

THE PRIVATE JET LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

# ELITE

T R A V E L E R

ASIA EDITION

## THE ULTIMATE ASIAN GOLF TOUR

ISSUE 4



EDITORIAL TEAM LETTER

MISSION HILLS GOLF CLUB / SHENZHEN



THE TASTING ROOM / MACAU



GRAND ENTRANCE / THE RITZ-CARLTON, OKINAWA



VILLA MUTHEE / SHANGRI-LA'S VILLINGILI RESORT & SPA, MALDIVES



THE CHAIRMAN SUITE / THE RITZ-CARLTON, SHANGHAI



GOLF, GROWTH AND MORE

You could say Asia has gone golf mad. Slow to pick up the Great Game compared to Europe and the US, the region is more than making up for lost time. Massive golfing complexes like **Mission Hills** in Shenzhen and the group's new tropical courses on Hainan Island cater to Asia's newly affluent, for whom the game lacks heritage but retains its prestige. Asia now boasts some of the world's most beautiful and challenging pro-designed courses, as you'll read about in this issue's "14 Days of Asian Golf" by regional golf expert Paul Myers (p. 112).

Speaking of golf, tee-junkies will love the new **Ritz-Carlton, Okinawa** (p. 136), a lavish and modern country club-styled resort just opened on the Japanese holiday island, offering traditional hospitality paired with world-class ame-

nities. To the north, Tokyo is also in the limelight with the opening of the acclaimed **Palace Hotel** (p. 36), an opulent reincarnation of the iconic 1960s house of slumber of the same name. The reinvented property is proudly Japanese, and offers spacious, elegant accommodation and restaurants that are set to light up the local culinary scene.

Shanghai is another city on the go, and the manic construction of the past five years has resulted in some of the region's most beautiful presidential suites, as resident writer Rachel Silvestri reports (p. 106). In our comprehensive Guide section you'll also find the top new restaurants and watering holes in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Macau, Taipei, Bangalore and other key private jet destinations across the region.

And if you long to escape the big cities for open spaces and sun-kissed beaches, our "Best Suites of the Maldives" piece showcases the most decadent resort digs on offer in an idyllic locale that's no stranger to the private jet set (p. 98).

Wherever you're heading this season, let *Elite Traveler Asia Edition* be your guide, your host and your confidante.

Kind regards,

NICK WALTON  
 Managing Editor  
*Elite Traveler Asia Edition*

## NEWS+PREVIEWS



PALACE SUITE / PALACE HOTEL TOKYO



PALACE SUITE / PALACE HOTEL TOKYO

### A PALATIAL RETURN

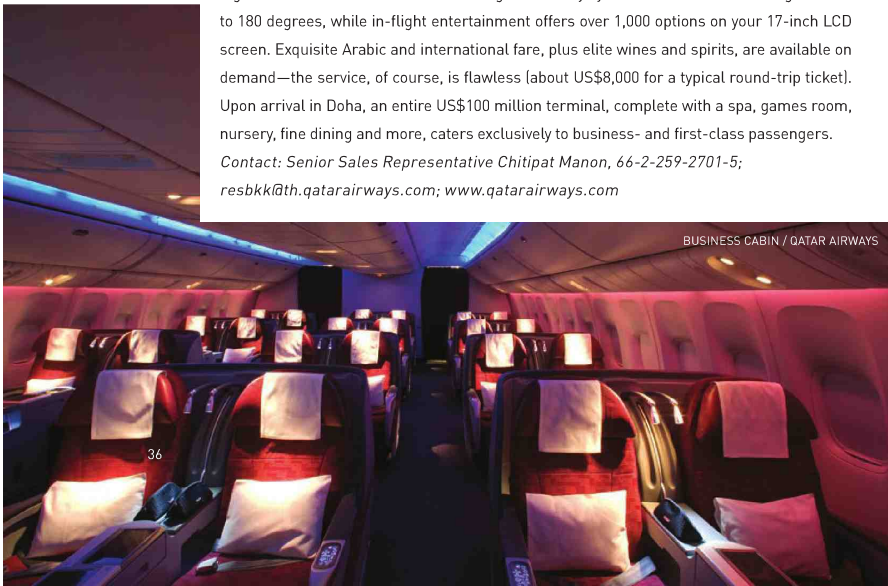
Located in Tokyo's Marunouchi district, one of Japan's most anticipated houses of slumber has opened in a stunning moat-side setting near the Imperial Palace. The **Palace Hotel Tokyo**, a luxury 290-room reincarnation of the original Palace Hotel, which opened in 1961, is the result of a US\$1.2 billion investment and promises to be a new icon of the city's hotel and dining scene. Described as an unfiltered appreciation of Japanese culture, the luxurious property offers guest rooms and suites boasting open-style bathrooms with soaking tubs, top-of-the-line technology, remarkable views of the Imperial Palace Gardens and interiors by Terry McGinnity. Many suites, including the extravagant 2,745-square-foot, two-bedroom **Palace Suite** (about US\$8,810 a night), also feature open terraces and balconies, as well as unique Japanese touches, including bath towels from Imabari and delicate Maruyama Nori teas from Tokyo's Tsukiji district. Be sure to visit the sushi bar at two-Michelin-star chef Shinji Kanesaka's restaurant or chill out in the 12,916-square-foot **Evian Spa Tokyo**.

