



HATA MATTERS

4th Edition August 2021

HATA MATTERS is a regular newsletter with the objective to enhance communications with its members and serves to inform members of pertinent industry news and developments, membership activities & events such as study tours, annual conventions etc., selective destination updates and various articles of interest for the membership.

Feedbacks and contributions from members are most welcomed. Please send your views and contributions to

manager@hata.org.hk For advertising opportunities please contact the Secretariat



Please also visit Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents site on Facebook where there are more than 500 “followers” or SCAN the QR Code to give us thumbs up!

CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE



Greetings fellow HATA Members and thank you very much for taking time to read this newsletter which I hope you will find interesting and informative.

For your guidance, the HATA Executive Committee meets regularly to discuss ways and means of enhancing its services and functionality for members and to seek out meaningful projects for the benefit of members.

One of the agendas in these Executive Committee meetings relates to membership activities such as our “Lunch & Learn” sessions, site visits to new venues and briefing on new developments etc.

In this context we would very much welcome members’ feedback and also suggestions as regard to membership activities that you wish us to implement in the future hence feel free to forward your ideas/requests via the HATA Secretariat

Many thanks and all the very best

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GETTING TO KNOW YOUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*In this section **HATA MATTERS** conducts a series of interviews with various members of the Executive Committee who are elected by the membership and dedicated to serving the membership to the betterment of the Association and in the best interest of the travel industry*

*In this edition, **HATA MATTERS** interviews Mr. Edmund Tsang, Vice Chairman of our Association to share his thoughts and visions*

HATA MATTERS: Can you tell us something about your early days and your current job?

ET: I started as a hotel desk clerk in a small hotel where I worked for about two years, and there I received no training and I had no mentorship. Then, I worked as a tour guide for several years in a small agency after passing a Registered Tour Guide examination. In 1974, I worked for Tour East Hong Kong - a British managed multi-national travel agency where I stayed there for seven years as their operations manager HK. For the past 20 years I've been working for Swire Travel which became Connexus Travel four years ago at which time I was appointed as a Consultant. In this role I advise the CEO of Connexus Travel to address to some industry, business development, or vision for the future issues.



HATA MATTERS: When did you join the HATA Executive Committee and some of the committees you have been involved with?

ET: I first joined HATA as a committee member as early as 44 years ago back in 1977 at which time most of our executive committee members were European and English-speaking senior executives employed by the larger companies. I was lucky enough to be nominated to head a number of committees that I loved and enjoyed working with, and of course keenly supported by my great passions and delights towards them. These committees include Training, Strategic Affairs & Convention, and Staff & Finance. As Convention Convener, I have chaired three overseas conventions held in long haul destinations namely 1990 to Frankfurt, 2018 to Dubai, and 2019 to Sydney. I have also served as Chairman 1993-1995 and currently as Vice Chairman.

HATA MATTERS: What was the most memorable experience or event you had with HATA?

To me, attending the 1997 HATA overseas convention to Johannesburg and Cape Town brought me the most memorable experiences and learning too.

This convention turned out to be a most efficient event, not only to showcase the cohesive African diligence, but also greatly impressed all attendees in terms of guarding heritage, nature preservation, and thriving people cultures. It was my first time and in Johannesburg came to learn about I.R. - integrated resort as this convention was held in a new and magnificent Sun City in Johannesburg.



We also visited in Cape Town, a very picturesque coastal city giving us the opportunity to experience various attractions to exemplify eco-tourism, too.

I also participated in the a post-convention tour and stayed for two nights at the private luxurious Sabi Sabi Safari Lodges in the Kruger National Park area. The coach journey took 5 tedious hours but I made no complaints, but felt richly compensated by being able to see the big five animals in the wild, scenic and natural habitats, also complimented by more sunset cocktails, terrains viewing, tribal performances, and other African cultural essences.

HATA MATTERS: What are your thoughts as regard to the travel industry for the past 2 years?

ET: Amid battling the unprecedented pandemic and the prior social unrests prolonging for the past two years, many member companies have regrettably, not found any effective means to react to the present predicament. Unfortunately, the travel industry has seen no optimistic roads to recovery, but is still keen to continue struggling for basic survival. Continuing volatility has also driven many colleagues to adopt quick, or brief business reforms, and a limitation to aim at resources management and suppliers partnership. Staff needed to learn new skillsets, owners

spent more time to reinvent and to add strategic partnerships, also to upgrade IT performances.

