

TRAVEL WEEKLY

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MARKETING

Dubai

Some theories on why Americans are not (yet) flocking to the eighth wonder of the world

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Spirit Airlines aims to be the Ryanair of the U.S. market (and then some)
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FAA forecast sparks air traffic concerns
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The first of Dubai's three palm-shaped islands is nearing completion; 28 resort-hotels will be built on it.

[NEW FARE MODEL]

Unlimited pass now being sold by Air Canada

By Dennis Schaal and Nadine Godwin

In yet another move signalling its growing independence from GDS distribution, Air Canada last week expanded its flight pass program for U.S. travelers, enabling consumers or travel agents to purchase subscriptions for an unlimited number of flights between the two countries.

The passes, which are available in three- or six-month subscriptions, are not offered on the GDSs because "their technology does not provide for the ability to distribute this product," said Air Canada spokesman John Reber.

A product that can't be distributed by GDSs could cause problems for some large corporate customers.

Since removing its lowest Tango fares from the GDSs in May, the airline has built out its ability to distribute its inventory more widely online. It said the same technology could also help resolve its GDS impasse.

"Air Canada does not have a strategy away from the GDSs," Reber said. "In fact, we are exploring many solutions inclusive of utilizing the new ... technology to try to solve the technology gaps in order to distribute our

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[OCEANIA, SILVERSEA BUCK MEGA TREND]

New ship orders bode well for luxury, upscale cruising

By Johanna Jainchill

MIAMI — Two new ship orders by upscale cruise lines surprised an industry that had

all but sounded the death knell for small and midsize shipbuilding.

Oceania Cruises, the three-vessel cruise line that started in 2003 with \$14 million, last

week announced that it would pay \$1 billion for two ships to be built by Italy's Fincantieri shipyard.

And just a day before that announcement, luxury line Silversea Cruises announced a new-build of its own, also to be built by Fincantieri.

"The upscale and luxury sector has learned to effectively compete with our larger competitors in the contemporary and premium sector," said Oceania chairman and CEO Frank del Rio.

"And we've begun to optimize the two metrics that are vital to success in this business, occupancy and yields ... [which] for

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WORLD BEAT

Hawaii copter crashes spark call for better FAA oversight.
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Boom time for cruise ports along the Danube River.
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N. Korea opens door to U.S. visitors for Arirang games.
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Redesign breathes new life into the InterContinental Geneve

By Jerry Soverinsky

Dispelling the notion that elegance and warmth cannot co-exist, New York designer Tony Chi has turned the Hotel Inter-

Continental Geneve in Geneva, Switzerland, from a worn, dated property into a sleek, world-class hotel.

Like an aging starlet desperately clinging to her storied past,

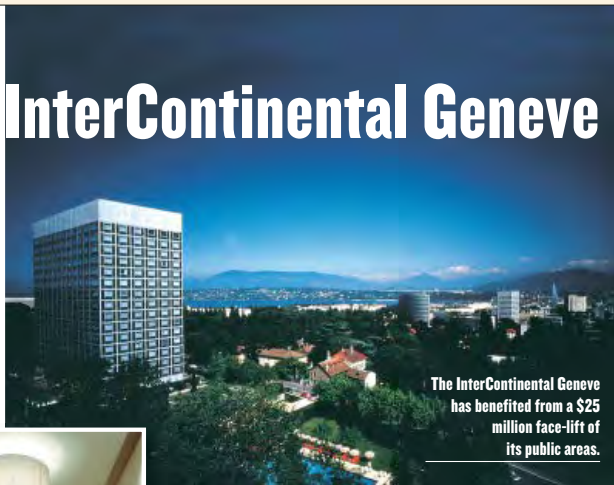
the InterContinental had relied on its 42-year-old distinction as Geneva's oldest five-star hotel instead of evolving to meet contemporary demands.

While its guest list included over 400 heads of state and four U.S. presidents, the hotel could not stem the decline of its restaurant and nightlife scene, which had become more or less desolate.

Guests would retreat to the hotel each night after an evening of dining and entertainment elsewhere, so re-suscitation was needed.

Enter Chi, who since 1984 has designed more 500 hotels and restaurants worldwide. Working with about

\$25 million, he completely overhauled all of the public spaces. The finished look is contemporary and elegant. The exterior is adorned by giant bamboo frames that create a serene, garden-like atmosphere. Paving stones line the driveway, which leads to 20-foot-high entrance doors.



