



# HATA MATTERS

8th Edition June 2022

**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

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## OUT-GOING CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow HATA members

I have completed the second 2 year term as Chairman of HATA.

During this time, fellow HATA members and industry partners have all given yours truly exceptional support so that I and our Executive Committee are able to carry out our duties in the manner that is expected of this office.

I wish to thank you all for this honour and privilege for my 4 years of tenure as HATA Chairman.

Special thanks also go to our Vice Chairman, Edmund, our Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Eliza, my colleagues on the Executive Committee, members of the various sub-committees and the Secretariat for their unrelenting efforts and time.

Meantime I wish Mr. Andy Lau every success in all his endeavours as the in-coming HATA Chairman

*Ronald Wu*

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# 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting

## Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents

(since 1957)

The 33<sup>rd</sup> HATA AGM was held on 25May2022 at the East Ocean Lafayette, L12, The ONE, 100 Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, with a good turn out from members



The meeting was convened by the Chairman Ronald Wu at 1240hrs.

### AGENDA

1. To receive the Chairman's Report for the year 2020/2021;
2. To approve Honorary Treasurer's report for the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021
3. To elect Officers;
4. To appoint Auditor;
5. To deal any other business of which due notice has been given.

With six vacancies on the Executive Committee and six nominations, the following were automatically be elected to serve on the committee.

Mr. Andy Lau – 360 Holidays Limited  
 Mr. Paul Leung – Holiday World Tours Limited  
 Mr. Yeung Sai Hing – China Travel Services (HK) Limited  
 Mr. Jason Shum -Nan Hwa (Express) Travel Service Ltd.  
 Mr. James Tung - Globo Travel Agency  
 Mr. Jason Wong – Sin Ma Tours Limited

The above will be joining existing Executive Committee members namely

Ms. Eliza Ma – Corporate Travel Management Ltd.  
 Ms. Charlotte Harris – Charlotte Travel Ltd.  
 Ms. Lily Agonoy – Jebson Travel Ltd.  
 Mr. Kelvin Ko – Premium Holidays Ltd.  
 Mr. Edmund Tsang – Connexus Travel Ltd.  
 Mr. James Liang – Century Holiday International Travel Service (HK) Co. Ltd.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 hours.



## **WELCOME TO THE NEWLY ELECTED HATA CHAIRMAN**

**Mr. Andy Lau**

**Managing Director 360 Holidays Limited**

**Can you tell us something about your early days and your career in the travel and tourism industry?**



After obtaining a double degree in Public Administration Management and Law from De Montfort University and the University of London, I have worked for over 20 years in sales and marketing and tourism management.

In my role as Managing Director of 360 Holidays Limited and Ngong Ping 360, I have led our team since 2019, and have followed my vision of growth through innovation and providing memorable travel journeys for our guests.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the company actively established a multi-faceted campaign strategy to broaden its local customer base, strengthen its image and create brand awareness. Through the team's concerted efforts, we have shifted our target audience from overseas to local customers and launched a number of innovative and mutually beneficial

collaborations with well-known brands in various fields, with the aim of providing guests with unforgettable travel experiences and memories.

I initially oversaw Ngong Ping 360's cable car business along with retail and leasing at Ngong Ping Village. During my tenure as Head of Commerce, I have expanded the Company's overseas and mainland markets penetration and shifted the distribution focus to the emerging e-commerce opportunities in early years, which facilitate the balance between group tour and FIT business at that time, that optimized the guest numbers. Besides, I was appointed as the General Manager of 360 Holidays and developed a series of special tourism products in addition to the cable car business, such as the Tai O culture and stilt house tours. These enriched the travel experience by connecting the various attractions and facilities on Lantau aimed at different market needs.

Before joining the tourism industry, I have been working in Sun Hung Kai Properties and Swire Properties for the sales & marketing roles for their residential properties and shopping malls.

**HATA MATTERS: Can you share with us the challenges and joy of managing one of Hong Kong's most popular attractions?**

The outbreak of COVID-19 has posed unprecedented and evolving challenges to the tourism industry. Containment of the pandemic is the top priority, and the tourism industry is committed to supporting all measures aimed at protecting both staff and guests. With closed borders and cancelled flights, travel came to a standstill, and the number of overall international visitors to Hong Kong dropped by 99% in 2021.

Our team worked together closely throughout the uncertainty brought by the pandemic, and actively established a multi-faceted business strategy to survive and thrive during these trying times.