Traditional inbound have all come to a halt, key outbound segments as business travel, MICE, vacation & luxury leisure, are continuously being curbed at the mercy of many new found global restraints and social distancing constraints.

Whilst Government's assistance and subsidies did come in early to offer hand-outs, but they seemed to just address to short-term scenarios, or deal with rescues at limited widths. I have seen travel agents subletting their office to sell wines and travel sporting products.

Only a few have succeeded in diversification by shifting some investment and resources to play up online retailing as a winery, food stall, garment, and cosmetic supermarket, likely an alternative channel that can be leveraged to fortify customers retention and customers loyalty, too.

HATA MATTERS: Can you share your insight going forward in the next 12-18 months?

ET: Our business will have no option, but have to be operated in working combination with three major partnering sectors like aviation, hotel, and cruise industry. Technically, air fares will not be reduced when airlines resume post pandemic normal services as there will be too heavy investments to overhaul their grounded aircrafts and update its capabilities after being stored for over 18 months. Capacity wise, both airlines and cruises need to drastically cut their occupancy rate to meet with social distancing compliances.

To the customers' perspective, especially the larger global clients, travel companies in executing bidding, like us would be required to divulge rigid compliances response from their responsible staff, contractors, partners, service suppliers and etc. to meet compliances acceptability of their check-list, ranging from:

- * Equipment deployed not breaching sustainability concerns.
- * Operations answerable to environmental, human rights, animal rights protection.
- * Best practices for corporate governance and CSR.
- * Understanding to observe genders and racial equality.
- * Ensuring IT & accounting hygiene.

Nevertheless, travel companies should not just feel complacent for staying the same to run traditional operation modes, and ignore the imminent danger of missing capabilities upgrade and operations reform to strengthen competitiveness, otherwise a late comer will find it tougher and more costly to take on business diversification, market expansion, talents retention/upgrade, and brand enhancement ? IATA driven NDC is becoming new norm, too.

HATA MATTERS: Any other messages or advice for our membership?

ET: I have not stopped learning over my career working dedicatedly for travel companies in the past four plus decades whereby I have learnt a lot, especially the great working knowledge by serving in the trade associations.

I am most grateful to the many opportunities enabling frequent friendship exchanges with our local colleagues and international industry friends. Their generosity have so kindly given me numerous and brilliant inspirations that I could leverage to apply and succeed in many new missions and challenges. We enjoy learning together and serving the industry by pledging:

- Always have a continuous and strong passion for travel and tourism!
- Always have a strong commitment to deliver whatever is promised!
- Be kind to our staff, suppliers and your customers!

It is pretty alright to make a profit, and even good profits, but never try to mislead your customers!





Dream Cruises, the only summer cruise in Hong Kong, sets sail with “Vitamin Sea and Dream”, a new wellness program at sea, and all-inclusive recreation and entertainment for the whole family



**Vitamin Sea and Dream:
Sail to a Healthier Lifestyle**

Vitamin Sea and Dream, Dream Cruises’ signature wellness concept, will make its Hong Kong debut on Genting Dream this summer. In this modern time where health and wellness has now become the new lifestyle status symbol, transformational and rejuvenating experiences have become ever more vital. *Vitamin Sea and Dream* is an integrated wellness lifestyle concept at sea that brings together top health experts, wellness and



fitness gurus on an inspirational journey that is exclusive to Dream Cruises. An exciting line-up of activities are in store for the Super Summer Seacations of Genting Dream, including aquatic fitness classes with Keith Chan, President of Hong Kong Aquatic Fitness Society, who will take the guests through fun-filled aquatic workouts of Aqua High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) and AquaWalk.

For hard-core fitness buffs who are looking to rev up their metabolism, they would not want to miss the Fitness Academy by Jen McCombie, HIIT Instructor, Powerlifter and runner, where she will teach a full-body, Tabata-style HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) workout, as well as *Chasing Waterfalls*, an outdoor workout that makes the best use of the jogging track on Genting Dream.



Guests will be geared with useful tools to boost their health and immunity at the Nutrition Immunity Boosting Academy with culinary and detox juicing workshops, where they will learn the secrets to eating right. They will also be inspired at Nutrilicious Academy by Michelle Lau, Registered Nutritionist (MSc.), nutrition educator, media personality, and Founder of NUTRILICIOUS, a B2B nutrition consultancy and communications company that aspires to inspire millions across Asia to eat their way to healthier and happier lives.

