

Spotlight – Paul Jones – Sonu Shivdasani - Away-night: Grace Bay Club, Turks & Caicos – Rest of the news – And ...

SPOTLIGHT

What a great Party it was last night (how about that super-cascade of 250 Taittinger bottles, on arrival!). Few know how skilfully to manage a networking event for over 3,000 – but the Martinez certainly can. This very special hotel, by the way, is celebrating its ever-young 80th birthday - and its GM Richard Schilling was truly born into the business as his family at one time owned both Le Grand and Le Meurice, in Paris.

Overheard: Kristi Jones, Virtuoso, talking about a 22-year old agent who has closed a \$350,000 trip, all via Facebook ... Tom Shelley, Space Adventures, says his oldest weightless client is 88. For Massimiliano Leonardi, Casa Howard Guest Houses, Italy, quality (the real luxe) is often found in small ventures. For Charles de Foucault, Ayana Resort & Spa, Bali, the only two shows of 2010 will be ALTM and ILTM • Keep smiling, there are still two more glorious days of valuable meetings to go. In all, there are over 39,000 pre-scheduled meetings at ILTM this year – and don't be surprised if you hear a lot of Portuguese being spoken as there are many more travel professionals here from Brazil than ever before.

PAUL JONES COO One&Only Resorts

Personalisation is the key, and this needs to be complemented by genuine delivery. Now more than ever, travellers are looking for a bespoke, personal experience from start to finish, so what makes One&Only stand out? Jones cites idyllic locations, highly personalised service, spas and such culinary gurus as Vineet Bhatia, Nobu Matsuhisa, Gordon Ramsay, Jean-Georges Vongerichten – and Alain Ducasse, who has just expanded Spoon at One&Only Le St Géran to offer Spoon On The Beach. One&Only Cape Town, which opened in April, has the largest room sizes in town, the first ESPA in sub-Saharan Africa, and Bastien Gonzalez' pedicure magic. Tony Romer-Lee is back in Cape Town, as GM One&Only Cape Town (reminder, the FIFA World Cup is June 11th – July 11th, 2010). Another date for the 2010 diary is October, when, under area director Olivier Louis, the 100-key One&Only The Palm, Dubai, opens: 2,700 sq ft Grand Palm Suite, four 3,250-4,250 sq ft private beach villas six-room spa, two pools, tennis, 15-berth marina.

Paul Jones and his Dubai-based SVP Sales & Marketing, Tricia Warwick, thank all travel professionals for their support – they fully understand the importance of experiencing a product first-hand (One&Only works closely with airlines on familiarisation trips). Further tools include online One&Only Certification, plus oneandonlybrand.com and a new website, launching 2010, will have functionality specifically for travel partners. Yes, says Paul Jones, he is looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

SONU SHIVDASANI Chairman and Magician, Six Senses Resorts and Spas

His sense of humour abounds (he smiled when Nick Perry, at Monday's Forum, asked which of Six Senses resorts Shivdasani did NOT mention in his Forum participation). Today's luxury is taking away stress, says the forever-passionate hotelier. Cities are more polluted than ever and luxury travellers have never had so little time. At the Six Senses' pre-Party party last night, he, and photographer Herbert Ypma, showed off new baby, Soneva Kiri by Six Senses, on 101 acres of Thailand's fourth largest island, the 41 square-mile Koh Kood (Ko Kut, population 2,000). It takes eight hours to reach the island - but now Six Senses has an eight-seat private plane. All 46 pool villas (4,000 sq ft up) have Gulf of Thailand views. Instead of the industry-norm of a well-structured 'kids' club', Soneva Kiri has the exact opposite, 'the den'. Privileged children, especially those of the rich and famous, are so cosseted today that their daily lives do not allow the freedom that Sonu and his wife Eva enjoyed in their own earlier days. On arrival at Soneva Kiri, therefore, kids are given den access cards that clearly state that adults must be accompanied at all times by children. The den was specifically designed by an architect not working on the rest of the resort, and it took 18 months to finish. Soneva Kiri is run by GM Antony Paton: at all times, Sonu Shivdasani urges travel professionals to make direct contact with onsite GMs – call them, to discuss details that might be specific for your clients.

Next month Six Senses officially launches a day spa in the center of Paris, namely rue de Castiglione, close to the famous Rue St Honoré and the Louvre. The spa's entry stairwell is a living garden by Patrick Blanc, and Pierre David's overall design include cocoon-like treatment rooms akin to the interior of a Japanese lantern, with a ceiling that looks like the sky over the adjacent Jardin des Tuileries, which supports Six Senses' commitment to a SLOW LIFE philosophy.