The team collaborated with well-known brands in various fields to improve the cost-effectiveness of promotions and to expand the customer base. In 2021, several highly creative breakthrough projects were launched, including the “360 Sweatival Sports Gala”, the “Ultimate Song Chart Award Presentation” press conference, and the first-ever virtual runway, in which we partnered with the renowned international fashion designer Vivienne Tam. These campaigns significantly increased local visits and received a record-breaking 52 international and local marketing awards in this challenging year.

The COVID-19 pandemic may be the greatest challenge executives will face in their lifetimes. As the Managing Director of one of the key tourist attractions in Hong Kong, I strive to consider and respond to everyone touched by the organization through a thoughtful, empathetic and positive approach. Staying calm and responding in a timely and flexible manner is of utmost importance in facing the difficult circumstances, such as those brought by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

It was a joy to see that all colleagues in their own expert fields gave their full support, which was essential when navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic.

**HATA MATTERS: How do you foresee the post COVID period in terms of travel & tourism industry in Hong Kong?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has re-shaped the tourism industry across the globe.

We do not expect 100% of global travel to resume overnight. The resumption of travel and the easing of restrictions to various countries will be rolled out systematically. Travellers are expected to first venture out closer to home, and to stay locally for a weekend getaway or travel domestically before any robust demand for international travel returns. Destinations within driving distance, such as cities within the Greater Bay Area, will be the preferred travelling destinations of Hong Kong people after the pandemic, and short-haul air travel will resume soon after.



As domestic and short-haul travel are expected to bounce back first after the pandemic, the competition will be fiercer than ever, due to limited resumption of the source market. The market boundary between travel agents will become blurred. Differentiation between travel agents will be determined by their core services, whether rely on automation or services fulfillment. After the pandemic, digital approaches on booking will undoubtedly play a dominant role, but at the same time, human services will never be replaced by digital approaches in the tour services fulfillment process.



Acquiring services and purchasing online bring speed and convenience, and were the preferred methods long before the pandemic. Due to COVID-19, consumers are now even more reliant on digital research and transactions. This has challenged the tourism sector, which must embrace digital transformations to operate successfully in the post-pandemic era.

Customer bookings also have much shorter lead-times than previously, with free cancellations, flexible presale bookings and insurance coverage being crucial factors when booking travel post-COVID.

Finally, cleaning, sanitization, screening tools and reduced touch points will remain essential considerations when making travel decisions.

**HATA MATTERS: What are your thoughts as regard to the association going forward after 3 challenging years?**

Tourism is one of the industries that were most severely hit by the repeated resurgence of COVID-19. After enduring 3 challenging years, the key to achieving the goal of reinvigorating tourism lies in collective efforts and productive cooperation among all industry players.

After taking up the next chairmanship, I will continue to maintain close and effective communications with the government, HATA members and our industry counterparts. I will also strive to ensure that HATA members receive accurate, timely and clear information. The road to recovery for tourism and travel also requires innovation and collaboration. It is hoped that HATA can provide a platform or a communication channel for its members, through which innovative collaborations can be established.

**HATA MATTERS: Any “Words of Wisdom” for our membership?**

“Stay patient and seize the right opportunity”.

Staying patient is central to success. Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a positive and calm attitude while waiting.

In the face of certain challenges and still-uncertain risks, resilient leaders must stay calm and patient, and anticipate the new business models that are likely to emerge, while embracing change and seizing the right opportunities.

In conversation with  
**Ms. Annie FONDA**  
Executive Director, Travel Industry Authority (TIA)

**ABOUT MS. ANNIE FONDA**

Ms. Fonda was the Director of Operations and Professional Development in the Estate Agents Authority between 2014 and 2020, where she led her team to handle duties including complaint handling, investigation, law enforcement, continuing professional development and information technology.

Ms. Fonda is also well experienced in law enforcement and operations and had worked in the Hong Kong Police Force for 27 years. She had served in many frontline positions, such as the commander for the Police Tactical Unit and the Emergency Unit. Before her retirement in 2010, Ms. Fonda was a Superintendent in the Hong Kong Police Force.

The Travel Industry Authority announced on February 11 the appointment of Ms. Annie Fonda as the Executive Director of the TIA with effect from 2021.02.16.

**HATA MATTERS:** Would you please tell us about the establishment of the Travel Industry Authority (TIA)?

**AF:** Back in the mid-2010, the unprofessional activities of a number of travel agents receiving Mainland tourists had caused a lot of concern. These incidents had greatly tarnished the reputation of Hong Kong's travel industry.