Vitamin Sea & Dream activities on Genting Dream

Departure date	Activity
18 August & 22 September 2021	Keith Chan: Aqua Fitness 101
24 September 2021	Jen McCombie: Fitness Academy
1 October 2021	Michelle Lau: Nutrilicious Academy



Around the World at Sea – First Stop: Japan

To satisfy the wanderlust of avid travelers, Dream Cruises presents *Around the World at Sea*, a series of thematic cruises that bring some of the most popular travel destinations onboard the ship. Throughout the month of September, guests of Genting Dream will be treated to a holistic experience that encompasses the best of Japanese festivities.

One of the major highlights of many Japanese festivals is to make wishes and pray for good fortune. Daruma dolls are considered cute lucky charms for the New Year, their rotund shape symbolising the ability to overcome adversity and to successfully achieve goals set by

their owners. For an adorable photo opportunity, seek out specially designed Darumas located around the ship, each representing a different blessing to bring happiness to every guest!

Pray for your dreams to come true at the Wishing Shrine at Sea at the Zouk Club. Complimentary Daruma wishing tags will be available for guests to write their wishes and hang them on their favourite Wishing Shrine at Sea for good health and prosperity!

A myriad of complimentary and chargeable activities will also be available Japanese Festival at sea. Guests will learn to make iconic keepsakes that are iconic to traditional such as Japanese the amulets that can be found in Sunny Doll Chimes and Japanese fans. Programs also How to Wear a Yutaka Workshops and Runway Geisha Make-up Demonstrations and Hair Ornament Tutorials, Origami Classes, Manga Drawing Lessons, Rajio Taiso Workouts, Japanese Parasol Dance and Bingata (fabric dyeing) Workshops.



Savour the many tastes of Japan with variety gastronomic delights sponsored by Okinawa Agricultural Cooperative Association, the Okinawa Prefectural Livestock Industry Promotion Foundation and Okinawa Livestock Products Export Promotion Council. In addition to Japanese festival deli food stalls that offer such delicacies as Okinawa Long Pork Sausage, Okinawa One Snap Pork Chop, Japanese okonomiyaki and Takoyaki from Osaka, Red Bean Dorayaki and Hanami Dango, there will also be exclusive free tasting of non-export Okinawa Wagyu beef for guests of Genting Dream to enjoy.



Beach
down
fortune,

during the
their own
festivals,
shrines,
include
Shows,

“MY CRYSTAL BALL “

An article by Dr. Tony Tse, Professor of Practice, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Dr. Tse was also one of the keynote speakers at the 2019 HATA Convention in Sydney

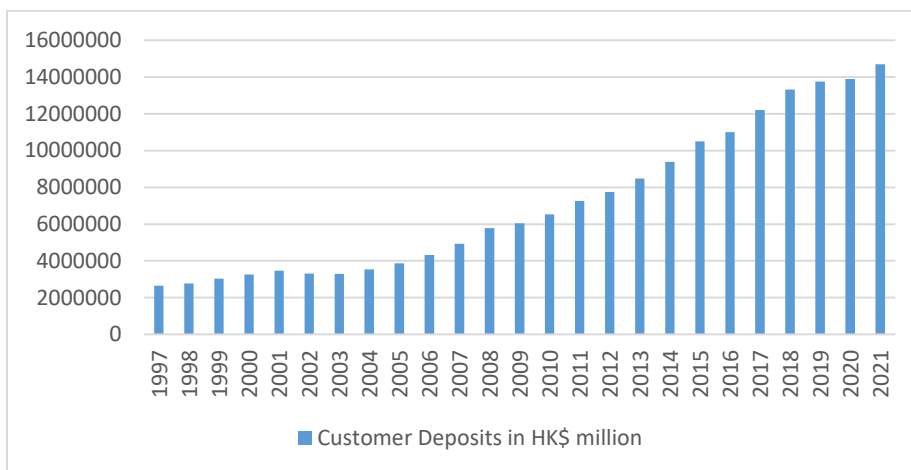
Battered by the global coronavirus pandemic, Hong Kong's GDP fell 6.1% in 2020 compared to the year before and unemployment rate reached 7.2% between December 2020 and February 2021, the city's worst employment situation since 2004. Although the situation showed signs of easing, with the unemployment rate dropping to 6.0% for the March to May period, the pandemic has taken its toll on the economy and nobody is sure when it will be over. Before we use crystal ball to predict the future when the economy will recover and when the city can resume normal travel, let us examine the economic fundamentals of Hong Kong to see if there is any tell-tale sign of how well the city will fare. The economic fundamentals will be the main driving forces steering recovery after the pandemic. This article examines from a historical perspective the city's wealth, property market, and stock market as the three economic fundamentals.



