

GLOBAL

You may know Delta as an airline with deep roots in Atlanta. And while that is still true, the company's global reach is growing stronger by the day thanks to its groundbreaking partnerships with airlines around the world. From Delta's investments in Aeromexico, China Eastern, Virgin Atlantic and GOL to its global partnerships with Air France-KLM, Alitalia, China Southern, Korean Air and Virgin Australia, it's never been easier to travel the world via Delta. For this issue, we talked to the CEOs and chairmen of many of Delta's partners about the opportunities and challenges facing their airlines—and highlight a selection of vibrant destinations to consider for your next trip. As these airlines thrive and expand, so does Delta. Bon voyage!

REACH

PORTRAITS BY IAN ALLEN

Palacio de Bellas Artes



MEXICO CITY

HAVING ITS MOMENT

BY JASON OLIVER NIXON

There have been few James Bond opening sequences as impressive and eye-popping as the demolition-meets-helicopter-fight scene sequence in the recent *Spectre*. Thank Mexico City and its sprawling **Zócalo**, or Plaza de la Constitución central square, for providing the perfect backdrop for Bond's Day of the Dead

action. And when it comes to

On the hotel front, Grupo Habita's hotel collection caters to chic globe trotters with outposts such as the **Distrito Capital**, with its vaguely 1960s vibe, and the leafy **Condesa DF**, tucked into the historic Colonia Condesa neighborhood. Centered upon a sleek central

courtyard, the recently opened hotel **Carlota** boasts comfortable, minimalist rooms bolstered by pops of high-octane color. And the elegant, 16-room **Hippodrome Hotel** serves as a soothing tonic to the hustle and bustle that rushes past outside. For larger-scaled options, check into the recently overhauled **Four Seasons**, just steps from bosky Chapultepec Park and lavished with cossetting mod cons; the stunning **St. Regis**, with its cool, contemporary vibe and stunning vistas of the Paseo de la Reforma; or the massive **InterContinental Presidente Mexico City** and its wood-wrapped, high-concept restaurant **Chapulín**.

And dining is where DF's scene has exploded: On the new and noteworthy list, **Quintonil** | CONTINUED ON PAGE 132

AEROMEXICO

CEO Andrés Conesa



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MEXICAN AIR TRAVEL RIGHT NOW? The Mexican airline industry is currently growing at a fast rate, benefiting from key opportunities driven by demographic and cultural factors: a growing middle class, low air traffic penetration with significant room [to increase] and slow-but-steady economic growth. In the next few years, we should also be able to benefit from the effect of the structural reforms implemented by the Mexican government to help boost Mexico's economic growth.

The main challenge we're currently facing is the lack of a robust infrastructure for the industry in Mexico and Latin America as a region. For Aeromexico, it's particularly relevant since our hub airport in Mexico City is already saturated.

However, the Mexican government has already announced the launch of the new Mexico City International Airport for 2020, and we're working with them to make it a truly world-class hub, with a [plan] that satisfies the needs of the industry.

WHAT ARE A FEW OF AEROMEXICO'S BIGGEST GROWTH MARKETS—DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY? In the past | CONTINUED ON PAGE 132

The blue Mediterranean waters of Nice.



AIR FRANCE-KLM

CEO Alexandre de Juniac



AIR FRANCE JUST RETIRED THE BOEING 747. WHAT HAS THE 747 MEANT TO TRAVELERS AND THE INDUSTRY?

Our Boeing 747 left the Air France fleet in January after nearly 50 years of history. It was a very emotional moment for our customers, who adored flying on this legendary aircraft with its famous “top deck,” and also for our pilots and cabin crew who all had a wonderful time working on this aircraft. But I want to emphasize that even if Air France will no longer operate the superjumbo, KLM continues to fly 26 Boeing 747 passenger and cargo aircraft.

Today, our ambition is to offer an ever more modern, comfortable and environmentally friendly fleet. I refer, of course, to the all-new Boeing 787, which in recent weeks has been flying in the colors of KLM, or our new Boeing 777 equipped with new travel cabins at both Air France and KLM and our biggest aircraft, the masterful Airbus A380.

FRANCE HAS FACED SOME DIFFICULT TIMES IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS. WHAT HAVE THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PARIS ATTACKS BEEN FOR AIR FRANCE? 2015 will

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NICE

MEDITERRANEAN CHIC

BY KIMBERLEY LOVATO

With its omnipresent mix of big-city backbone, bygone-era opulence and year-round sunshine, Nice earns its stripes year after year as the place to play on the French Riviera. The recently opened belle époque **Villa Otero** in the residential Musicians Quarter is a perfect pied-à-terre, with 38 rooms splashed in hues to match the Mediterranean Sea.

First-timer in Nice? The city’s new GPS-guided three-wheelers from **NiceCar** putt

through the historic old town and past ornate squares. Or explore the Riviera’s rocky inlets and villa-encrusted coastline with **Tahitian Adventure**, a guided tour company now offering waterborne sojourns in outrigger-style canoes in nearby Antibes and Cannes. For adrenaline addicts, the 1.5-hour journey inland to **La Colmiane** in Mercantour National Park guarantees thrills thanks to the December opening of France’s longest zipline. On one stretch that is more than 6,000 feet long, thrill seekers fly at speeds close to 75 miles per hour.

Football (aka soccer) frenzy and fandom heat things up this summer at the **Allianz Riviera** stadium, which will host four matches of the UEFA Euro Cup in June. Can’t make a game? Footie fans can still cheer on tours, in English or French, that go turfside and peek into nooks and crannies normally reserved for VIPs and the players of the French national football team.