AWAY-NIGHT Grace Bay Club, Turks & Caicos

A lemongrass-scented towel in the cream Lexus airport car set the scene; at the 88-room hotel GM Thierry Grandsire, my personal concierge and a Martini table awaited. We went up to the fourth floor – 63 stone steps, or a lift - of The Estate at Grace Bay Club, opened this February. Suite F-404 has a big balcony (with, sensibly, a shower) looking down over gardens, a pool, sandy beach and, 30 yards away, the turquoise sea. At night, big firebowls on the grass are lit, as flares guarding the world's longest Infinity Bar (90 ft, stretching out over the water as you sit around, enjoying a cocktail). Designed by RTKL, the suite, all 4,500 sq ft, has three bedrooms and bathrooms, an office, a large salon and fully-stocked kitchen, five overhead fans and eight-seat dining under a 15-candle candelabra. The palette is sand-coloured marble composite flooring, with cream, beige or sage rugs, cream walls and African hardwood doors. The US-size fridge includes Mug Root Beer and Dom Pérignon, coffee-making is Nespresso Le Cube, there are Ty Robes linens and Elemis toiletries. At night turndown I am left a conch shell with my name, some Salt Cay Candies, made of coloured vinegar and sugar crystallized with boiling water, and a candle with bits of shell in it. I sleep, for hours, and swim in one of Grace Bay Club's three main pools, looking at lovely white cabanas with red furnishings (you can rent these for \$200 a day - and, guess what, that sum is redeemable against any food, restaurant or spa bill so of course everyone spends more than that amount so it is mutual win-win). Later, my shower over, I call down to the personal concierge on the dedicated-butler mobile, and he shows me the way to breakfast.

Spanish-colonial sand-coloured buildings are separated from the beach by gardens and bushes that are high enough to create a maze as you pass hotel areas, some of which are rented as adults-only, because they are

elevator-free. Breakfast is included for all, whatever your meal plan. At the outdoor lounge-style Grill Rouge service stations and open kitchen are sensibly under a terrace. I sit at a wood table, with white Dudson china, and royal blue stemmed glassware and barrel-shaped china mugs plus bougainvillea held in a big conch shell and tiny pots of red Dickinson's preserves. Sea and sky change hues, as a constantly evolving kaleidoscope. A multi-lingual Peruvian formerly concierging at the Geneva InterCon offers a satellite edition of today's New York Times (by 2012, Grace Bay Resorts' COO Nikheel Advani is determined his 200-strong team will out-serve Asia). I wonder what to do today. Shall I visit the Elemis spa and LifeFitness gym, or take a speedboat trip to other islands, to ogle Donna Karan's and Bruce Willis' vacation home at Parrot Cay, or the marvels of buildings by Zaha Hadid, Kengo Kuma (think The Opposite House, Beijing) and other top architects planned for Dellis Cay, or merely stay here, on Providenciales, to have a conch tasting, with the locals, at Da Conch Shack – there is a free shuttle to any local restaurant, and back. And when I leave, my new family gathers to bid farewell, to hand over a souvenir photo album, me on the boat, me with conch shell. What a way to go.

REST OF THE NEWS – LIVE

The eight pool suites that are part of the now-73-key Grand-Hôtel Cap-Ferrat are – sensational! The new octet are all 850 sq feet, nearly half of which is totally-private terrace with a curvilinear pool that is anything from 300-700 sq ft. You have all off-white Pierre-Yves Rochon interiors, as in the original 1909 building too, and amazing bathrooms separated merely by glass walls. A subterranean art gallery, flanked by signed photos of Churchill, Onassis and other past guests, leads direct from avant-garde architect Luc Svetchine's snailshell-shaped extension, which also houses a top-range Carita/Comfort Zone spa, to the 1909 sibling • Last Friday GM Angela Lester opened the 1,495-key Vdara, Las Vegas: it is part of CityCenter, and it is no-gaming • In February, GM Michael Chiche opens the 36-key Las Alcobas, Mexico City: three penthouses with wraparound big-view terraces, food by Michael Mina and Martha Ortiz, Yabu Pushelberg design.