Wealth

The wealth of Hong Kong people can be measured by their deposits with authorized institutions. Figure 1 below shows customer deposits with authorized institutions in Hong Kong from 1997 to 2021 as reported by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. It can be seen that the deposits has been growing steadily over the past 20 years. The total deposits in all currencies were HK\$14,684 billion in April 2021, compared to HK\$3,461 billion in the same month in 2001. This means that the wealth of people in Hong Kong as a whole has grown at an average rate of 7.5% annually for 20 years. Despite the pandemic, the total wealth grew by 5.7% from April 2020 to April 2021. This shows that there was still a lot of wealth created and accumulated during the pandemic period, and this unprecedented wealth will unleash strong spending power when the pandemic is over.

Figure 1. Customer deposits with authorized institutions in Hong Kong 1997-2021 (April)



Source: <https://www.hkma.gov.hk/eng/data-publications-and-research/data-and-statistics/monthly-statistical-bulletin/>

Property Market

Hong Kong has the reputation as one of the priciest destinations in the world to buy a residential property, with an average price of about HK\$10 million. Nevertheless, the turbulence in 2019 and 2020 has fed through to property sales, leading to reduction in transaction and property price. We could look at how serious the impact has been by examining the Hong Kong Centa-City Leading Index (CCL), which is a weekly index based on contract prices of properties in the Centaline Group transactions in Hong Kong. The Centaline Group uses July 1997 as the base period with the CCL indexed to 100. Figure 2 below shows the CCL index from 1994 to 2021. The index dropped to a low of 46.5 in October 1998 because of the Asian financial crisis and 31.8 in August 2003 because of SARS. Since then the index climbed steadily to the peak of 190.5 in June 2019. In fact, the property price index grew steadily over the past 18 years with short-lived declines in 2008 and 2016. There was some damping in the index during the pandemic period in 2020, touching 175.0 in January 2021. At the time of preparing this article, the index reached a new height of 191.3 in August 2021. This shows that the property market has been resilient during the pandemic period so far.

Figure 2. Centa-City Leading Index 1994-2021



Source: <http://hk.centanet.com/CCI/en/index> 18 August 2021

On the commercial property side, Hong Kong has its largest hub for retail, dining and entertainment being developed under the brand “11 SKIES” on Lantau Island. The development with a total gross floor area of 3.8 million sq ft will offer 800 shops, 120 dining concepts, entertainment and office towers. The development will be opening by phases between 2022 and 2025.

In addition, the prime harbourfront site in Central was put out to tender in early 2021. The commercial site of 516,316 sq. ft. could yield a total gross floor area of 1.6 million sq. ft., and is valued between \$37 billion and \$55 billion. The tender received six bidders in June 2021.

The development projects on Lantau Island and in Central show that property developers are generally optimistic about the market.

Stock Market

The stock market is often considered a barometer of economic activities in a city or country. The Hang Seng Index as a key indicator shows that the stock market in Hong Kong has been very volatile between 2006 and 2021, as shown in

Figure 3 below. The index fluctuated between 15,000 and 33,000 in the past 15 years. Although the stock market is on an upward trend in the long run, volatility was evident with sharp decline in 2008 and recovery in 2009, sharp decline in 2015 and recovery in 2016, sharp decline in 2018 and recovery in 2019, and sharp decline in early 2020 and recovery later in the same year. The fluctuation in 2020 could largely be attributed to the pandemic. As of 18 August 2021, the Hang Seng Index stood at 25,867 compared to 27,472 at the beginning of the year. The loss in 2021 so far was largely attributed to regulations recently imposed on the education, big data, and tech sectors. This once again confirms the volatility of the stock market, with or without the pandemic.

Figure 3. Hang Seng Index 2006-2021



Source: <https://finance.yahoo.com/quote/%5EHSI?p=%5EHSI&.tsrc=fin-srch> 18 August 2021

So much about the economic fundamentals. **How about the travel and tourism market?** How much confidence people have in travel and tourism? How much do people pin their hopes on the recovery of hospitality and tourism? Let's take a look at the application for admission to academic programmes offered by School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The following figures show the number of applications to all the Bachelor of Science hospitality programmes and all the Master of Science hospitality programmes past two years.