Off the field, food and drink are the all-stars. In neighboring Villefranche-sur-mer, the newly opened **Le Palm Anjuna** is a hot-weather hangout serving seafood and bistro favorites in its portside art deco-goes-to-Bali-themed dining room. Nice’s up-and-coming Port neighborhood buzzes with trendy tables such as **Restaurant Jan**, located in a former motorcycle repair shop and dishing out sophisticated comfort food from young South African chef Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen. More casual but no less cool, **Café du Cycliste** is equal parts café, retail shop and clubhouse, inviting guests to roll in for coffee, use the locker room postride or chat with an onsite mechanic. High-end road bikes are available for rent, pumping new meaning into the term “one-stop shop” and confirming that joie de vivre really is the French Riviera’s favorite pastime.

VENICE

A DESIGN FLOURISH

BY INGRID K. WILLIAMS

Ever since Peggy Guggenheim opened her unrivaled collection of modern art to the public in an ancient palazzo on the Grand Canal in 1951, Venice has been the unsung capital of contemporary art in Italy. Not that the casual visitor would realize it. Walking through shadowy alleys, watching gondolas float down turquoise canals, sipping neon-orange spritzes

at waterside bars and posing with the pigeons in **Piazza San Marco**, one could be forgiven for seeing nothing but a lovely locked-in-time dreamscape. Yet within the endless labyrinth of crumbling palazzi and romantic waterways, a hot art scene has been smoldering.

Much of the current cultural renaissance has been driven by François Pinault, a wealthy French businessman

whose investments in modern art are now appearing in provocative exhibitions in various Venetian complexes. After a stunning renovation of the **Punta della Dogana**, a former customs house in a triangular structure that sits at the very tip of Dorsoduro, the Pinault Foundation began presenting collections of large-scale works from bold-face names such as Sol LeWitt and Rudolf Stingel. On the other side of the Grand Canal, the classical Venetian façade of **Palazzo Grassi** belies its recent overhaul, which created soaring galleries for masterpieces of modern art. And adjacent to that, moving-picture works are presented inside **Teatrino**, a sober concrete structure designed by Tadao Ando, the Japanese architect and Pritzker Architecture Prize winner who led the transformation of all three

of these modern-day Venetian landmarks. Mixing with these new cultural attractions are the city’s well-established Biennales. At this year’s **Venice Architecture Biennale**, running from May through November, design illuminati will gather for the 15th edition of the esteemed exhibition. Pavilions will present cutting-edge designs to shape the future of architecture, following the lead of the **Venice Art Biennale**. The city’s celebrated art event, which began in 1895, has long influenced the modern art world by providing a prominent stage for rising stars, including the European debuts of Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. More than a century later, the Biennale continues to contribute to the distinctive cultural dynamism in this aquatic, history-rich city.



A view of Venice’s Piazza San Marco.

ANTHONY LANNETONNE (NICE, VENICE)

XI'AN

CITY OF WARRIORS

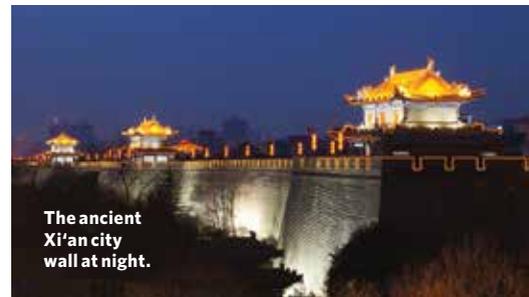
BY SOPHIE WILLIAMS

Xi'an may be the former capital of China, but today it's mainly known as the city of the Terracotta Warriors, dating from about the third century B.C. and just discovered in 1974. Considered by some to be the eighth wonder of the world, the warriors were built to guard Emperor Qin Shi Huang. If you plan to see them (the museum is about an

hour's drive from Xi'an), go early and start with the last pit and work in reverse, saving pit No. 1 with the largest number of warriors until last.

Back in the center of Xi'an, don't miss the **city wall**, which stands majestically among old and new parts of the former capital. Built starting in 1370, the wall was intended to keep out

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The ancient Xi'an city wall at night.



A fisherman flies the Chinese flag from his boat on the Xinan River.

HANGZHOU

CHINA'S ALTERNATIVE CAPITAL

BY DANIEL SCHEFFLER

Over the past decade, the capital of Eastern China's Zhejiang province has steadily been revealing its luminescence. Not that this is a completely new phenomenon: Venetian merchant Marco Polo called it "greater than any [city] in the world" in the late 13th century—and later this year it will host the G20 Summit.

Hangzhou is the southern terminus of China's UNESCO World Heritage Grand Canal, the longest canal in the world, which starts more than 1,100 miles north in Beijing. But this is also a contemporary city amid mist-covered hills and the Wulin Mountains loved for their hiking trails and ancient temples.

The city, with more than 8 million people, is

one of the seven ancient capitals of China and officially opened up in 1992 with serious modernization, including booming textile and agriculture industries, a speed train that takes just 38 minutes from Shanghai and a constant stream of tourism that isn't overwhelming—on foot or by bike.

The willow-kissed banks of **West Lake**, having influenced painters and poets for centuries, continues to be a highlight here with its bridges, islands, perfect gardens and idyllic pagodas tempting restful reflections by rowboat. But that's if the terraced tea plantations around the city don't seize you first, with teahouses offering their silent Longjing (dragon well) tea ceremonies.

For even more meditative inspiration, the **Lingyin Temple**, literally translated, as "temple of the soul's retreat," is one of the largest and wealthiest Buddhist temples in China with countless pagodas and grottoes that hold religious and spiritual rock carvings. It's with a similar sensibility that the Aman resort group created **Amanfayun** a few years back as a sanctuary with 42 rooms, suites and villas in a former tea-planting village surrounded by bamboo groves. **Shangri-La** is also opening its second hotel here, with 417 rooms in the heart of the Hangzhou.