So, in October 2010, the HKSAR Government decided to thoroughly examine the operation and regulatory framework of the local travel sector, including the role, powers, responsibilities, and operation of the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) as well as the Travel Agents Registry (TAR).

A ten-week public consultation was then launched by the Government in 2011 to collect views from the travel trade and the public on the way forward to better regulate the activities of the tourist guides and the licensing of travel agents. The Government later decided to set up an independent statutory body to be named the Travel Industry Authority (TIA) which would serve as the overall regulatory body of the travel industry.





*Above photo: The Executive Office of TIA located in Wong Chuk Hang has commenced operation since August 2021.*

After numerous discussions concerning the detailed arrangements under the new regulatory regime of the travel industry, the Government introduced the Travel Industry Bill to the Legislative Council in March 2017 with a new piece of legislation, the Travel Industry Ordinance (Cap. 634) (TIO), enacted in November 2018. In January 2020, TIA was officially established under the TIO to spearhead a new comprehensive regulatory regime with the aim of promoting a sustainable and healthy development of the travel industry in a holistic manner.

**HATA MATTERS: Would you please share with us the unique role, vision, and mission of TIA?**

**AF:** TIA is a statutory organization established under the TIO. Its purposes, among other things, are to provide the licensing of travel agents, tourist guides and tour escorts, regulate the activities of the licensees, and promote the integrity, competence, and professionalism of practitioners in the travel industry. Under the TIO, we are given the power of inspection and investigation to enforce the law in regulating the travel industry trade. In this connection, TIA needs to ensure that licensees are in compliance with the TIO as well as the laws of Hong Kong. TIA also needs to impose financial security requirements on (the new) travel agents and at the same time, take action against unlicensed travel agent business to ensure a level playing field for operators. We believe TIA must be and seen to be a robust, fair, and independent regulator to do a proper job and fulfill these regulatory roles.

As a responsible regulator, we strive to do a good job in raising the competence of the trade practitioners and setting high standards of ethics and conduct befitting the trade.

To ensure the sustainable development of the local travel industry that drives economic growth and promotes the image of Hong Kong, we are committed to encouraging and regulating travel enterprises and trade practitioners to conduct business and activities in a responsible and professional manner.

**HATA MATTERS: TIA recently conducted a good number of consultation sessions with various stakeholders, and in this regard could you share with us some of the findings and feedback?**

**AF:** A two-month trade consultation was conducted by TIA from 9 February 2022 to 5 April 2022 to consult relevant stakeholders of the travel trade on the implementation details of the new regulatory regime of the travel industry,

including the proposals on subsidiary legislations to be made under the TIO, the directives applicable to licensees and other proposals relevant to the implementation of the new regulatory regime.

To enable effective communication and exchange with key stakeholders of the industry, TIA has held 22 online briefing sessions with various groups of stakeholders of the trade to learn more about their views towards the proposed measures for the new regulatory regime. A total of 610 participants from 53 relevant organizations and associations attended the online briefing sessions.

In summary, the stakeholders of the trade are generally expectant of an early and smooth transition to the new regulatory regime. They are positive and supportive of the implementation of the new regulatory regime.

I am thankful to all the stakeholders for their valuable comments and tremendous support during the TIA trade consultation. We are also thankful to the unfailing support and assistance from various government agencies, public and private corporations and in particular, the Tourism Commission, TAR and TIC.

**HATA MATTERS: What changes or enhancements would you envisage when the new regulatory regime of the travel industry to be implemented in full from September 2022 (subject to final approval by the Legislative Council)?**

**AF:** With the new regulatory regime of the travel industry to be put in place from September 2022 (subject to final approval by the Legislative Council), we aim to instill a cultural change in the trade by encouraging trade practitioners to strive for excellence in both quality service and professional development. It is expected that the operation of the industry could be further enhanced, such as through streamlining the existing processes and appropriate training, to generate a higher level of efficiency.

We are also committed to enhancing the professionalism and are determined to combat unscrupulous practices of some practitioners to provide greater protection for consumers and the public. These will be done through clear regulations, for example, making coerced shopping a criminal offence. Apart from that, licensed travel agents, tourist guides, and tour escorts must comply with the relevant requirements under the TIO, and directives issued by TIA from time to time. Non-compliance with some TIO requirements may be an offence. In this regard, it is hoped that travel enterprises and trade practitioners could be regulated to conduct business and activities in a responsible and professional manner.