Number of applications	2020/2021	2021/2022
Bachelor of Science hospitality programmes	11,020	10,892
Master of Science hospitality programmes	304	315

Source: School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

The figures show that the level of interest in studying hospitality programmes in 2021/2022 is about the same as in the previous year 2020/2021. Obviously the candidates expect that the negative impact of the pandemic will be over by the time they graduate and they are hopeful of the recovery.

The above analysis shows that the economic fundamentals in Hong Kong are strong and the young generation is keen to join the travel and tourism industry. Let's hope that the vaccination rate continues to grow and we could leave home without face mask soon. How about my crystal ball? Well, it does not exist.

DIALOGUE WITH ADAM RADWANSKI

Managing Director, Asia Pacific Silversea Cruises



How is the Hong Kong market performing for Silversea Cruises?

The appetite for cruising amongst our guests in Hong Kong is very high thanks to the support of our Trade Partners. What is unique in the current climate is the strong demand for our ultra-luxury expedition cruises. We have also had unprecedented sales for our World Cruise, both for 2023 and our recently released 2024 World Cruise.

This positive performance can be attributed to our all-inclusive ultra-luxury product as well as the industry leading policies that we have in place. Silversea's Cruise with Confidence policy is the most comprehensive in the industry, affording guests flexibility and peace of mind when booking a future voyage.

Globally, how is Silversea positioned to return to service?

Silversea has returned to service with *Silver Moon* in the Mediterranean. The launch of *Silver Moon* also represents the unveiling of S.A.L.T., our much-anticipated culinary programme. The inaugural sailing of Silversea's new expeditionary vessel, *Silver Origin*, departed from San Cristobal in the Galápagos June 19. *Silver Origin* is Silversea's first destination-specific ship cruises with all-new itineraries in the archipelago.

Silver Muse resumed round-trip sailings from Seattle on July 29, making Silversea the first ultra-luxury cruise line to operate in Alaska. Returning to Northern Europe with three 10-day voyages from Reykjavik, *Silver Shadow* has started its circumnavigation of Iceland.

Silversea's healthy return to service, fleet expansion, and enhanced cultural offerings reflect the company's commitment to international market growth, while meeting rising consumer demand for ultra-luxury travel, following a year-long travel pause.



Do you believe small ship cruises will be quicker to recover?

It is no secret that these days size matters and small ship cruising is a clear winner in a world where social distancing and having your own space matter so much. Silversea ultra-luxury ships with a capacity of no more than 609 guests provide an unparalleled space to guest ratio, and this undoubtedly contributes to decision-making among guests who are considering a cruise.

There is also the allure of experiences that only small ship cruising can offer - exploring secluded harbours where others cannot go, sailing up narrow waterways into the heart of a city, or docking right at the pier while others must anchor offshore.

With ten ultra-luxury ships in its fleet, Silversea travels to over 900 destinations across all seven continents, on both expedition and ocean-going voyages. Silversea's guests enjoy the personalized service of a butler, in-suite 24-hour room service, complimentary dining and snacks served in a selection of restaurants, complimentary beverages throughout the ship, and cocktail receptions with canapés, among other luxurious comforts. Aboard Silversea's expedition cruises, all shore experiences are included too, as well as Zodiac tours and the enriching expertise of an Expedition Team.



How is Silversea working on luring guests back on board?

When it comes to Silversea our focus is on product, experience and service that we offer to our guests. With the release of our 2023/2024 season, we offer our guests the most comprehensive and more inclusive than ever before experience. This is what our guests value – hassle free ultra-luxury and all-inclusive holidays.

We have just become the first cruise line to offer guests a door-to-door service as standard. Enhancing the seamlessness of travellers' journeys, guests will have the choice of being collected from their homes in a private chauffeured vehicle to their local airport or directly to the ship. The same luxurious service is also available on guests' return journeys.

What are your tips to Trade Partners?

Reach out to our Sales team. Consider them your personal business consultant. They will be able to get give you the bespoke support that you and your business needs, and to let you know what sales trends we are seeing as well.

Silversea's pricing philosophy ensures that guests who book early are rewarded. Guests can be assured when they book a popular voyage early; the price they pay is the best possible price. By booking early, not only do guests benefit from price security, they get their preferred departure date as well as choice of suite.

I'd also recommend our Travel Partners join Silversea Academy, our digital training platform which is designed to equip our Travel Partners with the knowledge they need to sell our unique, all-inclusive offering. Moreover, agents participating will obtain two CLIA accreditation points for each module completed. We also have Marketing Central, another online Travel Partner platform which contains the assets needed to drive more sales. It includes videos, social media tiles, brochures, customisable flyers as well as our really popular customisable HTML email tool which allows our Travel Partners to fully customise emails by picking the voyages and adding a subject line, logo, offers and call-to-action.