The InterContinental Geneve has benefited from a \$25 million face-lift of its public areas.



The InterContinental Geneve's lobby now has a sleek, modern look.

Inside the hotel, guests will encounter limestone columns, wooden sculptures, two grand staircases, dramatic sculptures and a two-story fireplace.

On the menu

Chi changed the Woods from a bland, lifeless hotel restaurant into a vibrant space that lends itself to an exciting, sensual dining experience.

With a decor that combines rich, dark woods and purposeful lighting with clean, sharp lines, there's an unpretentious simplicity here.

The welcome retreat of calm elegance is enhanced in spring and summer, when guests can enjoy meals on an outside deck that overlooks a stone reflecting pool.

Chef Didier Quesnel creates seasonal dishes that expertly compliment the Woods' new look, which is now attracting hotel guests and Geneva locals.

During my visit, I sampled roasted venison filet accompanied by a sweet potato puree. My dinner companion ordered the perch, which was caught in Lake Geneva. The fish was delicately pan fried and served on a bed of sauteed garlic spinach. Dinner for two, including house wine, averages about \$150.

The hotel's two bars, Les Nations and O, are welcome complements to those seeking pre- and post-dinner options.



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The hotel introduced its 'In the Know' program, where staff help guests plan excursions tailored to their interests.

Both offer space for intimate or group conversation.

Relax and invigorate

The hotel refurbishment also included the addition of Clarins Institute and Day Spa, a 2,000-square-foot oasis of tranquility occupying most of the second floor.

The spa has five treatment rooms, a balneotherapy suite, a steam room and sauna. Travelers can relax in private spaces; serene music provides a soothing complement to incomparable views of distant Mont Blanc.

Treatments are priced from about \$36 for a basic eyebrow dyeing to as much as \$320 for the Rebirth Massage, a series of alternating massages and Clarins treatments.

Fitness-minded travelers will appreciate the newly designed workout room, which is well-stocked with cardio and circuit equipment. An outdoor heated pool is available during the summer.

Chi re-created the hotel's meeting and events space, which should come as welcome news to conference organizers and United Nations delegates.

With over 21,000 square feet of meeting space that incorporates up-to-date technol-

ogy, the hotel is well positioned to accommodate the most demanding international business needs.

The redesigned grand ballroom, which can seat 850 guests, features Christofle silver doors and floor-to-ceiling windows.

The hotel also has upped its personalized service, introducing an "In the Know" program, where hotel staff help guests plan excursions tailored to their interests.

Wine lovers will delight in a private tour of the nearby Les Perrieres winery and vineyards. Those with a sweet tooth and curiosity about all things chocolate will find much to smile about after a visit to Stettler, one of Geneva's oldest and most prestigious chocolate factories.

Also available is a lesson from the hotel's

patisserie, Gerald Bonnin, from whom participants can learn how to prepare the pastries that accompany post-dinner coffees at the Woods.

The hotel also will arrange guided hikes, bike rides or paragliding lessons.

However, all is not yet new and improved at the InterContinental Geneva. Its 328 guest rooms, including 102 suites, are slated

for the second phase of the hotel's renovation. For now, visitors can expect adequate, albeit tired, rooms in need of some TLC.

There's at least one Chi-designed guest room available on the hotel's seventh floor. For \$12,800 per night, clients can reserve a Royal Suite, a 3,600-square-foot palace usually reserved for emirs and kings.

Rack rates at the InterContinental Gene-

ve are about \$420 for standard rooms, \$481 for deluxe rooms (identical to standards, except guests get a view of Lake Geneva instead of the Jura Mountains), \$641 for suites and \$4806 for presidential suites.

The hotel rarely targets, though doesn't turn away, large tour groups. It instead favors business travelers and independent leisure travelers.

▶ EUROPE

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The more contemporary look of the Hotel InterContinental Geneva's public spaces, such as this hallway, is modern and elegant.

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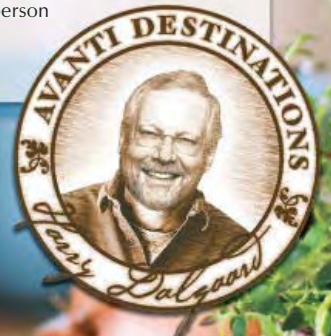
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