With our robust regulatory framework, we believe that TIA can remain creditable and responsive to the dynamic environment of the travel industry while safeguarding the interests of consumers and the public in the long run.

**HATA MATTERS: What support would TIA offer to travel agents?**

**AF:** Taking into consideration that the travel trade has been affected severely by the pandemic, TIA proposes the fee waiver extension to 30 September 2023 (following the initiative proposed by the Government in its 2022-23 Budget to extend the waivers/concession of 34 groups of fees and charges, including extending the fee waiver for application, renewal, issuing duplicate of license and amendment to license for one year from 1 October 2022), upon taking over of the licensing function of travel agent license from TAR. It is expected that around 1,700 travel agents would benefit from such a measure.

As introduced in the 2022-23 Budget of the Government, a sum of HK\$60 million will be set aside to sponsor the training of travel industry practitioners for three years, with a view to further improving the professional standards and service



quality of the industry. This initiative is crucial to generating positive synergy in the travel trade amid the current pandemic situation and paves way to the long-term sustainable development of the travel industry.

In view of the professional development of the travel industry, TIA will be organizing regular courses and seminars in the hope of providing travel agents with a better understanding about the key requirements of the TIO, the relevant directives issued by TIA, and the obligations of an authorized representative, thereby enabling them to achieve relevant qualifications and fulfill certain requirements for obtaining a travel agent license. Details of the courses will be announced shortly.

**HATA MATTERS:** Given the challenges that the travel agents faced over the past three years, would you anticipate that there will be an increasing number of licenses issued to the travel agents or perhaps less as compared to three years ago?

**AF:** The worldwide development of the travel industry has seriously affected by the pandemic since 2020. The uncertainties associated with the pandemic, the travel restrictions imposed by various countries/regions and the stringent anti-pandemic social distancing measures have kept tourists away and caused severe damage to the travel industry around the globe. Travel agents are forced to cease their business, reduce branches, or change to other businesses to save operating costs. The outbreak of the fifth wave in early 2022 has also made the business environment of the travel industry even harder.

I think the travel trade does need some time to rejuvenate from the devastating impact brought by the pandemic. Apart from the new normal, it also takes some time for the travel agents, tourist guides and tour escorts to get used to the new regulatory regime after its full implementation. Comparing with the situation three years ago, the current



application for travel agent licenses has dropped slightly. However, with the tenacity, determination, innovation, and strength of the Hong Kong people, we have full faith in the travel industry that it will bounce back to surpass the pre-pandemic level. I believe the number of licenses issued will increase gradually as the global economy continues to return to its full recovery with resilience and energy.

*Above photo: To cope with the outbreak of pandemic and the transmission of other infectious diseases, our boardroom is built with ultraviolet disinfection system to disinfect the air and furniture surfaces.*

# Together Towards New Tourism Horizons

An article by the Hong Kong Tourism Board

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) held its annual Tourism Update event online on 6 May 2022, attracting some 3,200 trade representatives from travel agencies, attractions, hotels, airlines, retailers, restaurants, and meeting and exhibition organizers from Hong Kong, Mainland China, and overseas markets.

With the theme **“Together Towards New Horizons”**, the HKTb shared insights into the latest tourism trends, opportunities and its work plan for the coming year, especially on how to revive the tourism industry.

## Hong Kong’s competitive edge still firm

Dr Y K Pang, HKTb Chairman, highlighted Hong Kong’s return to normality in his opening remarks. “Hong Kong’s daily life and economic activities are now gradually returning to normal, allowing us to stage large-scale events and prepare to welcome back visitors.”

“Throughout the pandemic, Hong Kong never stopped building and upgrading its tourism infrastructure. We will see the grand opening of the Hong Kong Palace Museum this summer, while the third runway at Hong Kong International Airport is expected to go into service within the next couple of years.

With these new infrastructure elements and the support of the central and Hong Kong SAR Governments, Hong Kong’s competitive edge has held firm and we can head towards new horizons with confidence.”

The HKTb hopes to join forces with trade partners to spread positive messages about Hong Kong and maintain the city’s international exposure, added Dr Pang. “We thank the travel, hotel, retail and dining sectors for their staunch support for HKTb’s work.”

## New Tourism Prospect

In his presentation, Mr. Dane Cheng, HKTb Executive Director, took the attendants through some tourism prospect and the latest travellers’ trend.

