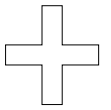


ASIA'S CREATIVE MEETINGS MAGAZINE

MIX

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AGENDA

5G: POWERING EVENTS
WORKING WITH CREATIVES
WORLD TUNNEL CONGRESS

EXPLORE

CHRISTCHURCH
CANTERBURY
TOKYO
AUSTRALIA

BEIJING'S

GREAT WALL INCENTIVES

HOLD EXCLUSIVE EVENTS
AND STAY ALONG CHINA'S
ANCIENT WONDER



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‘From the comfort of a private helicopter, you ... fly close enough to distinguish crumbling bricks of the unrestored sections, before gliding above valleys to get a panoramic view of the winding fortifications’

*Kate Cundale
Wild China*



◀ “William takes up to eight couples, or around that number, for three-day, two-night visits to his ranch. He wakes his guests early to take them on a hike up the unrestored Wall in the dark so they can watch the sunrise over this amazing ancient wonder.”

A decent level of fitness is a prerequisite for the **Wild Wall Weekends**, as is the ability to be able to handle the rustic conditions at the simple farmhouse – Lindsey himself jokingly calls the accommodation The Barracks. The reward is, of course, a totally novel perspective of the Wall, experiences and stories that are truly inspirational from an individual who has been honoured by both the Chinese and British governments for his pioneering conservation work.

A more feasible option for larger groups is the **Sunrise Kempinski Hotel** which is within easy reach of China’s most famous structure. Pretty much any sized event can be catered for at this property, which boasts more than 14,000 sqm of meeting space, a conference centre and 12 restaurants. The main hotel has 302 rooms with another 110 at the **Yanqi Hotel** and a further 178 rooms spread across

12 boutique mini-hotels arrayed around Yanqi lake. It is a one-stop MICE shop that was originally built for China’s hosting of an APEC conference and remains the only facility of its kind in Beijing.

It allows easy access to the Great Wall and also a number of other attractions such as the Hongluo Tempe Qinglong Gorge and Baiquan Mountain. Among the range of activities is water sports, horse back riding and, in the winter months, skiing.

Planners looking for adventurous experiences for their clients can choose from a range of options offered by **Wild China** – in Beijing and beyond. The company, founded by Harvard graduate Zhang Mei, originally offered rural curated tours for individual wealthy tourists, and in recent years has developed its corporate division.

Wild China can draw up tailored adventure itineraries which include the option of taking a helicopter ride over the Great Wall although the vagaries of China’s aviation rules and regulations – not to mention the weather – make it difficult to give cast-iron guarantees.

Permission to fly depends on what is happening in

and around Beijing: major government conferences, for example, tend to mean air-space restrictions. But it is a tantalising option, experienced by very few people.

“It is a rather different view of one of the world’s most iconic manmade structures,” says Katie Cundale, the company’s head of marketing.

“From the comfort of a private helicopter, you witness the undulating mountaintops crowned with watchtowers that extend as far as the eye can see, and fly close enough to distinguish the crumbling bricks of the unrestored sections, before gliding above valleys to get a panoramic view of the Wall’s winding fortifications.”

Destination China’s Homelein, who is always on the lookout for new, or unusual, sites for repeat visitors who have already seen the major imperial attractions, has a further recommendation.

“Ba Da Chu is a fascinating and very important Buddhist site in the western hills,” Homelein says. “It has eight different temples as you climb the hill, all with a different purpose. Ba Da Chu is worth the extra effort.” ●

MANDARIN’S CHOICE

THIS year saw the debut of the first Mandarin Oriental hotel in China’s capital – a 73-room boutique property located in the heart of the imperial area, a short stroll from the Forbidden City.

One of the key selling points of Mandarin Oriental Wangfujing, Beijing, located on the top floors of WF Central, a Hongkong Land luxury mall development, is the stunning terrace view out towards the iconic palace, which is the world’s largest.

Many rooms and suites have views towards the home of Ming and Qing emperors, as do all the dining outlets. The hotel can offer its prime suites as venues for exclusive gatherings and product launches, utilising the expansive outdoor terrace areas.

There are also designated meeting facilities. The 80 sqm Tai Pan room can accommodate 32 seated guests, or 60 people for cocktails, while the oak-panelled Wangfu private room, which can hold up to 12 people, has a view of the iconic Forbidden City and the option of serving gourmet meals.

Another five-star newcomer in the same area is the PuXuan Hotel and Spa, sister property to the PuLi hotel in Shanghai. In the northern part of Beijing, the Opposite House, a favourite of the art, design and fashion crowd, is marking its tenth anniversary with a major upgrade that will see the popular Mesh late-night bar make way for a casual restaurant and the previous check-in space turned into a classy lounge with comfortable sofas.

Whatever the choice of accommodation, or event venue, in Beijing, it is worth bearing in mind the size and scale of the vast city, home to 22 million people. Its immensity always amazes first-time visitors.



PuXuan Hotel and Spa