

## Vietnam Air changes charges

VIETNAM Airlines has amended its cancellation policy and now charges a fee for any flights cancelled more than one day after the issue date at a rate of US\$10 for domestic flights and US\$30 for international flights.

## Silk Air adds Da Nang

SILK Air will inaugurate a thrice-weekly circular flight to the coastal resort of Da Nang in Central Vietnam effective January 03. The routing is Singapore-Siem Reap-Da Nang-Singapore.

— *Indochina Services*

## More flights to South America

LAN Airlines, the national carrier of Chile, is expanding its services with a fourth weekly service from Sydney to Santiago starting December and a fifth weekly flight from July. The airline, a member of the oneworld global alliance, has just added a Saturday flight to its existing schedule of Monday, Wednesday and Friday — and from July 05 next year, there will also be a Tuesday flight. The new services, operated with 259-seat Airbus A340-300 aircraft featuring personal video screens in each of the three classes.

## Peak Tower development

THE Peak Tower, Hong Kong's leading attraction, drawing nearly five million visitors a year, is to undergo a substantial revitalization next year.

The Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (HSH), owners of the attraction, plan to spend over HK\$100m on a total make-over to create a "festival market" style shopping, dining and entertainment centre.

The Peak Tower revitalization program is scheduled to begin at the end of February and be completed in early 2006. The Peak Tram will, however, continue to operate as normal throughout the renovation period.

## Direct flights

AIRASIA has added direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to Macau in the Special Administrative Region of China. Air fares for the KL — Macau service start from RM159.99 one way.

# Business travellers put comfort before security

**Value for money, greater comfort — and a guaranteed upgrade — head the wish lists of business travellers, according to the 2004-2005 Corporate Air Travel Survey, writes Ian Jarrett.**

The survey was one of the key elements of World Travel Market's Global Travel Report 2004-2005.



The online survey was conducted by aviation analysts, Airclaims, in cooperation with several international airlines. More than 450 frequent business travellers were polled in the August 2004 survey.

Nearly a quarter of business travellers would fly more often if they were guaranteed upgrades and more than one third were tempted by cheaper fares.

Surprisingly, in the main, safety issues were played down by corporate travellers. Only three per cent of those surveyed were concerned about on-board security while two per cent called for good overall security.

Fewer than a third said they were comfortable flying to the Middle East. Some 90 per cent said they were happy flying to Europe, 76 per cent said they were comfortable with Asia-Pacific and 72 per cent said they had no problem with the United States.

Only six per cent of business travellers wanted better schedules, while 11 per cent would fly more often if airlines were more reliable and 10 per cent wanted more frequent flyer programs.

The report found that business travel is under-performing, especially out of Europe. In most regions, including Asia-Pacific, leisure travel demand is outpacing business travel.

The good news, according to the Corporate Air Travel Survey (CATS), is that prospects for business travel are much better than they were 12 months ago.

The survey suggests that 34 per cent of business travellers are planning to take more flights over the next 12 months — compared with 20 per cent of respondents in November 2003.

Only about five per cent — as against 11 per cent in November 2003 and 28 per cent in August 2003 — said they expected to take fewer flights.

The CATS survey — carried out across three major travel regions with frequent long-haul business travellers — also points to increased spending on corporate travel.

Some 34 per cent of respondents said they would spend more in the next 12 months, as against 20 per cent in November 2003. The number of respondents saying they would spend less fell to just over 10 per cent from 27 per cent.

Other concerns of business travellers were excessive taxes, the hassle of travel — especially delays and waiting times — and the downgrading of services in line with the airlines' efforts to reduce costs.

# Singapore, Sydney airports have quickest check-in — survey

Most airline passengers in the United States are shunning express check-in options.

That's the major finding of a new study, which says the check-in process has the greatest impact on overall airport satisfaction.

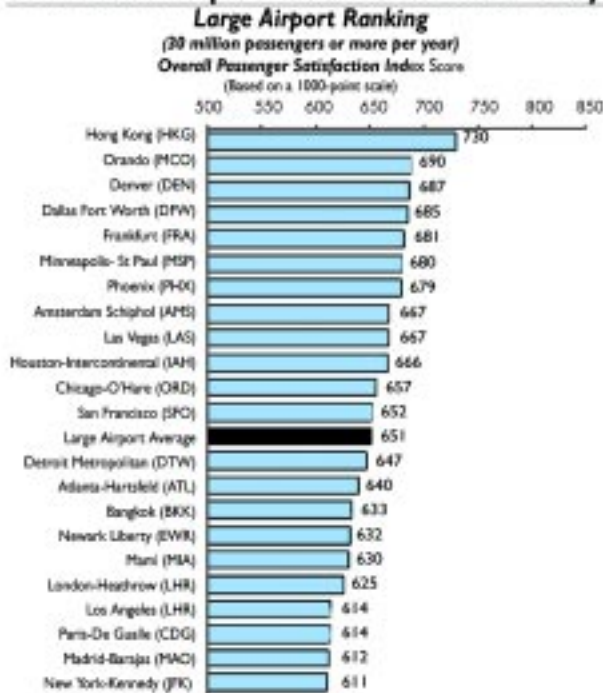
The study measures airport satisfaction in three segments — large (30 million or more passengers a year); medium (10 million to less than 30 million passengers a year); and small (less than 10 million passengers a year).

It found that less than one quarter of passengers take advantage of express check-in options. "Even though faster options are often available to expedite the check-in process, passengers either aren't aware of them or just aren't yet comfortable using them," said Linda Hirneise, partner and executive director of travel industry research at J.D. Power and Associates, which carried out the study, now in its fifth year.

According to Hirneise, the check-in

process has the greatest impact on overall airport satisfaction. "Airports need to make sure these options area available to passengers and to continue to promote their time-saving benefits," she said.

## J.D. Power and Associates 2004 Global Airport Satisfaction Index Study™



Note: Tokyo-Haneda (HND) is included in the study but it not ranked due to insufficient sample size.  
Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2004 Global Airports Satisfaction Index Study™

The study also found that wait times at security check-points have increased 15 per cent, from an average of 13 minutes in 2003 to 15 minutes this year. By segment, the average wait time at large airports is 16 minutes, 15 minutes at medium airports and 13 minutes at small airports.

Washington-Dulles, Denver and Los Angeles are among the airports with the longest security wait times, while Singapore, London-Gatwick and Sydney have some of the shortest waits.

"Since September 11, safety, check-in options, security checks and the time it takes to go through the entire airport experience have forever changed the airport passenger experience," said Hirneise. "The keys to improving airport satisfaction across the globe require improving passenger facilitation, managing wait times and providing an environment where airport passengers can be productive."

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