“We are glad to see that Mainland and Asia will continue to be the engine of growth in world economy, which will support more robust economic activities including tourism.” Mr. Cheng said.

The HKTb has also conducted extensive research in 16 markets and found Hong Kong is still well-loved by travellers worldwide. The respondents have specifically identified some major driving factors to visit Hong Kong, including



cleanliness, local culture, in-depth experiences, unique cuisine, high accessibility, and ease of communications. These factors are not only core strengths of Hong Kong but also match the trends and tastes of the post-COVID travel era.

In the meantime, the new developments and opportunities brought by the Government policy support and completion of new infrastructures could also facilitate in driving the tourism recovery.

To capture all these opportunities and solid foundation of Hong Kong, the HKTB has formulated a **Revival Plan** for driving tourism recovery.

### Hong Kong Summer Treats

In the first stage, HKTB will focus on boosting positive ambience in Hong Kong while maintaining global visibility of Hong Kong as an appealing travel destination. Therefore, the HKTB announced a new “Hong Kong Summer Treats” promotional campaign, consisting of three waves of city-wide dining, staycation, shopping and entertainment offers to boost local ambience, stimulate consumption and create business opportunities for the trade.



The promotion debuts with the two signature Spend-to-Redeem programme “Local Tours” and “Staycation Delights”, providing the public with 80,000 quota of guided local tours and hotel staycation discount and benefitting travel agents and hotels with \$40 million of direct subsidies.



In the second stage, the HKTB will restage some of the signature events to sustain the positive ambience in town including a thematic promotion “Arts in Hong Kong” – a campaign that supports international art and cultural events, such as Art Basel, which will return in a physical format.

When social distancing measures are further relaxes, the HKTB will launch a series of city-wide offers with a brand new digital platform in celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the HKSAR. A series of mega events will also be arranged.

Mr. Cheng stressed the importance of ensuring a recovery at home in the run-up to the return of worldwide visitors. “We want to make Hong Kong people to feel good, prepared to welcome back our visitors and to be a good host. All these exciting happenings will also help us spread positive messages about Hong Kong and maintain the city’s global visibility.



## Pave The Way For Reopening

When boundaries and borders reopen, the HKTb will launch extensive promotions, including the tactical “Open House Hong Kong” campaign, to welcome back visitors when the time is right. The HKTb will collaborate with travel trade to offer exclusive experiences and offerings to visitors, creating global excitement to put Hong Kong back on the radar as an international tourist destination.

HKTb is also working closely with trade partners to equip themselves in preparation for welcoming back visitors, for instance, providing fee waivers to applicants of Anti-Epidemic Hygiene Measures Certification Scheme and launching a new series of hospitality campaign.

It will also continue to partner with trade members to help them develop attractive products and promotions to drive arrivals, including tactical co-ops with trade partners to offer add-value products to consumers and mega familiarization trips for trade to develop new itineraries. The funding schemes provided by HKTb could also support trade promote businesses, including both B2B (trade shows and trade seminars) and B2C (marketing, GBA tour incentive scheme, small MICE group funding scheme).

To attract high yield segments, HKTb will also continue to bid for A-list regional and international MICE events. We are driving MICE arrivals and uphold HK’s status as an international MICE centre and will further establish Hong Kong as the MICE hub of the Greater Bay Area (GBA), bringing in both MICE travellers from GBA to Hong Kong, as well as International MICE visitors to GBA and Hong Kong.

In the long-run, HKTb will help develop Greater Bay Area as a tourism cluster. A world-facing Greater Bay Area tourism brand will be established to develop multi-destination travel in the area through GBA-themed events and showcasing the Area’s unique cultural appeals.

## Enhanced Digital Experience

Last but not least, to better respond to market needs, HKTb will also strive to enhance the visitor journey into a seamless experience through a comprehensive digital transformation, from the beginning to the end, from inspiration, planning to post-trip experience. The new platform will be able to target different segments in different markets, working with different partners. We are also able to connect the visitors with our business partners, supporting trade partners of all scales before and after boundaries and borders reopen.

## Our Future is Full of Potential

Mr. Cheng concluded, “With our solid tourism foundations, our status as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, our position at the heart of the dynamic Greater Bay Area, and our wealth of new tourism assets and infrastructure, Hong Kong’s tourism future is full of potential.”