Head to the ancient silk trading street **Hefang** for the buzz of a metropolis and a selection of Chinese crafts, from merchants selling hand-blown sugar candy to bonsai stores. Then explore the new **Folk Art Museum** at the China Academy of Art, designed by Kengo Kuma on a former tea plantation. When hunger strikes, try the tender Longjing tea-scented chicken at **Grandma's Kitchen**. And for live music, Hangzhou's **Nanshan Lu** and **Shuguang Lu** streets will be your best bet.

CHINA EASTERN AIRLINES

Chairman Liu Shaoyong



MORE THAN 2 MILLION CHINESE VISITED AMERICA LAST YEAR. HOW HAVE YOU COURTED THIS NEW BUSINESS? In an economically globalized world, the airline industry has become a barometer of a country's economic performance. According to

statistics from the China Tourism Academy, the total number and purchase power of Chinese tourists abroad have outrun the rest of the world for three years in a row. In 2015, the total number of Chinese tourists abroad reached 120 million, a 16 percent increase,

[and their] total consumption was worth RMB 1.1 trillion. A deeper pocket and a better life have created ever-increasing demands of Chinese people to go abroad for sightseeing or shopping, and a continued strong rise of Chinese foreign travel is excellent news for the airline industry, which also indicates a rapid development of China's service industry.

China Eastern Airlines has been an active facilitator for people to people exchanges between China and the United States. As early as 1991, we

launched the Shanghai-Los Angeles route. As a booming economy, the United States is a perfect tourist destination with a vast territory and a variety of tourist attractions. Boosted by the loosened restrictions on the visa application and the inclusion of RMB in the SDR basket [of currencies by the IMF], it will be increasingly more convenient for Chinese people to travel to the United States. Based on those analyses, China Eastern has identified the North American market as a strategic priority and has worked

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DAVE TACON (HANGZHOU); CANGHAI/176 (XI'AN)

CHINA SOUTHERN AIRLINES

President Tan Wan'geng



CHINA SOUTHERN IS THE FOURTH-LARGEST AIRLINE IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF DOMESTIC TRAFFIC. HOW WILL YOU BUILD NAME RECOGNITION OUTSIDE OF CHINA? First, we will continue to strengthen our hubs and develop our Canton Route transfer brand.

We will make great efforts to optimize our international route network centering on the Guangzhou hub. . . . China Southern has become the largest air carrier from mainland China to Australasia, Southeast Asia, Central and West Asia.

Second, by leveraging Guangzhou's geographical advantages and relying on China's vast hinterland, we will strengthen industry cooperation with tourism authorities, travel agencies, hotels and banks to jointly promote Guangzhou's 72-hour visa-free transit policy, and we will design and promote comprehensive travel products and services.

Third, we will upgrade aircraft types on the long-haul European, American and Australasian routes, deploying the A380s, B777-300ERs and B787 Dreamliners on these routes to provide

comfortable and pleasant in-flight experiences to passengers. . . .

Fourth, we will implement a localization strategy in the international and regional markets. Our head office will work closely with overseas offices to launch innovative brand marketing campaigns.

YOU HAVE TWO MAIN HUBS—IN BEIJING AND GUANGZHOU. WHERE ARE SOME OF YOUR EMERGING DOMESTIC DESTINATIONS WITHIN CHINA? In mainland China, second- and third-tier cities are growing faster than first-tier ones, central and western markets faster

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MANAUS

GATEWAY TO THE AMAZON

BY TIM JOHNSON

A sprawling metropolis in the heart of the world's largest rainforest, Manaus is a city that must be seen to be believed. Built by rubber barons using profits from a 19th-century boom, the city sits at the most famous confluence of the world's greatest river. Surrounded on every side by water and swaths of dense, impenetrable jungle, its approximately 2 million residents are unconnected by highway to the outside world. So here, the river is a road—bringing in cruise liners and cargo ships and sending out double and triple-decker riverboats that carry travelers to tiny, isolated, far-off villages.

Motor out just a short distance from the heart of town and you'll find the famous **Meeting of the Waters**, where

the Rio Negro and Rio Solimões collide to create the Amazon. Separated by a distinct line, the warm, coffee-black waters of the Negro and the cool, creamy waters of Solimões (which tumble from high in the Andes at a speed more than double that of the Negro) flow side by side for three miles before finally combining into one.

A stroll around the city core will reveal that Manaus is more than a mere outpost. The center of the global rubber trade in the 19th century, it was once one of the world's wealthiest cities, and its elites built a miniature Europe in the middle of the rainforest. Refurbished and reopened just before the World Cup—Manaus hosted four matches—the city's main market, the **Mercado Municipal Adolpho Lisboa**, was origi-

nally modeled on Les Halles in Paris. But the **Teatro Amazonas** is undoubtedly the greatest remaining testament to those heady days. Built almost exclusively from European materials, which came by boat over the Atlantic and up the river, this grand, neoclassical opera house opened in 1897. Its interior still features a painted stage curtain from Paris and a massive, golden chandelier, and the building is topped by a dome created from 36,000 ceramic tiles in the colors of the Brazilian flag.

Once you've gotten your culture fix, the rainforest beckons. Manaus is one of the most popular launching pads for an amazing Amazon adventure. Board a wooden boat for a simple day trip or sign on for a week-long voyage into the remotest reaches of the rainforest, an incredibly biodiverse place that is, famously, home to one-third of all the animal species in the world. You can experience its best in a relatively short time by heading to a place like **Juma Amazon Lodge**, where guides and guests navigate a series of increasingly narrow tributaries to stay in stilted, thatched huts.



