourways. A jacquard weave technique brings dark blue together with a second color in each of the eight combinations, for a premium look with a collectible feel. Finnair will introduce two new designs at a time, changing them for another two every six months.

Apart from these, the new amenity kits will have products from L:A Bruket, a natural and organic skincare brand from Sweden. Each amenity kit includes aluminum tubes of almond-coconut lip cream and a chamomile-lavender facial hydrator from L:A Bruket. Finnair will also offer L:A Bruket hand soap and hand cream in its on-board business class lavatories, as well as L:A Bruket products in its airport lounge bathrooms and shower suites.

Scents of cucumber-mint, lemongrass and grapefruit leaf have been chosen to help customers feel refreshed and invigorated.
US National Parks
showcasing nature’s gifts

The national parks in the United States are renowned for their stunning beauty, unique topography, unusual ecosystems and recreational pursuits. There are no less than 61 of them, boasting a record attendance in 2017 of more than 84 million visitors. If you haven’t feasted your eyes on at least some of them, you’re really missing out on nature’s endowments for mankind, writes Andy Ng.

Because of their geographic dispersion and the expansive coverage, it takes intimate knowledge to plan a cost and time efficient itinerary, and this can only be gained through careful research and cumulative experience. In this respect, I count my blessings in having an old schoolmate, Benny Ko, who resides (some of the time) near Salt Lake City in Utah, and knows the area like the back of his hands, not to mention the fact that he is an honorary Paiute (a native American tribe) due to his voluntary work as a doctor.

My objective is simple: I want to see as many of the national parks as possible in about a week to take in their spectacular sights, some of which are icons on any traveller’s wish list. I also express my desire to re-live the scenes of many a Hollywood Western that I have seen in my childhood, with such immortal heroes as John Wayne and Gregory Peck.

And boy, have we achieved our target and more, because heading southwards from Salt Lake City, we followed an anti-clockwise loop that took in five national parks, viz, Bryce Canyon, Zion, Grand Canyon, Canyonlands, and Arches. And for bonuses, we also covered Antelope Canyon, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Monument Valley and Dead Horse Point State Park.

In addition to the scenic diversity, we went through, weatherwise, searing desert heat as well as menacing blizzards in our journey. For nourishment, nobody would go hungry after a hearty American breakfast. Along the way, we tried country Americana, roadside Navajo barbecue, and even decent Chinese fare in remote country towns. I don’t know about you, but after a few meals of steaks, burgers and chips, one does yearn for a bowl of piping hot rice to nurse the stomach.

Bryce Canyon National Park

Even before reaching this park, we passed through some spectacular rock formations at the Red Canyon of Dixie National Forest on scenic Byway 12. The park boasts a series of amphitheatres filled with massive and delicate pillars of stone eroded into bizarre shapes called hoodoos that span different shades of salmon orange. To me though, this collection of rock spires looks more like the terracotta army at Xian in China!

It is an easy drive to various well-marked viewing points, including Natural Bridge, Inspiration Point, Sunrise Point and Sunset Point. As the topography of the area is made up of cliffs and deep canyons, it is important to time your visits if you want to avoid those stark shadows in your photographs.

Zion National Park

Utah was originally settled by native Americans and later by Mormon pioneers. Its dynamic landscape has long caught the attention of film makers as over 900 films have featured it for the silver screen and television. Zion National Park has gained reputation since the release of the 1969 Hollywood blockbuster ‘Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid’ (starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford), which was shot on location here as well as in various southwestern states.

Measuring 24 km long and up to 800 m deep, Zion Canyon takes your breath away as it is surrounded by massive, perpendicular sandstone cliffs of cream, pink and red that soar into an azure sky. As we drove down the zig zag road, I couldn’t help recalling the valley of gold in yet another 1969 Hollywood Western epic, ‘MacKenna’s Gold’, starring Gregory Peck and Omar Sharif. It is truly fantasyland if you let your thoughts run wild!
Grand Canyon National Park

As a UNESCO World Heritage site, Grand Canyon, across the state in Arizona, is one of the most powerful landscapes on earth that overwhelms one’s senses as millions of years of erosion have exposed the multicolored layers of sedimentary rocks of the Colorado Plateau. Bring a pair of binoculars for a closer scrutiny of the intricate landforms in greater detail.