# ***SINGAPORE CALLING!***

## ***Catching up with Dr. Robin Yap from Singapore***

***A long time industry friend of HATA, and a veteran in the regional travel & tourism industries who has participated in 7 of HATA's overseas conventions as key note speaker***

**HATA MATTERS: Can you tell us something about your early days and your career in the travel industry?**

I joined Singapore Airlines in the Engineering Division in 1978 after serving 2.5 years in the army (mandatory for all Singapore male citizens). I was fortunate to move to Marketing Division in the Advertising and Tourism Department where my journey in the travel industry began. Never looked back since and when the Tourism Division became a subsidiary of SIA, I joined Mr. Edwin Kwee to move over to Tradewinds Tours and Travel on 1st April 1984. And it was also during that time, I started contracting for SIA Holidays' programmes to Hong Kong using Fiesta Tours. Returned to SIA Advertising Department in 1985 and subsequently left in 1987 to establish Insight International Tours' Asia office. Insight International Tours was acquired by The Travel Corporation in 1994 and I continued the journey with the new owner till my semi-retirement in 2018. I was offered to stay on as Chairman Emeritus till Aug 2021. In between business, I served in a number of capacities at the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore and PATA Singapore Chapter. If I were to start all over again, I would still choose to be in the Travel Industry as it allows me to see the world with paying the earth!



*PATA Executive Committee to Serve*

**HATA MATTERS: What are you up to at this time?**

I want to LIVE before I LEAVE and that's why I chose to semi-retire in 2018 to focus on living before I leave as health has shown red lights signing time to slow down!

I wanted to focus on wellness, travel to enjoy the destinations and spend time with those who matters. For the last 40 over years, I have travelled but did not see a lot of in beautiful countries I visited on business. I want to travel to see if I can help those who cannot help themselves due to circumstances beyond their control.

I have spent considerable time to help the women in Changjiji village in Bhutan to be financially independent and also some monasteries to keep their young monks fed and keep them warm.



*Left : Young Monks Robin supported annually at Chusing Gonpa, Thimphu*

While work and volunteerism are very fulfilling but at the end of the work and volunteering path, you are on your own. Organizations will continue to seek out able, younger leaders, volunteers and we must be prepared to assist in the transition. This is part and parcel of learning and observing. I guess everyone will have to walk the same path of learning

and gaining of wisdom. But all will be lost if we do not reflect and learn while still have time! Spend more time on who deserve your time.



I retired from TTC in August 2021 and currently sit on a number of educational advisory boards and as Project Advisor at BDO Management Consulting Singapore.

*Left: Helping the women at Changjiji village to market and improve their scarf quality to sell at better*

#### **HATA MATTERS: When did you develop a relationship with the Hong Kong travel trade?**

My romance with Hong Kong started way back in the late 70s when I joined Singapore Airlines. Taking the advantage of the FOC tickets, I used to fly to Hong Kong to watch the last episode of my favourite Kung Fu drama series several times a year and stayed at the Imperial hotel at Nathan Road for HKD100 a night, a big sum then.

As I was involved in developing SIA Holidays Programmes, I used to travel to Hong Kong to meet with operators and led a couple of tours there too

It was during that time I met many inspiring Hong Kong travel personalities who taught me a lot about the dynamism of the business.



When I left Singapore Airlines in 1987 to open the Insight International Tours regional office in Singapore, I had to work with the General Sales Agents in the region and at that time Hong Kong was one of the most important markets. P & O Travel was our GSA then and we jointly expanded the market through training and regular product updates. Many HATA members were supporters of Insight International Tours and I used to visit them twice a year to launch our new products and over time, we became good business partners and lifetime friends. P & O Travel under the leadership of Mr. Richard Willis, represented Insight International Tours and Contiki, and bumper sales were achieved in the early years and Richard even coined a name for Contiki in Cantonese “Wan Tat Keng” (玩得勁) which went very well with the youth market when this product was launched in a disco and subsequently captured 500 bookings with only 300 brochures in year one!

**HATA MATTERS: Can you tell us about your long association with HATA and about any memorable moments?**

There were too many memorable moments but one worth mentioning was the debates on how to handle zero commission introduced by their airlines. I was invited to speak on their subject as Singapore was the first to work with the airlines to ensure smooth transition.

There were many issues NATAS and HATA shared in dealing with airlines in the late 90s and early 2000s and we had to share knowledge and best practices to handle the new business landscape.

I have participated in 8 HATA conferences - Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hangzhou, Singapore, Shanghai, Bali and Hong Kong. There were all so well organized and supported by the members, something we could not emulate in Singapore.