Giant lily leaves in the Amazonian forest near Manaus.

GOL

CEO Paulo Sergio Kakinoff



EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT "GOOOOOOOOOOOLLLLLL" MEANS IN FOOTBALL-MAD SOUTH AMERICA. WHO CAME UP WITH THE NAME OF THE AIRLINE? The word GOL means success, achievement, happiness, victory and has the same pronunciation anywhere in the country and in the world. It is also monosyllabic, easy to memorize, strong and, above of all, very much Brazilian. As football is a national passion

and a democratic sport, covering all kinds of people, GOL's strategy has been like that since it was established. The company has democratized the Brazilian airline industry, making this kind of transport accessible to all. Before GOL's operations, it was accessed by only 5 percent of the population.

WHAT KIND OF IMPACT DID THE 2014 WORLD CUP HAVE ON YOUR AIRLINE? WERE YOU ABLE TO

SUSTAIN THE ECONOMIC "BUMP" FROM AN EVENT LIKE THAT? The company's performance during the World Cup in 2014 was a huge success. We carried out the largest operation of a national company in that period. ... [And] all the improvements implemented for the World Cup are permanent, such as the GOL + configuration that gives more space between the seats, and self-service facilities in the airports. During that period, GOL operated 28,000 commercial flights and transported 3.4 million customers, reaching record occupancy rate levels. **WILL THE 2016 OLYMPICS IN RIO HAVE A SIMILAR EFFECT ON GOL**

AS THE 2014 WORLD CUP? The Olympic Games have different characteristics than the World Cup because the Olympics will be concentrated in a single city—Rio de Janeiro. We believe that other Brazilian cities will have a normal routine during that period, but of course, it is expected that tourists look for other places outside of Rio, like Foz do Iguaçu, Manaus and the Northeast coast, among many diverse attractions across the country. **WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR DOMESTIC GROWTH MARKETS?** Seasonal movements that happen in some Brazilian destinations also contribute to the development

OLIVIER GOUJON / ROBERTHARDING (AMAZONIAN FOREST)

of our business. There are many examples of regional festivals that take place every year in the country, such as Carnival all over Brazil; Oktoberfest in Blumenau; Círio de Nazaré, a religious festival in Belém do Pará; or even the folk festival of Parintins in Parintins. In all of this, we make changes in our network planning to be strategically structured to attend to travelers who wish to enjoy those popular events. **WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BIGGEST BENEFIT OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN AIRLINES, SUCH AS DELTA AND GOL?** Delta is a key part of the recent history of GOL and more than a business partner. We exchange experiences

and ideas while focusing on our customers and the services offered to always provide a consistent experience. At the end of last year, GOL and Delta Air Lines completed four years of strategic partnership, highlighting the success of the alliance that has flown over 500,000 passengers by codeshare and interline agreement. Currently, GOL offers 405 flights to 35 destinations served by Delta, while the U.S. company offers 100 flights to 31 destinations served by GOL. **WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE DESTINATIONS, PERSONALLY?** I could choose many interesting places for different reasons. First

I would say Berlin, where I lived. It is a very cosmopolitan city, strong, historical and culturally rich, besides being a friendly place. Barcelona is an interesting city with a perfect balance between day and nightlife. The architecture is also very unique, with remarkable buildings across the city. In Brazil, there are two particular destinations. For me, south of Bahia is a delightful place for relaxing and has the most beautiful beaches in this Brazilian state, full of pleasant people. And I could not forget Rio de Janeiro, one of the world's most beautiful cities to visit. And for a perfect lifestyle, my favorite destination is California.

KOREAN AIR

CEO Cho Yang Ho



WHAT IS ON THE HORIZON FOR KOREAN AIR? There are blue skies on the horizon for Korean Air. Our SkyTeam Alliance will continue to soar. Along with Delta, as a founding member of SkyTeam, Korean Air is continuing to work closely with our SkyTeam members to support the growth of our alliance and provide our customers with outstanding service. Korean Air founded SkyTeam with Delta and two other partners in 2000, and this longstanding relationship has been beneficial for both Korean Air and Delta.

In addition, the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games are going to be a defining moment in our country's and our airline's history. I'm proud to be chairman of the Organizing Committee and a part of this historic event.

Meanwhile, we're creating new markets around the world to support our growth initiatives. Our inflight products are constantly being enhanced to meet, and often exceed, the expectations of the all-important business traveler, so we're enthusiastic about the future.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF OPERATING AN AIRLINE IN KOREA TODAY? Koreans have become some of the world's most prolific

travelers, and our international passenger numbers show it. Because of this, Korean Air has partnered with major museums around the world to sponsor Korean language audio tours. So far, Korean-speaking travelers can immerse themselves in Paris' Louvre and Musée d'Orsay, St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum and London's British Museum, all compliments of Korean Air.

Thanks to South Korea's geographical advantage, the high demand for air travel and the popularity of Korean brands, our country's air transport industry has shown consistent and constant growth.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE AIRLINE'S GROWTH MARKETS?

The Seoul Gimpo-Jeju route will continue to grow and flourish. To prepare for this, the Korean government is planning a second airport in Jeju, scheduled for completion in 2025. Korean Air will be ready and able to continue serving the booming Jeju tourism industry.

And thanks to the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics and Gangwon province's natural tourist attractions, winter travel from China, Japan and Southeast Asia to Korea is expected to increase.

Korean Air is not only capitalizing on existing opportunities, we are growing new markets with significant potential in Europe, the Americas, China, India and Southeast Asia, among others. We are doing this by strengthening our marketing activities as well as our presence in local communities, and we are making a difference when we can in the regions we serve.



