



HOTEL NOBLE  
KUALA LUMPUR

## Hotel Noble, Kuala Lumpur Newsletter

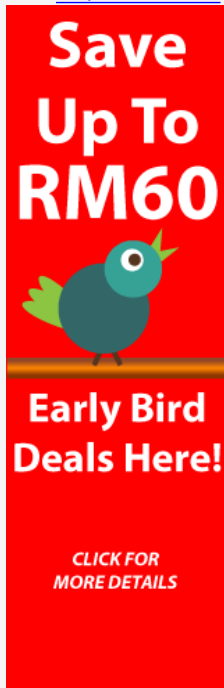
Tourism News Updates

June, 2009

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Dear Andy,

## Month of June's Promotion

Month of June Room Special Offer Rates (1st June - 30th June 2009- All days)

Book online for **RM 110.00 NETT** only \* Conditions Apply (Limited Rooms & only apply to **STANDARD ROOM TYPE**)

Loyalty Program Promotion is on-going for all VIPs and our loyal guests now.

**RM 68.00 NETT** (Conditions Apply). Please call us for more information.....

### July Promotions

**Will be announced very soon!!**

## Touts Menace at LCCT

SOME passengers arriving at the Low-Cost Carrier Terminal (LCCT) are unhappy with the way touts operate at the terminal.

While the touts provide a much-needed service, they definitely tarnish the country's image among tourists.

During a recent three-hour stake-out at the LCCT bus terminal, the StarMetro team saw some youths with walkie-talkies communicating with the bus counter clerks at the arrival hall, asking them to direct passengers to the waiting buses.

For faster service: Passengers buying tickets to board a bus at the LCCT.

And since the touts provide a convenient and efficient service, commuters do not mind paying a little extra to enable them to leave the place faster.

However, regular travellers are not happy with the way the touts operate at the LCCT terminal.

A regular traveller said the "touting" actually starts at the bus counters located in the arrival hall where counter clerks tell passengers about the buses "scheduled to move immediately" and those in a hurry take up the offer.

"However, this is not so. The bus only leaves when full," said C.K. Lim, who had arrived on an afternoon flight from Solo, Indonesia. Lim said travellers prefer to buy their tickets from touts at the bus terminal as they could then hop into the first bus leaving the place. "I was told on two separate occasions that the bus would leave at a certain time. It did not depart at the said time and I had to wait in the bus for 20 minutes. I would have been on my way if I had bought my ticket outside," added Lim.

It was noticed that although many flights had landed that afternoon, most of the travellers pushed their baggage past the ticket counters to buy tickets from the touts at the bus terminal located about 100m away.

The situation at the LCCT is unlike that at the KL Sentral bus terminal where commuters have complained of being harrassed by touts all the time.

Commuters as well as travellers who had just arrived at the LCCT did not seem to mind paying extra to get to their destinations as there were many bus services to choose from and most had similar departure times.

The touts know which bus was leaving the terminal and would direct the travellers to the waiting bus.

However, travellers who bought their tickets online, as in the case

of the Skybus with the AirAsia logo which includes the RM8 fare to KL Sentral, would have no choice.

LCCT-KLIA manager Raghbir Singh said if it was found that the counter clerks at the arrival hall were indeed "touting" and giving wrong information to arriving passengers, action would be taken against them.

However, he added that Malaysia Airports was unable to take action against the "touts" operating at the bus terminal as the bus services come under the jurisdiction of the Commercial Vehicle Licensing Board (CVLB).

Raghbir said Malaysia Airports was aware of touts operating at the bus terminal and therefore it was for the bus operators to solve the problem as it would mar the image of the LCCT.

"We have had meetings with the bus operators and CVLB to bring all the bus companies under a common umbrella body but there seems to be differing ideas," said Raghbir.

He said both Aerobus and Skybus have their own operating schedules but it would be wise if they could work out common rules and regulations as well as departure times to overcome the problems of touts.

Source : STAR

## Gardens And Parks To Be Next Tourism Products

The Tourism Ministry is planning to develop gardens and parks all over the country as tourism products as they have the potentials to attract foreign as well as local tourists.

Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen said local gardens and parks such as the Titiwangsa and Taiping lake gardens and parks in Putrajaya, Melaka and Johor Baharu could be developed into signature tourism products.

"The gardens must be beautifully designed, taking into account the colour combination and lightings, and they should showcase mostly the country's native flowers and plants," she said during a press conference, here Thursday.

She said during the ministry's sales mission to Europe recently, they visited gardens in the Netherlands and France and found out that people were interested in flowers and plants that were easily found here in Malaysia.

"In the gardens' greenhouses, they exhibited the plants as 'exotic' plants. Whereas we in Malaysia, we don't see them (the plants) as the wealth of this country," she said.