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CONVERSATION WITH A FORMER CHAIRMAN

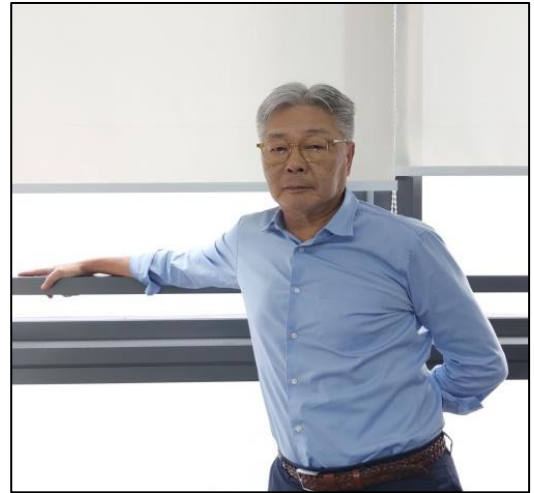
In this section HATA MATTERS chats with various former chairmen and office bearers where they share their recollections relating to their connection to HATA in various capacities

In this edition, HATA MATTERS chats with Mr. Freddy Pong Director of Sunpac Tours & Travel Limited. He chaired the Association from 1996-1999 and again May-December 2006

HATA MATTERS: When did you associate yourself with HATA?

FP: I joined the HATA Executive Committee in the mid-80s and was privileged to be elected Chairman of HATA in 1996. During my tenure as Chairman, I am pleased to say that with the full support of the Executive Committee, we were able to have a good balance of outbound and inbound members in serving their respective needs.

As former chairman I am proud to say that HATA, the longest established travel trade association and a non-profit entity, has over the years made great achievements in serving the multinational membership



HATA MATTERS: How do you evaluate the Association's progress in the past few years?

FP: I am delighted to see that HATA as a trade association has been very active as regards enhancement of product knowledge and technology, networking opportunities with stakeholders, representation at governmental levels for the betterment of our members as well as effective communications with members with platforms like HATA MATTERS.

Also I am particularly pleased to see "young blood" joining the Executive Committee and I am certain that they will be a great contribution for further growth for HATA.

HATA MATTERS: Looking into the crystal ball what is your take on the travel & tourism industry post-pandemic?

FP: Needless to say, the road to full recovery, which to all intents and purposes, will take a bit of time, is undoubtedly challenging for the travel trade in general as many aspects of the industry will change with new protocols, like social distancing, limitation on guests numbers, more stringent Health & Safety policies applied worldwide.

Be that as it may I am optimistic that travel will continue to be one of the main pillars of our economy and that there are still a wide scope of opportunities to be tapped.

HATA MATTERS: Can you elaborate on the opportunities you just mentioned and how to prepare for them?

FP: In my views there are opportunities in the vacation and cruise segments especially for high value clients. , incentive travel (both out bound and inbound), special interest groups and event management.

As for preparation, one needs to be creative and “think out of the box”, embrace the latest travel technology, and always add-value for your clients

HATA MATTERS: Can you recall an “amusing “moment with HATA?

FP: During the HATA Convention in Johannesburg in 1997...I, as the association’s Chairman at the time, was accommodated (by the resort hotel), in a large balcony suite on the lower floor on the property affording a magnificent view from the large balcony featuring a spectacular display of flowers and an array of fruits and offering a grandstand view of the wilderness and forest on a scale I have never seen before.

Then about twenty minutes of checking into this deluxe suite, I heard my wife’s loud screams and laughter with her hand pointing at the balcony.....and there I saw which must have been the whole tribe of monkeys having a good time enjoying the flowers and fruits and floral delights.....I slowly closed the balcony door and watch them enjoying their party whilst I enjoy my whiskey toasting to the victors!!!



HATA MATTERS: Any further thoughts for HATA?

FP: In my opinion, HATA, as Hong Kong’s longest established travel trade association since 1957, is the foremost entity in the representation of its members; hence it is imperative for HATA to assist its members to move forward with strength and resilience during these challenging times. Furthermore it is vitally important for HATA to continue its role as one of the a KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) in the travel and tourism sector

HATA MATTERS: What is keeping you busy these days?

FP: Despite the downtime, I still go to the office on a regular basis to ensure effective communications with various stakeholders (clients, service providers and staff). In my leisure time, I spend most of the time with my family and then a round or two of golf to keep fit!