Hangzhou was most spectacular with the amazing fireworks display at West Lake. Also speaking on the topic on Cruising to Profit on-board a cruise to Kaohsiung to all the Cruise experts and was very fulfilling.

I had to tweak the contents to focus on river cruising to give the audience something to consider as Hong Kong was primarily selling ocean cruising then.

**HATA MATTERS: What are your thoughts as regard to the travel industry at large post-COVID?**

I will not use the words transform or pivot because am sure all would have gotten tired of hearing these two words. The Chinese wisdom of “Every crisis creates new opportunities” still holds true. The early adopters to change are probably already operating on a new platform now. But not too late for those who haven’t because China market will open up soon once they fix their problem.

## HATA MATTERS: Any “Words of Wisdom” for our members?

“Every Road leads to City Hall” which my statistic lecturer in university told me. No matter how bumpy the road is, finish the race and say “I did it My Way” which is also Richard Willis’ favourite. And “Never Shirk a Journey” as my late Chairman Dr Stanley Tollman would remind us at every meeting.

I am also a strong believer in learning from whatever I do, may it be business or sports.

I took up cycling 4 years ago to raise funds for the needy in Singapore. Never looked back since. Along the way, I have learned many important lessons.

1. Keeping the balance
2. Focus on the journey
3. Shield my team members against the headwinds
4. Let others lead when energy is low
5. Conserve energy for the last burst to victory
6. Take care of the equipment
7. Be very aware of the terrain
8. Read the wind directions
9. Which gear to engage to maximize performance
10. How to break a fall
11. When you do fall, get up and ride on. Because everyone will fall once or more. Don't stay down
12. Always expect the unexpected
13. Give way when you need to or run the risk of being run over by a truck!
14. Keep to your lane unless overtaking
15. Falling behind does not mean losing the race. Catching up is possible if you maintain your speed and focus



While we are not out of the pandemic yet, let's hope the worse is behind us. In the meantime while we rebuild and ramp up the recovery process, we must be careful and take lessons from the past and be prepared.

I wish all HATA members a new beginning in post pandemic.



# Exploring Sha Tau Kok

A delegation from HATA'S Executive Committee (namely Edmund Tsang, Eliza Ma, Paul Leung and Jason Wong) joined a site visit on 09May 2022, organized by the Security Bureau visiting to Sha Tau Kok together with the Executive Committee members of other trade association, senior executives from the HKTB and Perry



Yiu who represents the travel industry in the legislative council. The host was none other than Mr. Chris Tang Ping Keung Secretary for Security HKSAR Government.

Sha Tau Kok is Hong Kong's northernmost town and is the last remaining major settlement in the Frontier Closed Area for the past 70 years. It has been muted that the town is soon to be opened to

tourism hence the objective of the site visit was to acquire input and recommendations from the travel sector. As mentioned by Paul Leung “there are indeed room for improvements as regard to tourism

infrastructure and facilities but nevertheless it has potential as an historical and cultural attraction



Sha Tau Kok Control Point is one of Hong Kong's border crossing points at the geographical land border between Hong Kong and Shenzhen in China. The border between mainland China and Hong Kong runs along Chung Ying Street. The town has a post office, a bank, a few shops and

a small population. Most of its residents are from Hakka farming or Hokkien fishing backgrounds. Both farming and fishing have declined in the past few decades, with the better educated younger people moving to live and work in urban areas. Older villagers, however, remain, most living in the government housing complex



# HATA LIFESTYLE

*This new section is contributed by HATA members to the sharing lifestyle experiences and practical advice (such as culinary arts, photography, gardening etc.) with members*



青年會專業書院  
YMCA College of Careers

Chinese YMCA College of Careers (COC) is an Allied Member of HATA and offers a variety of courses ranging from traditional culinary arts to modern culinary crafts including molecular gastronomy, chocolate making, sugar art and many more. In COC you can explore different cuisines which focus on modern techniques used in the culinary world today. Applications of different techniques and ingredients are thought of by professionals in the industry.



Chef Nicholas specializes in experimental cuisine. Having worked in a few notable establishments including Michelin starred restaurants and other prestigious restaurants around the world. He is constantly seeking to pioneer a new culinary concept in the industry.

His notable achievements include representing Malaysia in the International Young Chef Challenge to compete with experienced chefs around the world, taking home several medals and securing a place in the top 10.