She said the ministry would be working with garden designers, including looking at getting the services of the chief gardener of the Monet Garden in France.

"I have asked our ambassador in France to ask the chief gardener of Monet Garden if he can come down to Malaysia and give his advice on gardens here," she said.

On another note, Ng said the ministry wanted to upgrade the floral festival in Malaysia to another level such as the Chelsea Flower Show in the United Kingdom.

"We will study in great depth before preparing for this year's floral festival that we hold annually in Putrajaya," she said.

Source : Bernama

## Hotel crime rises in recession, but hotels say they're still safe

Mary Catherine Tubbs was an experienced hotel manager, but that didn't save her from becoming a crime victim at a hotel 10 years ago.

Like two women tied up last month in New England hotel rooms by an assailant dubbed the "Craiglist killer," Tubbs was tied up by a man who followed her into a hotel room in Northbrook, Ill.

He threw her to the floor, tied her hands behind her back with a bathrobe sash, put a pillowcase over her head and choked her.

"I resisted vigorously and he left," says Tubbs, a hospitality

resisted vigorously, and he left," says Tubbs, a hospitality consultant in Nashville, who managed hotels from 1990 to 1998. "We're absolutely seeing an increase in crime at hotels," says Philip Farina, CEO of Enterprising Securities, a San Antonio company that designs security programs for hotels. Security industry veterans like Farina say that the hard economic times are especially driving up incidents of theft, including the amount perpetrated by hotel staff. Hard times are also prompting cuts in security at some hotels. As a result, they say, guests must take more responsibility for their own safety by being more vigilant when they arrive and after checking in.

"The current (economic) downturn is associated with significant cuts in security," says Dave Wiggins, a member and former president of the California Tourism Safety & Security Association. At the same time, he says, hotel employees are working fewer hours and making less money, which "may be pushing some otherwise honest people toward dishonest behaviors." Many in the hotel industry dispute that hotels are any less safe now, especially after security was beefed up following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Joe McInerney, president of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, disagrees with the security experts. He says there is no evidence crime is on the rise.

John Wolf, spokesman for Marriott International, says, "The incidence of crime within our hotels remains far below the rest of society."

Car break-ins also a problem

The fact is nobody knows how much crime is committed in hotels vs. elsewhere. Police don't keep statistics on that, and no hotel companies responded to USA TODAY's requests for crime data. However, hotel security experts such as Farina estimate that at least one crime may occur daily in a big-city hotel. And, they say, most are thefts.

A 2009 study that examined crimes reported by 64 Miami Beach hotels to the Miami Beach Police Department in 2002 and 2003 shows that theft is the chief problem.

The study, authored by criminology professors at Ball State University and a hospitality professor at Florida International University, found 756 crimes against guests were reported during the two years. The hotels, meanwhile, reported that they were the victims in 84 crimes - primarily burglaries.

Nearly half those crimes against guests were thefts, and 38% occurred in the hotel rooms. Car break-ins in hotel lots represented 13% of the crimes. More crimes occurred in the afternoon than any other time during a day.

Insurance claims also don't give an accurate gauge of how much theft occurs.

Richard Dahm, whose division of Wells Fargo Insurance Services insures about 50 Florida hotels primarily in Tampa, Clearwater and Sarasota, says each hotel files a couple of claims a year for crimes involving guests.

Hotels, though, may not file insurance claims just as they may not report crime to police, Farina says. "Hotels are notorious for wanting to protect their brand or image," he says.

Michael Brown, a Ball State criminology professor and co-author of the Miami Beach crime study, says guests also may not make reports.

"Hotel guests may also assume that they misplaced their items or the lost property is not worth the time and hassle to report the incident to hotel staff or police," Brown says.

Brown says that while there are no reliable data, "Research strongly suggests that most hotel crimes are committed by hotel employees."

Security in parking facilities

In many instances, it's easy to do. An employee at a luxury San Antonio hotel was arrested last year for stealing iPods and other items from guest rooms, says Farina, who wouldn't identify the hotel. The employee also ripped out checks from the middle of guests' checkbooks, apparently hoping the thefts would go undetected, he says.

But hotel employees certainly aren't entirely to blame, and guests have to bear some responsibility. Hotel parking facilities, which may be owned by a hotel, a municipality or a contractor, are vulnerable, too, if people leave their belongings in their cars. Frequent business traveler Matthew Daecher of Harrisburg, Pa., says his 2006 Chevrolet Impala was broken into in September in the parking garage at Hilton Garden Inn in Secaucus, N.J. The car's door handle was pried away to access the lock.