Foreign VAT Refund – Bringing Unprecedented Savings to Corporations

Who VAT IT Is?

We VAT IT provide International Value Added Tax (VAT) refund service to enterprises which incurred VAT on business travel and supplier invoices in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and European countries.

Headquartered in London, VAT IT is the Indirect Tax specialist to recover the foreign VAT for corporations and we are proud to announce that VAT IT is the biggest VAT refund group on the planet at the moment. We currently service over 13, 000 clients in over 117 countries through our 38 wholly owned offices worldwide.

What Expenses That MICE & Tour Operator Companies Can Claim?

MICE and tour operator companies can reclaim VAT charged by suppliers in foreign countries. When their business engages directly with a foreign supplier on behalf of their clients, it is likely the supplier will include local VAT charges on their invoices.

The VAT incurred on the purchase of various travel components, including hotels and car rental -which are then sold by Tour Operators MICE and Tour Operator companies can claim the following expenses:



VAT on bulk-booking
accommodation



VAT on tradeshow
and exhibition supplies



VAT on transport



VAT on conference supplies



VAT on car rentals



VAT on conference supplies

Who Can Claim Foreign VAT In The Travel Industry?

- Tour operators
- Convention and conference organisers
- Event planning and production companies
- Car and limousine rental companies

What Is VAT IT Total Outsourced Solution?

The VAT IT does every single work for clients and leave them to concentrate on their core business. VAT IT will:

- Tailor the service level to client's needs and provide advices
- Provide on-site full retrieval service and identify all the reclaimable invoices for clients
- Prepare required documents and submit the claims
- Keep clients informed on the progress of their claims with regular updates and real-time online reports
- Handle queries on behalf of clients if there is any
- Transfer the refund to our clients' bank accounts upon receiving it from the relevant VAT authorities

Why VAT IT?

Our tailor-made services and industry-first technology are designed to dramatically maximise client's foreign tax savings. Here below are our competitiveness:

- Comprehensive experience in vat refund
- Strong global coverage
- Technology pioneer in VAT refund industry
- The only industry player obtained ISO27001:2013 ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED
- Professional legal team to provide legal advices to clients
- No refund, no fee
- Every single work is done by VAT IT, clients can focus on their own business development

To learn more about VAT IT VAT refund service, please send an email to Kathy at kathy.man@vatit.com.hk or contact her at +852 2270 5900

Membership Activity

“Lunch and Learn”

Qualifications Framework for Travel Industry (Briefing luncheon)

A “Lunch & Learn” briefing for HATA members on the Qualifications Framework for Travel Industry was held on 28 July 2021 members.

The briefing commenced with a welcome speech by Mr. Andrew Leung, JP, Chairman of Industry Advisory Committee followed by a briefing from Mr. Ernest Lee, Senior Manager of Qualifications Framework Secretariat on the completion of professional production of Specification of Competency Standards, launching co-operation with the travel trade and subsequently a Q & A session

About Qualifications Framework (QF)

In order to ensure sustainable manpower development amidst the rapidly changing world, the Education Bureau of the HKSAR officially launched the Qualifications Framework (QF) in Hong Kong on 5 May 2008.



The QF is a seven-level hierarchy covering qualifications in the academic, vocational and professional as well as continuing education sectors to promote and support lifelong learning with a view to continuously enhancing the quality, professionalism and competitiveness of our workforce in an increasingly globalized and knowledge-based economy. Qualifications recognized under the QF are quality-assured and level-rated in accordance with objective and well-defined outcome standards.



In 2018, the Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC) of Travel Industry, which consists of the representatives of employers, employees and government departments, was set up by the Education Bureau to serve as a platform for stakeholders to implement the QF with concerted efforts and advise the HKSAR Government on the training needs and manpower development in the Travel Industry. Over the years, the ITAC has been drawing up the Specifications of Competency Standards (SCS), which sets out the skills, knowledge and competency standards required of the practitioners to perform various job functions in the industry effectively. The SCS will serve as useful benchmarks and reference for education and training by providers, as well as development of in-house training programmes by the employers and human resources managers. The draft SCS, together with the progression pathways and the competency requirements of associated key job posts, drawn up by the ITAC are now ready for industry consultation.

For details, please visit: www.hkqf.gov.hk/travel.



SWAN HELLENIC



Swan Hellenic was relaunched in July 2020 to proudly continue the spirit of cultural expedition cruising the company pioneered in the 1950s. Building on its British roots, the new company has a global cultural cruising outlook dedicated to providing guests with the opportunity to 'see what others don't'.