**Chef Nicholas Joon, Executive Chef & Culinary Programme Manager at YMCA College of Careers**

## **Molecular Gastronomy**

Molecular gastronomy is seen as applying the theory of food science and combining it with the traditional culinary arts. The most common molecular gastronomy techniques that are used globally is spherification. Some examples of molecular gastronomy foods are processed fruits that are made to taste like meat, cocktails in ice spheres, fake caviar made of natural ingredients, transparent raviolis, spaghetti made from vegetables, instant ice cream and many others. We will be focusing in demonstrating simple spherification techniques in this chapter. In molecular gastronomy, spherification is defined as the encapsulation of a liquid inside different sized spheres that burst in the mouth.

## What is Spherification?

Spherification is the process of turning liquids and purees into bubbles with texture. The two additives involved in the spherification process are Calcium Lactate Gluconate and Sodium Alginate. The wall trapping the liquid inside the sphere consists of a gel formed by a process similar to Gelification. The ions found in Sodium Alginate are essential for the formation of the gel.

### Spherification

#### Ingredients

##### Calcium Solution

###### Mango Sphere

250 g	Mango
50 g	Ice
1.5 g	Calcium Gluconate

###### Blueberry Sphere

250 g	Blueberry
50 g	Ice
1.5 g	Calcium Gluconate

##### Sodium Alginate Solution

1 litre	Distilled water
5 g	Sodium alginate

##### Water Bath

1 litre	Distilled water
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#### Method

##### Calcium solution

1. Blend the ingredients of Mango Sphere together for at least 1 minute.
2. Blend the ingredients of Blueberry Sphere together for at least 1 minute.

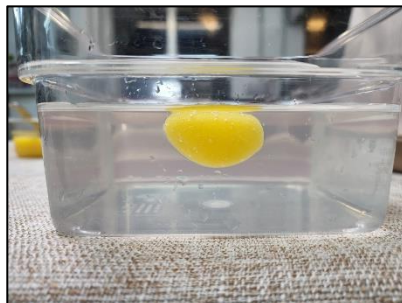
##### Alginate solution

Blend the ingredients together for at least 12 hours before.



### Spherification

1. Using a spoon of your choice, scoop the calcium solution and drop it into the sodium alginate solution and leave it for 3 – 5 minutes to form.
2. Next, using a slotted spoon, scoop the mixture from the alginate solution and drop it into the water bath to wash away the acidity of the mixture. Leave it in the water bath for another 3 – 5 minutes.
3. Remove from the bath and serve.



## Arancini Balls

Arancini are Italian rice balls that are stuffed, coated with breadcrumbs and deep fried. It is considered as one of the famous light foods from Sicily.

### Ingredients

#### Aracini

20 g	Butter
50 g	Leek (finely diced)
60 g	Shallot (finely diced)
½ pc	Onion (finely diced)
30 g	Garlic (sliced)
100 g	Arborio risotto rice
500 g	Vegetable stock
1 pc	Bay leaf
100 g	Tomato sauce
20 g	Balsamic vinegar
1 tsp	Salt
1 tsp	Pepper
3 g	Lemongrass powder
70 g	Parmesan cheese

#### Sauce

½ pc	White onion (Roughly chopped)
1 pc	Red Chili (Roughly chopped)
½ tsp	Cayenne
½ tsp	Paprika
50 ml	Balsamic vinegar
40 g	Castor sugar
1 pc	Bay leaf
500 g	Chopped tomatoes
½ tsp	Thyme
15 g	Garlic
½ tsp	Tabasco
1 tsp	Olive oil

### Method

#### Aracini Ball

1. In a pan, sauté leek, shallot and onion and garlic with butter until fragrant.
2. Add in risotto rice, vegetable stock and bay leaf, continue cooking for 15 minutes under medium heat while constant stirring.
3. Add in tomato sauce and balsamic vinegar; continue to cook for 3 minutes.
4. Season with salt, pepper and lemongrass powder. Remove from heat and mix in parmesan cheese. Leave to cool.
5. Shape the rice into 30 g ball each.
6. Coat the rice with flour, dip it into the egg and coat with bread crumb.
7. Fry the ball at 170°C for 5 minutes or until golden brown.

#### Sauce

1. In a pan, sauté chopped white onion and chopped chili with olive oil until soft.
2. Add in cayenne, paprika, balsamic vinegar, bay leaf, thyme and sugar until thickened.
3. Add the remaining ingredients and cook until fragrant under medium heat.
4. Blend all the ingredients for 1 minute.



***Bon Appetit!***