Brown's Hotel, London, GM Stuart Johnson says power teas are VIP in-vogue, biz+leisure. He sets no time limit (stay as long as you like). You sit on elegant at-home sofas, have endless hot scones and home-made raspberry jam, and slices of old-fashioned Dundee cake and Victoria sponge from a trolley. You can also take a tea-torial, making scones with Fabien Ecuivillon. See the mod-Brit art in the hotel's adjacent Albemarle restaurant, by the way – a favourite is a day-glo illuminated sign, I loved you more than I can love, by bad-girl artist Tracey Emin • At Regina Hotel Baglioni, Rome, Biondi Santi will host regular Brunello di Montalcino tastings, at the aptly-named Brunello restaurant • Maia, Seychelles chefs personalise all menus • Le Plaza-Athenée, Paris, has bought 3 adjacent buildings, to add function space and bedrooms.

Is Cam Ranh Bay (Cameron Bay, Vietnam) the next find? Amanresorts is going in, as is Alila, and we hear Nira Hotels & Resorts, being set up by the creative MPS Puri, has signed an MOU. Is staying any 24-hours the next marketing feature? Nira will do it, and Montages already do, as do The Address Hotels & Resorts, owned by Emaar Hotels (whose MD Marc Dardenne says key selling points also include free connectivity). He now has signed management contracts for a conversion of a 17th century chateau in Languedoc-Roussillon, and Morocco • Thomas Flohr, Founding Chairman VistaJet, offers a two-tier model. Clients can opt for On-Demand, best for occasional flyers, or Program, ideal for those who fly 100+ hours a year. VistaJet's current fleet includes a staggering 275 new Bombardiers, plus Challenger 850s and Global Express, to fly up to 11.5 hours, maximum 14 passengers. VistaJet's secret, says Flohr, is service (he finds US private jets often lack this – why can you stay in style in New York in, say, Four Seasons New York, Mandarin Oriental New York or The Peninsula New York, and yet the same millionaire boards a BBJ to be given a Styrofoam cup and a commercial cheese platter?) • Talking of The Peninsula New York, it has two exciting packages right now. The American Girl Place Package aimed at young female guests includes an American Girl doll-bed to take home. Adult? Try four-hours' ultimate shopping with Kathleen Beckett, owner of Beckett's Black Book Service (she was previously fashion editor at Vogue Magazine).

Andres Ergas, President Nomads of the Seas, says ultimate luxury is being flown to a glacier for a massage (his Atmosphere state-of-the-art cruise ship, based in Patagonia, carries 28 passengers, 32 crew, best of food and service, fly-fishing and so much more) • Kapil Chopra is opening VP/GM of the 207-room Oberoi Gurgaon, opening August 2010. Approach through a dense forest; India's largest city rooms, from 550 sq ft; three suites with private 60-ft cantilevered pools, and a restaurant where two 16-seat pagodas are in a 600 x 400 ft water feature. Lotte Hotel Moscow, opening centrally April 2010 (GM Arie Aizenshtat), will feature a 4,500 sq ft Royal Suite, a Mandara Suite and a Pierre Gagnaire restaurant • Orient-Express' Khwai River Lodge offers free 45-minute game viewing by 'copter, through March 2010 (and at all its Botswana lodges, there is now free internet) • W Hotels launches Global Glam fashion collections – 34 designers, specifically for inhotel stores and whotelsthestore.com. In Australia, Collette Dinnigan has designed the ultra-exclusive Dom Pérignon lounge attached to The Establishment, Sydney • George Butterfield, co-founder of Butterfield & Robinson, says his two Tour de France programmes, and a fly-and-bike Wine Grand Journey are selling extremely well.

In Mumbai, Taj Lands End hopes to have its rooftop The Chambers club – open to hotel guests – operational by next week. In Phuket, Paresa is partnering with Med Spa Phuket on teeth whitening through to Botox or Thermage • In January Kempinski will take over management of the stunning 19th century 22-room Villa Rothschild, in Koenigstein, Frankfurt (COO Duncan O'Rourke says Kempinski – new tagline Remarkable European Flair - is unique, for who else has a corporate creative director straight from the New York theatre world?). Also, Ritz-Carlton will be entering Israel in 2012, with a seaside Tel Aviv property. **And:** Tonight's Business Networking Session is 6-7pm in the Focus Forum room – and, at all times, VIP Buyers can relax in the Buyer Lounge, sponsored by Grand Hotel Via Veneto, and do not forget the ILTM Champagne Bar, on the lower show floor, left of the Central Boulevard. If the sun shines, visit the Kiwi Collection/Visa patio at V112.