Two new 5-star polar PC 5 ice-class expedition cruise ships arriving in November 2021 and April 2022 will each accommodate 152 guests in 76 spacious staterooms and suites, the majority with large balconies. A larger PC 6 ice-class vessel accommodating 192 guests in 96 staterooms and suites in the same distinctive comfort and style as its sister ships will be arriving year-end 2022. All three new ships are being built in full compliance with SOLAS Safe Return to Port requirements.

Dedicated to guests with a passion for adventure and cultural exploration, the company's meticulously planned itineraries explore the wild landscapes, wildlife, peoples and unique cultures of the world's less travelled regions.

Its ships feature elegant Scandi-design interiors, extensive outdoor spaces and dedicated expedition facilities. The crew includes an expedition team comprising expert guides, speakers and lecturers, and numbering 120 and 140 respectively almost equals the number of guests, reflecting the high levels of attentive personal service provided.

Headquartered in Cyprus with offices in London, Dusseldorf and Monaco, together with a branch office in Hong Kong (serving mainland China, Taiwan and South-East Asia), as well as partnerships serving India, Japan and Australia-New Zealand, Scandinavia and Iceland, Swan Hellenic supports the travel trade with specialist local partners to provide customers with expert personal service worldwide.



Mr. Andrea Zito, CEO of Swan Hellenic SH Minerva float out Ceremony on 23rd June 2021

For enquiry, you're welcome to contact our Preferred Sales Agents

Goldjoy Travel (TA LIC 351103)
Hong Kong Wing On Travel (TA LIC 350074)
Hong Thai Travel (TA LIC 350070)
Incruising (TA LIC 353288)
Jetour Travel (TA LIC 353020)

Miramar Travel (TA LIC 352742)
Sightseers (TA LIC 350295)
The Travel Adviser (TA LIC 350289)
Travel Expert (TA LIC 350709)

Should you have any enquiry, Welcome to contact: Thomas Lee, Director of Sales Asia, Swan Hellenic
Email: thomas.lee@swanhellenic.asia Tel: +852 90969693/28610300 website: swanhellenic.com

VODOHOD

RUSSIAN RIVER CRUISES



Vodohod is a full-service tour operator and the largest cruise operator in Russia. For over 15 years, we have been organizing cruises visiting the most interesting cities and locations of our country, providing the highest service and maintaining high quality standards as well as increasing the popularity of cruises as a comfortable and modern way of enjoying your holidays.

Vodohod is the undisputed leader in the cruise industry in Russia, and one of the leaders in Europe in terms of the number of fleet units and passenger capacity. Every year about 110 thousand guests travel on our vessels.

We are proud that in 2021, Vodohod was deservedly recognized as the “Industry Leader” among passenger shipping companies in Russia.

Fleet

We have 12 ships dedicated to international guests whom we have divided into 3, 4 and 5 Stars. Whichever category you choose, you can rest assured you’ll have an amazing and memorable holiday experience with Vodohod. To maintain a high service quality, Vodohod renovates the fleet regularly. Vodohod has implemented a fleet renovation program since 2018, upgrading up to three ships per year and investing in high-quality interior solutions, modern design, spacious cabins and maximum convenience and comfort for our guests:

2020: MS Maxim Gorky 5*, MS Konstantin Korotkov 4+*

2019: MS Sankt-Peterburg 4*, MS Nizhny Novgorod 4*

2018: MS Kronshtadt 4*, MS Nikolay Chernishevsky 4*, MS Konstantin Fedin 4*

Luxury brand-new ship

In 2020 we launched our brand-new river-sea flagship Mustai Karim, the first luxurious 5-star vessel built in Russia. Featuring modern European design, the ship interior resembles a five-star hotel with floor-to-ceiling windows, SPA area, restaurants and bars with specially created menus designed by multi-award-winning chefs. Exquisite cuisine and a premium wine list to be enjoyed in several stunning panoramic bars are just a glimpse of the delights to be found on board. With our gracious service, extensive animation program, exclusive excursions we’ve crafted especially for our guests, you’ll experience a true masterpiece in river cruising.

For enquiry, you’re welcome to contact our Preferred Sales Agents

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Should you have any enquiry, welcome to contact: Thomas Lee, Director of Sales Asia, Vodohod

Email: thomaslee@tam.com.hk Tel: +852 90969693/28610300 website: Vodohod.com