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### GLOBAL LUXE

Not only has **Qatar Airways** seen phenomenal growth in the 15 years since its launch, it has earned some of the industry's most coveted Skytrax passenger choice awards—proof positive that rapid expansion hasn't come at the cost of exacting luxury standards. Named the world's best airline for a second consecutive year in 2012, Doha-based Qatar Airways is perfectly positioned as a gateway carrier between East and West. Baku, Perth and Zagreb are among the cities already added to the airline's 110-plus destinations in 2012, soon to be followed by Yangon and nonstop service to Tokyo before year-end. A long-haul, business-class flight aboard one of the fleet's new Boeing 777s will fly by: Seats with built-in massage recline to 180 degrees, while in-flight entertainment offers over 1,000 options on your 17-inch LCD screen. Exquisite Arabic and international fare, plus elite wines and spirits, are available on demand—the service, of course, is flawless (about US\$8,000 for a typical round-trip ticket). Upon arrival in Doha, an entire US\$100 million terminal, complete with a spa, games room, nursery, fine dining and more, caters exclusively to business- and first-class passengers.

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BUSINESS CABIN / QATAR AIRWAYS

### CONFIDANTE

BY MARY GOSTELOW

The **PuLi Hotel and Spa**, part of central Shanghai's **Park Place** development, instantly appealed to global connoisseurs, and discerning Chinese business leaders, when it opened three years ago. Some views look out at Jing'an Park, and all rooms have pull-back screens and walls of gray clay blocks. Public areas feature incredibly high ceilings, and black Forbidden City-tiled or distressed wood flooring. The 90-foot bar in the lobby dispenses drinks and checks you in. A sense of calm pervades everything.

No wonder PuLi's developers, **Urban Resorts**, led by Markus Engel and John Laing, are using PuLi's designer, Johannes Harfuss, for their next project, the 329-room **PuYu** opening in Wuhan this December. They have already announced one more: **PuSen**, in Shaoxing, 35 minutes by high-speed train from Hangzhou, will be a 100-room luxury resort in a collection of 60 historic houses relocated by its owner, Qing Sen.

The idea of historic houses turned into luxury resorts is epitomized at **Amanfayun** in Hangzhou. There, an entire village of tea plantation homes is now 47 freestanding villas, plus restaurants, some rented out. While there, try the **Vegetarian House**, run by Buddhist monks. In Thailand, car dealer Suchet Suwanmongkol created his own historic "village." After spending years buying adjacent plots of land totaling 60 acres, he built what is now the village-like **Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi**, boasting 123 accommodations and embellished with what he says is only 20 percent of his total collection of antiques.