Measuring 446 km long, up to 1.6 km deep, and up to 24 km wide, this mesmerizing vista can be viewed from both the North and South Rims, although they are hours apart as you have to drive around the canyon. For us, the South Rim was Hobson’s choice as the North Rim was closed because of icy conditions. If you have your walking gear and supplies set up, you could try tackling a number of trails that descend into the canyon.

Canyonlands National Park

Turning north back to southeast Utah is the extensive Canyonlands National Park where everything is on a grand scale as you stretch your sights into this wilderness of rock, rock and more rock. Water and gravity, the dual architects, have cut flat layers of sedimentary rock into innumerable intriguing landforms.

On your way out, don’t miss the right turn to the Dead Horse Point State Park where a viewing platform allows you to catch one of the many horseshoe turns as the Colorado River winds its way through the canyon.

Arches National Park

Saving the best to last, Arches National Park features more than 2,000 of the sandstone arch spans for which the park was named, including Utah’s icon – Delicate Arch, measuring 46 feet high and 32 feet wide. Other photogenic natural bridges include Landscape Arch, North America’s longest arch spanning 306 feet, and Double Arch as featured in Harrison Ford’s ‘Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade’.

There are hundreds of miles of biking and hiking trails for sports enthusiasts, but one easy option that takes less than half an hour is to stroll through the Park Avenue that features such rock formations as Three Gossips, Sheep Rock and Tower of Babel. It’s a surreal experience as you soak in the aura of this nature’s sculpture studio.

The relentless weathering and erosion means more and more arches are toppling over as new ones are being formed. That’s the circle of life.

Bonus visits

In between the national parks, we managed to visit a number of truly memorable hotspots in Navajo Tribal Lands at the state border between Utah and Arizona.

First, there is the classic horseshoe bend of the Colorado River at the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area which you can see in all its glory from the rim of the cliff above. It’s hard to desist from taking a shot with your feet dangling from the overhanging cliff face!

Second, there is the magical Antelope Canyon which twists and turns underground as a result of erosion of the sandstone by flash floods over the centuries. Marvel at the saintly light beams from above when the sun is at the right angle, although you must also stay alert to warnings of emergency evacuation from the guide if and when a flash flood occurs!

And finally, Monument Valley. It’s an open plain littered with towering sandstone formations sculpted over time and soar up to 1,000 feet above the ground. As a cinephile, I somehow felt that I had been here before. Hey, is that John Wayne there riding into the sunset?
Hollywood star Chris Pratt carries Tumi

TUMI, a leading international brand of travel, business and lifestyle accessories, has introduced its new campaign for Asia Pacific & Middle East starring Hollywood actor Chris Pratt.

A long time TUMI user, Pratt’s international star quality, magnetic charisma, and down-to-earth personality shine through in the brand’s campaign featuring TUMI’s new Alpha 3 and Alpha Bravo collections.

Making his appearance earlier at the TUMI Loft, an immersive TUMI brand experience at Pacific Place in Hong Kong, Pratt debuted his virtual avatar on the new TUMI Club App. Guests can download the App and use the new Augmented Reality (AR) feature to take virtual selfies with a lifelike Chris Pratt avatar at the Loft.

In addition, TUMI Loft guests can use the technology to trigger a special Chris Pratt avatar animation by scanning his poster at the TUMI Loft entrance.

“I’m blessed to have a job that allows me to travel so much. I’ve always trusted TUMI as my go-to luggage on my various trips around the world,” says Pratt. “I only ever promote products I actually use in real life. This makes TUMI a great fit. TUMI products are sleek, stylish, built to last and have long been my choice for luggage.”

“We are thrilled to have Chris Pratt star in our campaign as he represents a new age of leading men in Hollywood — bold and genuine,” says Victor Sanz, TUMI Creative Director. “Combined with his international appeal, Chris’s personality truly speaks to our growing millennial fanbase.”

The setting for an exploratory and immersive journey, the TUMI Loft is a tactile showcase of the brand’s innovative spirit, creativity and heritage. Constructed in exposed steel with raw concrete floors and an open layout, the TUMI Loft captures the industrial yet cosmopolitan essence of the brand’s New York roots. The result is an inspirational concept space that brims with the innovative design character of TUMI, offering guests a multitude of specialized areas to explore and discover.

**TUMI Website**
www.tumi.hk

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