

# MEDIA RELEASE

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28 August 2014

## **Singapore overtakes Bangkok as biggest Asian destination** *GTA's partners buck downward trend in number of room nights booked*

- Despite significant softening in hotel occupancy and average daily rates, number of room nights booked in Singapore with GTA rises +35% in first six months of 2014 with bookings by Chinese travellers up 45%
- Number of room nights booked through GTA's XML has doubled
- The success in the first half of the year has seen Singapore overtake Bangkok to become Asia's most popular destination
- A strategic alliance with Meritus Hotels & Resorts has led to a 78% increase in room nights booked at Singapore's Mandarin Orchard
- In particular, GTA's market-leading XML technology enables it to cast a truly global distribution net for hotels and in-destination services and experiences and power global travel
- Latest success follows similar growth in 2013 when room nights booked in Singapore increased by 50%

One of the largest inbound operators to Singapore, global hospitality and leisure distributor GTA has bucked a downward trend in the destination's tourism industry in the first half of the year, which has resulted in significant softening in hotel occupancy and average daily rates compared to 2013. With international visitor arrivals falling by 2.8 per cent in the first half of 2014, the softening is being attributed to a combination of weakening arrivals from China, lower demand for corporate travel, and a surplus of supply leading to greater price competition.

In contrast, the number of room nights in Singapore booked with GTA by high street and online travel agents and tour operators around the world rose by 35% in the first six months of 2014. The number of room nights booked through GTA's XML has doubled in that time. GTA's business has been so successful in the first half of the year; Singapore has overtaken Bangkok to become Asia's most popular destination and – contrary to the wider trend – room nights booked by Chinese travellers has increased 45%. Most travellers are coming from Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, UAE and the UK; all important markets for destination Singapore as highlighted by Singapore Tourism Board.

Says Daryl Lee, GTA's Vice-President of Sales for Asia: "This is great news for Singapore and the hotels that are benefiting from our ability to reach practically every part of the planet. Every day, millions of people turn to online and high street travel agents and tour operators to book accommodation. And every day behind the scenes, GTA powers global travel with XML and HTML solutions to help those travel businesses with all they need.

"This global presence in mature and emerging source markets, the expertise and experience of our people and the reliable performance of our technology mean hotels trust us to bring them to market and help them profit."

As a market leader in XML technology GTA casts a truly global distribution net, enabling travellers to book hotels through online and high street travel agents and tour operators, as well as fulfilling the demands of travel wholesalers. Every day 110 million availability and price requests are made through GTA's XML. Such high-yield performance is enhanced by the expertise of the company's people, dedicated to setting up the channel, providing ongoing technology support and creating collaborative marketing initiatives. GTA's size also means it can afford ongoing investment in XML to keep mapping updated with new hotels, room types and traveller formats or promotional codes, while making the speed and reliability of the system even better. Enhanced partnerships with channel managers through its recently launched supplier XML API gives hotels even greater and faster access to market.

Maria Gail Taylor, Regional Vice President of Revenue for Meritus Hotels & Resorts, says: "Our strategic alliance with GTA has led to a 78% increase in the number of room nights booked at the Mandarin Orchard, helping us buck the general trend in Singapore right now. GTA's global network enables us to easily reach

the greatest number of customers in core and newer markets. Their global data and business intelligence, coupled with their understanding of our business means our partnership is profitable as well.”

Andrew Hughes, Vice President of Hotel Sourcing for Asia Pacific, the Middle East & Africa at GTA, adds: “Agents and tour operators around the world know how hard we work to find the properties they need in the destinations travellers want to visit. Our ability to power global travel has led to our market-leading performance in Singapore.”

Strong success for GTA and its hotel partners in the first half of 2014 follows similar growth in 2013 when room nights booked in Singapore increased by 50%. Last year, the destination’s most important Asian source markets last year were South Korea – which saw the most significant year on year growth and more than trebled the number of room nights sold in 2013 – and Indonesia (up 68%). With GTA, the destination saw room nights from its third most popular source market, Hong Kong, increase by 76% last year; the culmination of an average annual growth rate (CAGR) of 31% over the last three years.

GTA is currently celebrating ‘30 years in Asia’ with a campaign of special offers in Singapore and other destinations. Travel agents are taking advantage of 30% and more off bookings. In just over a month it has already spurred demand and, together with a wealth of partner activities from roadshows to workshops and fam trips, has helped GTA raise awareness about Singapore and build demand for the destination and its hotels.

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Media enquiries: Elliott Frisby, External Communications Manager, GTA:  
**+44 (0)7833 406161 or +44 (0)20 3170 4204, [elliott.frisby@gta-travel.com](mailto:elliott.frisby@gta-travel.com)**

**Notes to Editors**

- Powering global travel, GTA provides ground travel products and services for fully independent travel, supporting the biggest and best in travel. Part of Kuoni Global Travel Services, a division of Kuoni, GTA is trusted to deliver because of its wealth of experience, privileged relationships and on the ground expertise. Its technology solutions easily connect travel suppliers and sellers worldwide. Booking sites – GTA retail, Travel Cube and Travel Bound, as well as GTA wholesale – process over 21,000 bookings daily, in more than 25 languages. Connect now with GTA. [www.gta-travel.com](http://www.gta-travel.com)