Exotic places give elite travelers a sense of fulfillment. This, says Rupert Hoogewerf, chairman of Shanghai-based Hurun Report, is what China's millionaires and billionaires desperately seek. He recently surveyed 150 of them, and found that they average 3.2 overseas trips a year, with France the current top destination. Next they'll be heading for Spain's Mediterranean coast. In late June, Bart Raaphorst, director of **Villa Padierna Hotels & Resorts**, was in Shanghai to co-host a dinner at the sensational **House of Roosevelt**—it boasts the largest wine cellar in China, and its chairman, Tweed Roosevelt, nephew of FDR, is also chairman of the Theodore Roosevelt Association. Raaphorst introduced Marbella's **Villa Padierna Palace Hotel**, where Michelle Obama famously stayed in August 2010, to 65 members of the invitation-only **Roosevelt Club**. They all received membership cards for **Villa Padierna Golf Resort** with lots of added benefits.

Ultra-high net worth Chinese want to give back, says Rupert Hoogewerf. They are looking for good causes, and they are into self-education, health and organic living. Recently Hoogewerf was with a small party climbing a mountain. One billionaire liked it so much he bought it—to set up tea plantations. Perhaps another Amanfayun is in the making.

## MEMBERS ONLY?

The **Tokyo American Club**, one of Japan's most exclusive private members clubs, opened its doors to the public last year inviting non-member gourmands to dine at the newly opened restaurant Decanter. The venture—the first time in 83 years that the club has welcomed non-members—has proven such a success that this August sees the launch of **Flatiron**, the club's newest dining venue, again welcoming non-members.

Flatiron's sleek third-floor dining area includes a curved *washi* artwork sculpture by Eriko Horiki and floor-to-ceiling wine cellars—home to more than 10,000 bottles including verticals of Château Palmer, Opus One, Château Latour, Bond Estate and Penfolds Grange reaching back 20 years.

The signature Behind the Velvet Rope cocktail, a heady combination of Grey Goose vodka, black raspberry liqueur and agave nectar, infused with strawberries and basil with cranberry is a firm favorite. There is also an excellent selection of whiskeys including a ten-year-old Nikka Single Cask distilled and matured at the Yoichi distillery in Hokkaido and available in Japan only.

The food at Flatiron, masterminded by chef David Kristiaan Ueno, melds aspects of molecular gastronomy, sensory cooking, immersion bath technology, flash freezing and searing into a true culinary journey. The multicourse, seasonally inspired set menu includes imaginative creations like frozen heirloom tomato pops that are taken through "a molecular transformation," whereby rapid blast freezing removes all of the tomato's liquids and crystallizes its essence. Guests fill their tomato with piping hot gazpacho, which is then blasted with liquid nitrogen—when the smoke clears the diner taps what looks like a tomato, shattering it and leaving shards of tomato mingled with a delicious hot soup. Flatiron only seats eight guests a night, so advanced reservations are a must.

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## PALATIAL INDULGENCE

Thanks to the meticulous attention given to the design of the chic interiors, aesthetic presentation of each dish and a fleet of serene kimono-clad staff, dining at **Wadakura, Palace Hotel Tokyo's** newly opened Japanese restaurant, offers a fascinating glimpse into Japanese heritage and hospitality.

Two-Michelin-star chef Shinji Kanesaka is in charge at **Sushi Kanesaka**, one of four specialized dining areas within Wadakura, which in total offers 118 seats. Named after one of the six moats surrounding the Imperial Palace, Wadakura also has a six-seat tempura bar called **Tatsumi** (referencing the ancient Imperial watchtower visible from the ten private dining rooms) and **Go**, an area dedicated to teppanyaki-grilled premium Japanese beef.

Executive Chef Keiji Miyabe's multicourse seasonally inspired tasting menus are a melody of colors, flavors and textures from corn dumpling with water shield, small melon and fresh yuzu, to clamato capellini paired with sea urchin, caviar and Japanese green pepper—an innovative twist on Italian-Japanese flavors. In the main dining room, enjoy palace garden views as you dine on Japanese favorites from sukiyaki to shabu-shabu and kaiseki.

Wadakura's interiors celebrate minimalist Japanese aesthetics with organic textured walls crafted by master plasterer Naoki Kusumi, wave-like naguri-style woodwork and a serene cascade of water down a stone wall.

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THE SCIENCE OF FOOD / FLATIRON



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