A view of Seoul from Mount Ansan. BELOW: The city's Dongdaemun Design Plaza.

SEOUL

OLD AND NEW UNITE

BY LAUREN KILBERG

Seoul is a city of beautiful contrast, where modern ways merge with the ancient. Mountains stand shoulder to shoulder with the work of world-class architects to create the city's skyline. A ride on the impeccably clean and easy-to-navigate Seoul Metro can deliver you to an 8th-

century Buddhist temple or a 14th-century palace. Traditional teahouses are tucked away and around the corner from Starbucks in the must-visit neighborhood of **Insa-dong**, while modern art galleries sit adjacent to antiques shops along its main thoroughfare.

Megadepartment stores such as the **Galleria** in Gangnam offer shopping as do Seoul's numerous traditional markets. At **Noryangjin Fisheries Wholesale Market**, witness the dizzying frenzy of hundreds of mongers hawking seafood of all varieties, or head to **Namdaemun Market** for just about anything else, from lacquerware to ginseng. Alternatively, head to the fashion-forward **Apgujeong** neighborhood for the high-

end boutiques of famous Korean and international designers and Seoul's very own **Rodeo Street**.

You can glean a lot about South Korean culture from visiting Seoul's museums, markets, palaces and temples—but also its restaurants. The city is home to smoky galbi spots where patrons grill meats and vegetables in the center of their tables. Eat anywhere serving Korean cuisine and you'll be delighted by countless small bowls filled with steamed, stewed and simmered side dishes. For a truly unique experience, visit **Sanchon**, owned and operated by a former monk and offering a culinary tour of traditional vegan temple cuisine from a set menu. Aim to eat around 8

p.m., when dancers and musicians perform for diners.

Later, as businessmen and college students alike pour out from karaoke rooms and nightclubs to enjoy late-night snacks of *tteokbokki* (spicy rice cake) or *sundae* (blood sausage) served from

pojangmacha (tented stalls), the elderly rise with the sun to practice tai chi in the parks.

When you're ready to rest, check into the ultrachic **W Seoul-Walkerhill** or one of the city's *hanok* guesthouses that offer a B & B experience in a traditional Korean abode.



SEONG DOON CHO (SEOUL, DONGDAEMUN DESIGN PLAZA)

VIRGIN ATLANTIC AIRWAYS



CEO Craig Kreeger

VIRGIN ATLANTIC RETURNED TO PROFITABILITY IN 2014, WHICH WAS ALSO THE FIRST YEAR OF THE JOINT VENTURE WITH DELTA. HOW HAVE BOTH AIRLINES BENEFITED FROM THIS PARTNERSHIP? Our partnership with Delta brings significant benefits for both airlines, but more importantly, for our customers. As two customer-centric airlines, we've always believed our brands complement each other.

Within the first 12 months of our partnership, we welcomed more than 50,000 customers on our transatlantic routes between the United States and the U.K. And over the past two years, we've worked together to strengthen our networks and improve our route schedules to ensure our growing number of customers receive a seamless experience. Together, we offer a choice of more than 40 daily flights across the Atlantic, connecting to more than 200 U.S. destinations—giving business and leisure fliers almost endless choices of places to explore.

More importantly, we believe in doing what's right for the customer and providing a high level of service. We've accomplished a lot together while maintaining our own separate Delta and Virgin Atlantic identities. Both Virgin Atlantic and Delta recognize that the strength of our partner-

ship lies in ensuring that each airline continues to leverage the power of its own business and distinctive brand.

ONE OF THE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN YOUR FINANCIAL POSITION IS THE PRACTICE OF RAISING LONG-TERM FINANCE SECURED AGAINST YOUR SLOTS AT LONDON'S HEATHROW AIRPORT. EVIDENTLY, AIRLINES IN AMERICA HAVE BEEN USING SLOT ACCESS AS DEBT COLLATERAL FOR SOME TIME. IS THIS SOMETHING YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN MORE

OFTEN IN THE E.U.? We have a history of challenging the status quo and finding innovative ways to invest for our customers. This landmark deal is important because it represents a significant milestone for Virgin Atlantic as our maiden capital markets transaction. It's also the first time any airline has successfully accessed the value of its London Heathrow slot portfolio in this way—a feat that will strengthen our business. This deal offers us the right capital base to fund our long-term investment program, including the purchase of new aircraft and our ongoing £300 million program of customer service enhancements.

WHAT DOES VIRGIN ATLANTIC OFFER THAT OTHER BRITISH AIRLINES DON'T? We always aim to go above and beyond the norm to deliver unforget-

table experiences for our customers. Today, our vision and spirit revolves around our ethos “Let It Fly.” We take travel to the next level because we believe travel is part of our customers’ life journeys, allowing them to follow their dreams, seek new experiences and turn their ideas into reality.

Our products and services all resulted from our belief in building a close relationship with our customers, listening to them and genuinely seeking to make their experiences great. What makes us different from other airlines are the extra little touches and flair that we add to the customer experience—from our luxurious Clubhouse experience to our on-board bars in every Upper Class cabin and our selection of on-board foods and beverages from local U.K.-based purveyors.

And at the heart of the Virgin Atlantic experience is our people. Our people are what make our experience so special. We encourage our people—through our hiring, training and practices—to be themselves at work and to have fun.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE DESTINATIONS? Personally, I am doing a little more travel to Boston at the moment as my daughter is now at school there. It’s a fantastic city with a vibrant culture and something new to do in every season. Having grown up on the West Coast, I still love traveling to Los Angeles and San Francisco, two other great U.S. cities that also provide a nice break from the English weather.