"I guess it didn't go as quickly as planned, because they didn't get in and just damaged my car," says Daecher, the president of a transportation risk consulting company. "Or they decided to concentrate on the truck next to my car, where they did get in and

stole a laptop and other items."

Hotel crime can be violent, too, as the "Craigslist killer" crimes at New England hotels pointed out.

Prosecutors in Suffolk County, Mass., have accused Boston University medical student Philip Markoff of tying up and robbing a prostitute at gunpoint in the Westin Copley Place hotel on April 10 and fatally shooting a 25-year-old masseuse April 14 at the Boston Marriott Copley Place.

The women reportedly met their assailant by posting ads for their services on the Craigslist classified advertising website.

Prosecutors in Rhode Island allege that two days after the killing in Boston, Markoff assaulted a prostitute at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites in Warwick, R.I.

Markoff has pleaded not guilty to charges of murder, kidnapping and armed robbery. And Marriott International did not comment on the slaying at its Boston hotel. Marriott takes "the safety and security of our guests very seriously," and its hotels have "many protections and procedures" in place, spokesman Wolf says.

But those incidents aren't isolated ones.

A woman was allegedly raped May 1 at the Radisson Hotel Boston parking garage by the same man who allegedly raped another woman in the garage on April 19. Jose Ruben Rivera III, who is homeless, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Two gunmen killed a man and a teenage boy, and wounded three others, on April 11 in a second-floor room at the Knights Inn in Rosemead, Calif. The Los Angeles County sheriff's office said the shooting occurred during a large party.

In Galena, Ill., a guest found the front-desk clerk unconscious after a man walked through the front door of the DeSoto House Hotel on April 4, assaulted the clerk with a knife and stole \$500. In March, the clerk was robbed by another man with a gun who also stole \$500.

Violent crimes such as armed robbery occur more frequently at small hotel properties near highways or in high-crime neighborhoods, says Norman Bates, a security consultant and former security director at three Boston hotels.

'Responsible for myself'

McInerney of the hotel association says hotels understand the importance of guest safety and - despite a severe downturn in travel - have made few cuts in security staffs.

Many hotels have security staff that periodically patrol hallways on guest-room floors, and many limit access to some floors with rooms for high-paying and frequent guests. But, at most hotels, non-guests have easy access to guest-room floors.

"Allowing non-guests on guest floors provides opportunities to commit crimes," Brown says. "It is perhaps the best practice to require guests to chaperone non-guests."

Security experts such as Farina say a hotel's security precautions can easily be compromised, and hotels need to take other measures. For instance, he says, using security staff to perform other hotel duties during tough economic times is asking for trouble.

"Security staff may be asked to deliver a meal to a room or taken off security for 20 minutes to help with housekeeping," says Farina. "Twenty minutes is a lot of time for something to happen."

He also says that hotels should require housekeepers and other employees to politely confront non-guests in hallways and ask whether they need help finding their room. "The last thing a criminal wants is for an employee to remember them," he says.

Tubbs, the former hotel manager who was assaulted in an Illinois hotel, says other steps need to be taken.

Check-in, shuttle-bus and restaurant employees need better security training, she says.

Keep room number private

Staff at front desks shouldn't announce a guest's room number at check-in, Tubbs says, because it could be valuable information for a criminal targeting a traveler. Nor, she says, should drivers or restaurant staffs call out guests' room numbers.

"One of my pet peeves is hotel breakfast staff asking for my room number," she says. "Why should everyone in the general vicinity hear my room number?"

Despite her concerns, Tubbs says, she feels safe at the hotels she chooses.

"Since my encounter in 1999, I have rejected hotel rooms because they were too isolated or across from stairwells, or because the clerk announced my room number aloud," she says. "I take responsibility for making myself safe."

#### TIPS FOR HAVING A SAFE STAY

These tips from government officials and hotel security experts may help ensure a crime-free hotel stay:

Before booking a hotel, make sure that guest-room doors have multiple locks, including a deadbolt.  
Consider using a valet, or park your car in a well-lit area as close as possible to the hotel lobby. Before getting out of the car, scan the parking lot for any possible assailants. Lock the car and do not leave any valuables inside.  
In high-rise hotels, request a room on the third floor or above. If hotel personnel mention your room number during check-in or another time during your stay, ask for another room.  
Don't enter an elevator if someone inside seems suspicious. Don't open the room door to anyone without verification from the front desk, and do not use your name when answering the phone. Make sure you know how to use the phone in your room and that you can dial 911.  
Place all valuables in the in-room safe.  
Hang the "do not disturb" sign on the door and leave a light and radio or TV on when leaving.  
At night or any time there's concern about safety, request a hotel staff member to accompany you to your room to inspect it.

Source : USAToday

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