

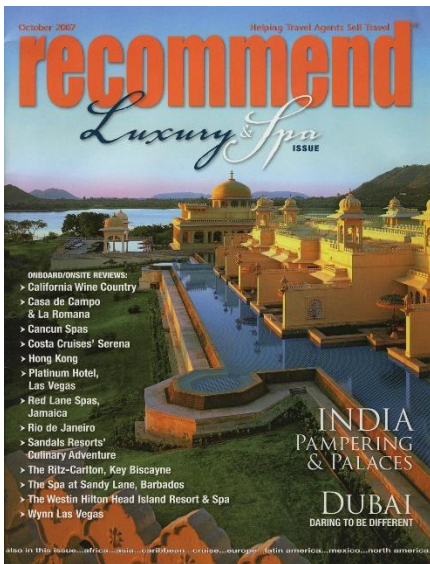
editor's
NOTES



The infinity pool at
The Leela Kempinski Kovalam
Beach Kerala.

Welcome to our luxury and spa issue—one in which we focus on high-end global travel and spa product, the kind of product that's geared for your well-heeled clients and the big commissions that selling those products will get you. And while it certainly seems like just about every niche product available in the travel industry has really taken off in the last couple of years, few have developed with the kind of growth that's being exhibited in the luxury niche. Whatever the reason, that growth is obvious in the increase of luxury hotels and spas, the expansion of business and first class travel, the huge development of the luxury niche in cruising and most importantly, the demand for first class product in the tour segment.

A good example is the growth of luxury travel to India, not only in terms of product, but in terms of price. What had been a bargain a few years back, has grown considerably more pricey. Surely, the ailing dollar and the booming Indian economy has something to do with it, but the growth of luxury hotels and the demand raised the price point in the marketplace. At the same time, more and more luxury hotels are being developed there, as you'll see on page 28. A good example is still another five-star Indian brand that we didn't mention in the feature—The Leela group (800-426-3135) of palaces, hotels and resorts. The 12-year-old hotel company currently has four properties operating: The Leela Kempinski Mumbai—the group's first property—The Leela Palace Kempinski Bangalore, The Leela Goa and The Leela Kempinski Kovalam Beach Kerala. In addition, there are five new properties nearing completion or under construction—The Leela Kempinski Gurgaon, Delhi; The Leela Palace Kempinski Udaipur; and The Leela Palace Kempinski Pune; The Leela Palace Kempinski Hyderabad; and The Leela Palace Kempinski Chennai. The Leela Kempinski Kovalam Beach Kerala resort in southwest India is the newest of the properties to open. The property highlights a unique Ayurveda Center, *Divya*, in an 8,000-sq.-ft. spa environment where clients can partake of the healing and rejuvenating qualities of this ancient and traditional Indian medicine. It was in Kerala, in fact, where Ayurveda was initially developed. The Ayurvedic de-stress and the Ayurveda refreshment programs run from \$68 for a 1-day program to \$204 for the 3-day refreshment treatment.



Israel Kicks Off Major Agent Education Course

The Israel Ministry of Tourism is initiating its first travel agent education course in years in **Recommend's** November issue—the **Israel @60 Education Course**, which will also be available on our **Recommend Online Member Education Center**. The program—named to commemorate Israel's 60th birthday as a nation in 2008—is not only geared to educate you on all the new Israel travel product available, but also to help you sell more and make more money sending your clients to Israel.

There's an even bigger incentive for you to enroll as quickly as you can. In addition to the CEUs you'll earn from **The Travel Institute** and your designation as an *Israel Travel Expert*, 10 agents will be selected to join the Israel Ministry of Tourism in Tel Aviv to attend the IMTM—Israel's main tourism event—in February. The selection will be based on the successful and timely completion of the education course.

Correction

In the September issue, in the Israel story on page 20, we mistakenly added an "r" to Akko. Our apologies to our readers and the Israel Ministry of Tourism.

Next Month

You're all going to have a lot of fun with this one as we celebrate our 40th anniversary with a special issue where we'll take a look back at the travel industry and how it has developed up to the present time. We'll also be doing a little bit of crystal ball gazing, looking at where the travel industry is going to be tomorrow. In the meantime, have a great read.—Rick Shively