MANCHESTER

CULTURALLY UNITED

BY RHONDA CARRIER

Recently named “Britain’s new cultural capital” by *Rough Guides*, Manchester is on a high. And 2015 may have been its most exciting year since it began shaking off its post-Industrial Era doldrums in the 1990s.

First up was the unveiling of the **Whitworth Art Gallery** after a £15 million revamp that included the addition of light-flooded glass wings that take it out into the surrounding parkland to make nature an intrinsic part of the experience. This was closely followed by the opening of **HOME**, a sparkling new center for international contemporary art, theater and film. And the cultural euphoria

continued into summer 2015 with the fifth outing of the **Manchester International Festival**, a groundbreaking biennial event focused on original new work.

Meanwhile, the cityscape keeps pace. The best of the city’s industrial remnants are repurposed—old cotton mills transformed into swanky loft apartments and former railway arches into hip clubs, canals cleaned up and lined by open-air cafés—and state-of-the-art architecture rises in their midst. The **Museum of Science and Industry** makes glorious use of the world’s oldest passenger railway station as a site for its cutting-edge displays and

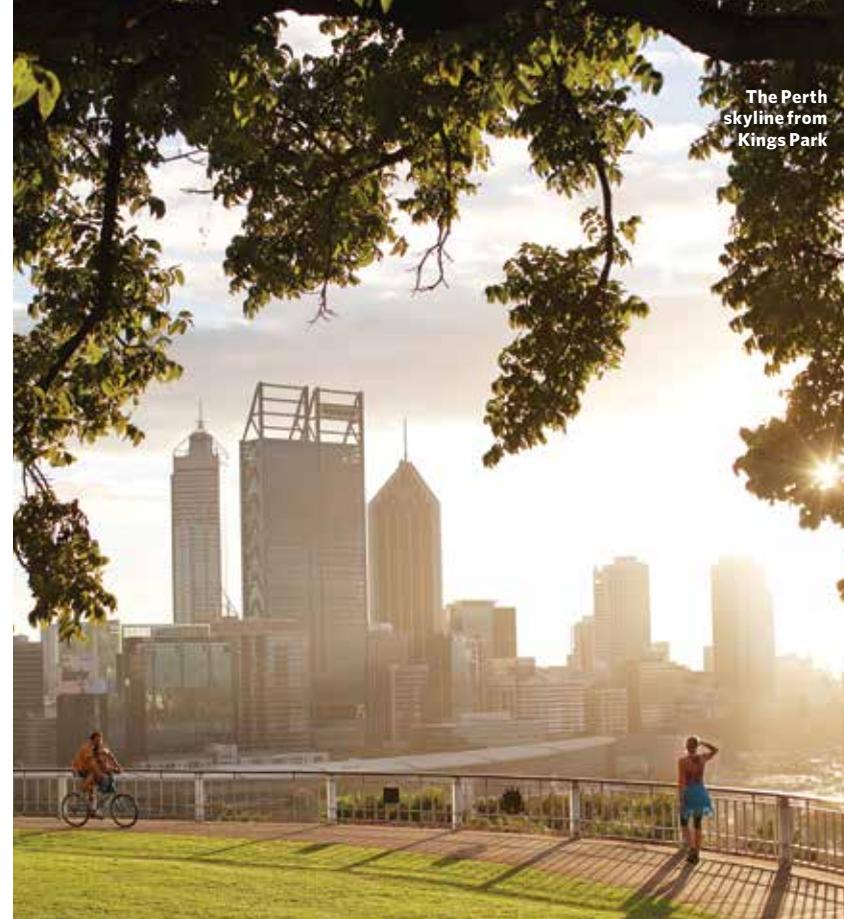
changing exhibitions, while the **Imperial War Museum North** and the **National Football Museum** occupy striking contemporary buildings.

The vast influx of people in recent years (many of them Londoners) testifies to Manchester’s growing appeal. Many are drawn here by the jobs created by the arrival of **MediaCityUK**, home to major broadcasters including sections of the BBC. But general growth also brings with it lifestyle benefits—Manchester no longer feels second best.

Once a culinary wasteland, the city now gives even London a run for its money, whether you favor hyperlocal produce in inventive venues such as **Manchester House**, traditional regional favorites in historic venues such as **Mr Thomas’s Chop House** or flavors from all over the world courtesy of Manchester’s richly multicultural population. A major new player for 2016, chic **King Street Townhouse** with its rooftop infinity pool—unheard of in Manchester—is a handy barometer of the city’s rebirth.



Manchester International Festival



The Perth skyline from Kings Park

PERTH

WESTERN AUSTRALIA’S CAPITAL OF CHILL

BY CHRIS CLAYTON

Perth is among the most isolated cities on earth, once known as the provincial little sister to cosmopolitan Sydney and Melbourne. But things are changing. Western Australia’s laid-back capital is bordered to the west by the Indian Ocean and carved out by the winding Swan River, and the coastal town’s climate and joie de vivre skew Mediterranean.

The tail end of a mining boom in the region has spurred tourism

draws such as **Elizabeth Quay**, Perth’s \$2.6 billion riverfront district whose first phase opened in January with live music, pop-up food trucks and community markets. Just up from the river in a lively stretch of downtown is more evidence of worldly progress: **Print Hall**, where a late-afternoon flat white leads seamlessly to happy hour or dinner at one of the multiple bars and restaurants. Nearby **Choo Choo’s** is a shining, mural-covered example of Perth’s burgeoning “small bar” scene, with mini cocktail rooms sprinkled throughout the city. And the historically Greek and Italian precinct of Northbridge is today a mix of gentrifiers like the boutique-y **Alex Hotel** and attractions such as **Art Gallery of Western Australia** and **Northbridge Piazza**.

Perth is also paradise for outdoorsy sorts. **Kings Park** overlooking downtown is larger than New York’s Central Park and boasts a botanic garden and preserved bushland, while iconic **Cottesloe Beach** lures surfers and sunbathers in equal measure.

VIRGIN AUSTRALIA

CEO John Borghetti



WHAT ARE A FEW OF VIRGIN AUSTRALIA’S BIGGEST GROWTH MARKETS RIGHT NOW?

The United States is a very important market for us. With the Australian dollar so low, there really never has been a better time for Americans to visit Australia. Of course, Australians still love to visit the U.S. and they are also exploring holiday destinations in Southeast Asia and the Pacific such as New Zealand, Samoa, Bali, Fiji and the Cook Islands. Within Australia, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane remain important markets as well as travel from these cities across to Perth on the West Coast and to popular destinations in regional Australia.

YOU’RE CREDITED WITH REINVENTING VIRGIN AUSTRALIA—AND COMPLETELY ALTERING THE AUSTRALIAN AIRLINE INDUSTRY—SINCE BECOMING CEO IN 2010. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAIN LESSONS YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY? Listening to people, whether that’s our customers or

our staff. In the airline business, many of your best ideas will come from your staff. After all, it’s your team at the airport or on board aircraft that are talking to customers each day. . . . When I first wanted to make a number of exciting changes at the airline, I quickly learned not to be put off when people laugh at you for what you believe in. It’s important to have a thick skin because otherwise the doubters will distract you from truly innovating and changing business for the better.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE DESTINATIONS? While there seems to be a never-ending list of places around the world I want to visit, Italy would have to be No. 1 as it’s where I was born and I still have a strong connection. There is nothing like a good Italian meal and coffee near the Spanish Steps in Rome. I also enjoy Singapore and New York as destinations. The hotels, food and culture are all world-class, and my wife loves the shopping in all three cities.



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AEROMEXICO

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few years, we've been working hard developing our network proposition, first of all by enhancing key markets like Monterrey, Guadalajara and Cancún.

Also, because of our strategic geographic location, we have a key role to play connecting passengers going from North America to South America and vice versa. As the only Latin-American airline with direct flights to Asia and by offering service to several European destinations, we have become a key player connecting America to the world.

This year we are focused on both strengthening our network through new destinations such as Amsterdam and Santo Domingo as well as strengthening our connectivity by adding frequencies to some tactical international destinations such as London, Madrid and Shanghai.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST BENEFITS OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN DELTA AND AEROMEXICO?

Developing a Joint Venture partnership between Delta and Aeromexico will allow us to offer a seamless product to our passengers flying through the transborder market with a truly global travel experience—an enhanced joint product, a wider network for connecting flights, better options for schedules, more nonstop flights as well as potentially bringing more competitive prices to the market.

By allowing us to bring the best of both airlines to our passengers, we will be able to create new opportunities to develop the Mexican airline industry as well as Mexico as a hub of the Americas, bringing a better proposal to one of the most important

transborder markets in the world. This partnership will strengthen the integration between the two nations that started with NAFTA in the '90s.

WHAT'S ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED IN 10 YEARS AS CEO OF AEROMEXICO?

The airline industry is fascinating because it's never static; every day it brings a new change. Whether it's exchange rates, oil prices, economic growth, political or social factors, you need to be able to quickly adjust your business strategy to fit this. You never get bored!

Hence, the most important lesson I've learned is that having the best people and helping develop their full potential is the key element for a successful operation that is always on top of issues, as is achieving an impeccable delivery both from the airline perspective as well as to our passengers.

HOW MANY MILES DO YOU FLY EACH YEAR?

I have lost track of my miles since I don't get credit for them in my frequent flyer account! I travel a lot due to my responsibilities as CEO but recently even more in my capacity as chairman of the International Air Transport Association Board of Governors.

WHAT ARE A FEW OF YOUR FAVORITE PLACES TO TRAVEL, PERSONALLY?

While it is really hard for me to pick one, if I had to choose, I'd say San Miguel de Allende. My family is also very fond of the Sea of Cortez in the Baja Peninsula, particularly for relaxed holidays in the summer.

Outside of Mexican destinations, I also enjoy traveling to New York; the city easily allows you to make the most of your time, with all types of both business and leisure activities always available.

MEXICO CITY

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attracts diners for chef Jorge Vallejo's colorful dishes such as marlin with purslane, prickly pear and guacamole. Settle into stunning **Biko** for an ever-changing tasting menu or **Fonda Mayora** for colorful riffs on favorite traditional Mexican dishes. Long-running superstar **Pujol** wows with an ever-changing menu that carries diners from street snacks to baby corn with powdered *chicatana* ants—yes, ants—and coffee. Wind down the evening at the city's crop of speakeasies: **Xaman**, **Hanky Panky** and elegant **Luciferina**, housed in a throwback mansion.

Explore the bustling La Roma neighborhood for some serious shopping before diving into culture: Get your contemporary fix at the **Museo Tamayo**, the **Museo Jumex** or the **Kurimanzutto** gallery. Or go old-school and head for the **Chapultepec Castle** for plenty of brass and glass or the **National Museum of Anthropology** for all things Maya paired with dramatic midcentury architecture. And don't miss the atmospheric Centro Histórico: Have lunch in the tile-clad confines of **Sanborns** before taking in the **Palacio de Bellas Artes** theater or gazing at the Zócalo with its massive **Metropolitan Cathedral** (take a tour of its stunning rooftop).

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XI'AN

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invading armies. Bicycles are available for rent throughout the day along the 13.7-kilometer route. It's also a great spot to catch the sunset over the city: Stay around until dark to watch the wall come to life with lights illuminating the watchtowers.

At night, the southern part of the city is the liveliest. Take a trip to the **Big Wild Goose Pagoda** to view what is said to be the largest musical fountain show in Asia. Every night, visitors gather at the square in front of the pagoda to watch the show. Afterward, stop at **First Noodle Under the Sun**, a

local Shaanxi restaurant that serves some of the best *biáng biáng miàn* (long, wide noodles) in town.

Located at the end of the old Silk Road, Xi'an reflects many influences from countries along the old trading route, and a trip here isn't complete without exploring the **Muslim Quarter**. Step back through history as you visit its narrow alleyways, traditional Muslim butchers and one of the oldest mosques in China. Chinese tourists flock here for one of the area's most famous dishes, *yang rou pao mo*, or crumbled flatbread in mutton stew, as well as the sticky rice cakes and handmade candy sprinkled with nuts.

CHINA EASTERN AIRLINES

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on developing new positioning and planning since 2013, resulting in the launch of our Pacific Plan. . . . Due to a variety of favorable factors including the persistent low oil prices, our China-America routes reaped profits for the first time in 2015. Based on available statistics, China Eastern is gaining more advantages in its China-America routes and we are very confident about its operation.

As the China-U.S. Year of Tourism, 2016 is another golden opportunity for China Eastern. Our flights departing from Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu, Kunming and Nanjing to the U.S. will reach around 60 each week in summer, together with Delta, covering almost all major cities and with increased destinations for direct flights and frequency. We will also enhance our cooperation with Delta and expand our market shares in both China and the U.S. The Pacific Plan is not just a plan for profits, but a strategy, a brand and a business model. This unprecedented exploration will lead China Eastern's further development in the global market.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST

GROWTH MARKETS WITHIN CHINA? According to statistics from the 2015 Annual Aviation-related Index White Paper, China's domestic tourists grew annually at 12 percent to over 100 million in 2015—with an increase of 42.51 million new tourists, accounting for about 40 percent of China's overall domestic tourists in 2015. The new tourists mainly came from Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and other provincial capital cities. China Eastern Airlines saw the biggest increase in the flights from Eastern China to the

Southwest and Northwest China regions. China Eastern has established a route network with Shanghai as its main hub and Beijing, Kunming and Xi'an as regional hubs. We now own 14 branches and subsidiaries that focus on the air transportation located in the north, northwest, southwest, and south central regions of China as well as along the Yangtze River. Currently, the Guangzhou-based Guangdong branch is under establishment in order to continue our expansion in China's domestic aviation market and seek to connect all route networks.

IN 2015, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE CHINESE MIDDLE CLASS OUTNUMBERED THE AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS 109 MILLION TO 92 MILLION. WHERE DOES THIS MIDDLE CLASS WANT TO TRAVEL?

I personally believe that the Chinese people's choices for tourist destinations are gradually changing. Popular destinations in an earlier stage included China's neighboring countries and regions, Western Europe, Australia and North America, and in the future, the network will expand to the hinterland of the United States, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean region, South America, Africa and so on. With the younger generation becoming the mainstream of society, travel demands are burgeoning and more choices of further destinations are being made. The four significant factors behind traveling for Chinese people are experiencing different cultures, strengthening the family bond, finding self-fulfillment and joy and promoting sustainable tourism. Consumption-based fashion tourists who are enthusiastic about the good things in life and tourists who give top priority to invaluable experiences are two major forces of Chinese tourists.

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CHINA SOUTHERN AIRLINES

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than eastern ones and regional routes faster than trunk routes, [so] China Southern has continued to optimize its capacity allocation to meet demand in the aviation market. In the 2015 winter season... China Southern increased capacity into some important domestic markets such as Shanghai, Kunming, Chongqing, Wuhan, Xi'an, Urumqi, Hangzhou, Harbin, Nanjing, Changchun, Lanzhou and Dalian.

CHINA FAMOUSLY INVESTED IN AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE BEFORE THE 2008 BEIJING SUMMER OLYMPICS. IN 2022, BEIJING WILL HOST THE OLYMPICS AGAIN. WILL THIS EVENT ATTRACT THE SAME AMOUNT OF INVESTMENT AND MARKETING ATTENTION?

By the time the Winter Olympic Games are held, complementary transportation services will be available that include aviation, high-speed railway, highways and subway. The new Beijing Daxing International Airport will [begin operating] in the second half of 2019, the first phase of which is designed to handle 45 million passengers annually; in 2021, the Beijing-Zhangjiakou High Speed Intercity Railway will begin service, with the whole trip taking about an hour; in 2019, highways will link the three sports stadiums in Beijing, Zhangjiakou and Yanqing; and in 2020, 30 subway lines are expected to be in service in Beijing.

AIR FRANCE

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remain marked by these despicable terrorist attacks. For my part, I wish to retain the remarkable movement of solidarity toward our country and the values it represents. This response went beyond our borders. During my last trip to New York, we received many messages of support. We were extremely touched as these attacks have directly affected the Group in its daily operations. In the same way as the tourism industry at large, we have sustained important losses related to a decrease in traffic on our flights to Paris. This trend is slowly disappearing and our operating result should be mainly positive in 2015.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR GROWTH MARKETS?

This winter, on our long-haul network, we have mainly increased our capacity to North America, which remains one of our most important markets. In this context, our joint venture with Delta Air Lines represents a significant asset to attract and retain our customers. Recently, we increased our direct flight capacity between both New York and Nice in the South of France. Our customers now benefit from a daily frequency operated year-round by Delta, on a codeshare basis with Air France. Moreover, starting in June 2016, Air France will operate a new daily service between New York and Paris/Orly.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

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